

SUBSTANCE
OF THE
SPEECHES
OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM PITT,

On the 23d and 31st of JANUARY 1799:

INCLUDING

A correct Copy of the PLAN,

WITH THE

DEBATE which took place in the House of Commons

On the PROPOSAL for an

UNION between GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND.

To which are annexed,

The celebrated SPEECHES of the Right Honourable
JOHN FOSTER, late Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Speaker of
the House of Commons of Ireland, on the 12th and 15th Days of
August 1785, upon the COMMERCIAL PROPOSITIONS.

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Settled
Oireachtaí
Houses of the

HOUSE OF COMMONS;

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1799.

MR. PITT spoke to the following effect:—" Sir, after the inclination which has been manifested by the House to come to a decision on the question before them, I should feel it my duty to offer some apology for rising to delay that decision, but as some difference of opinion is likely to take place in the minds of Gentlemen, and the point under consideration is so intimately connected with the safety and prosperity of the British empire, though I do not think it necessary to enter fully into the important details which the subject naturally suggests, I cannot pass over with indifference several topics which have been alluded to in the course of the Honourable Gentleman's speech. The Honourable Gentleman in bringing forward his amendment, has appeared to me to furnish but one argument in support of the conclusion which he labours to establish, namely, that there is no power which can make the result of the deliberation for adjusting the reciprocal interests of both countries effectual. He has taken upon himself the task of denying to the Parliament of either kingdom the right of incorporating one country with another. With respect to the publication which he has undertaken to refute, that is a subject to which the House cannot attend; but how does the Honourable Gentleman's denial of the right of the Parliaments of both kingdoms stand? If the Parliament of Ireland has no right to incorporate itself with the legislature of this country, without the sense of the people of Ireland, as little has the Parliament of Great Britain a right to follow the same measure with that of Ireland; as little had the Parliament of Scotland a right to agree to the terms of the Union which had been effected, as little had the Parliament of England a right to ratify that Union, under which England has so eminently flourished, under which our laws and liberties have prospered, have been extended and confirmed, in defiance of every check and obstacle; under which Great Britain has increased in opulence, in power, and glory, and has become at once the admiration and envy of the world. If there be any truth or any consistency in the Honourable Gentleman's denial of the right which he challenges, then all the solid and beneficial establishments which have been carried into effect since the period of the Union, must give way and fall to the ground. Even the Honourable Gentleman would, according to his own argument, stand here unauthorized, unqualified to deliver his sentiments in this House. For if we admit his position to be just, it evidently follows, that there is no one act which has been performed by us for these 90 years past, in which we have acted legitimately and constitutionally;

and, in fact, we could not at this moment sit here as a legislative Body. I cannot devise by what means, or by what ingenious resources the Honourable Gentleman can support his statement, and it seems that his allies are hitherto unknown. I have, however, learnt from the newspapers, that the Honourable Gentleman has at least one ally in his very extraordinary proposition. A certain person has publicly declared, that every citizen of both countries should come forward and deliver his opinion on the present occasion; and that without the sense of the aggregate bodies of the kingdom, the Parliament of Great Britain could not discuss nor determine the present momentous question. According to this plan, which appears to coincide with the sentiments of the Honourable Gentleman, every citizen was to stand forth with his reasons, and vote in numerical progression, and the Legislature were, in the mean time, patiently to wait for the result of the whole. If we are to go back to the elements of Jacobinism, I must admit the argument of the Hon. Gentleman to be just, and we are, consequently, no longer a Parliament. But I must do him the justice to say, that I am persuaded he entertains no such opinion, and if he does not, there is of course an end to that topic. With respect to the competence of Parliament to carry the measure into effect there does not exist a doubt; and if the competence of either or both Parliaments be fully admitted, let us see how stands the question in your hands, as well as the amendment of the Hon. Gentleman. He complains, Sir, that the address of thanks to His Majesty was moved by my right honourable friend near me, and seconded by me as a matter of course. But why did we pursue that conduct? Was it because we were not aware of the difficulties attending it; because we were not apprised of the indispensable necessity of mature and minute investigation?—No, Sir!—but because we did not think it right to agitate a question of such transcendent importance on the bare mention of it; because we conceived that it would be premature to bring forward for discussion, a topic, the outlines of which were unknown; because we could not consistently with our duties to the public, agree to submit to consideration, a subject so deeply interesting in its relations and operations, until it was stated fairly and openly in all its various details to the House. But the Hon. Gentleman has gone farther, and talked of a wish to carry it by surprise. I do not hesitate to say, that if any blame be imputable to us, it is that of having acted with too much caution. It has been distinctly recommended from the throne, to adopt such salutary measures as might improve and perpetuate a connection essential to the common security and interests of both countries. We only stated, in conformity to that communication, the time of laying before the House the materials necessary for forming an opinion, and added, that a proper interval would take place before we took the sense of Parliament. I certainly thought that the Hon. Gentleman would have candidly allowed the fairness of our conduct, and have done justice to our desire, so clearly ascertained, of treating the subject with all the importance and deliberation to which it is so peculiarly entitled,

entitled.—In short, the question now is, shall we, after the expiration of a proper interval, discuss and come to a determination upon the subject, or shall we in the first instance, and in the mere outset of the business, without taking a just review of the considerations on both sides, without entering into the essential points that are connected with, and must influence our decision, positively declare, that the measure is either unnecessary to the security and happiness of Ireland, or so impracticable in its operation, as to prevent any hopes of realizing it? With regard to the amendment, I shall say a few words presently. It is enough for us to say, we bring forward a proposition in our opinion suitable to the present state of Ireland. We do no more. We do not ask for immediate discussion. But Sir, what is the Hon. Gentleman's conduct? he says, without considering the subject in any point of view as it relates to this country or to Ireland, "I will enter upon no enquiry whatever." Now, Sir, he is bound, according to this system of acting, to make out to our conviction, either that the state of Ireland is so completely satisfactory, that we may repose with safety, and that, consequently the proposed arrangement is superfluous, or it is incumbent on him to point out some other mode of a more salutary and more efficacious nature. Has he then, I am authorized to demand, made out any such case? I answer, no! Does Ireland stand in need of a remedy? I have heard nothing but complaints of the miserable and distressed situation of Ireland from the Hon. Gentleman and his party for a long time past. They have reiterated and studiously expatiated upon the wretched condition to which that country was reduced; they have bitterly inveighed against the mistakes and errors of its Government; they have described in the most alarming terms the horrors which it was condemned to suffer; they have anxiously started difficulties and raised objections against every word that went to extenuate the painful distresses which they related. What has the Hon. Gentleman seen in the condition of Ireland since that day, to cause so material an alteration in his opinion? What has he discovered since that day to induce him to retract his declarations, and impress him with a conviction, that Ireland is so secure, so happy, and so prosperous, as to render every kind of remedy unnecessary. He has seen a rebellion raging with inveterate fury, and aiming a deadly blow at the connexion between that country and Great Britain. He has seen that Rebellion crushed, and the Government of Ireland left standing in security. The Hon. Gentleman seems to forget that he found no difficulty then in blaming the Parliament of Ireland, yet he comes forward now and is as profuse of his praises on it, as he was before lavish in his censures. He cannot, therefore, have seen any thing since that period to justify this extraordinary and unaccountable dereliction of sentiment. The evils and calamities with which Ireland is afflicted lie deep in the situation of the country. They are to be attributed to the manners of its inhabitants, to the state of society, to the habits of the people at large, to the unequal distribution of property, to the want of civilized inter-

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course, to the jarring discord of party, and above all, to the prejudices of religious sects. The Hon. Gentleman says, we cannot cure them all in a day. If they could be cured so, they might be cured by the Parliament of Ireland, by Parliamentary Reform or Catholic emancipation. But if the deplorable situation of the country can only be cured by gradual, sober, and dispassionate improvement and civilization; if much of it that is justly complained of can only be remedied by the circulation of capital, by the social intercourse naturally flowing from improved trade and commerce, by the diffusion of social habits, by the discrimination of liberal sentiment, by removing party distractions, by suppressing factious associations, by allaying hereditary feuds subsisting between two nations living in the same Island, and by the extinction of religious prejudices, we must look to it in the provisions of an independent Legislature removed from the immediate seat of these evils, which shall not be partial to either party, but the fair arbiter and kind parent of both; which shall not be liable to local influence, nor be subject to popular incitement, and which shall be fully competent to make head against the lawless inroads of destructive innovation and anarchy. Where then, Sir, is this gradual and effectual remedy to be found, while the legislature remains in that country, and must, from the parts which compose it, partake of the spirit of either party? If, therefore, the Hon. Gentleman looks to Ireland for a Legislature calculated to apply a radical cure to the calamities which are manifest, he will not find it there. If he looks to the imperfection of the Constitution of Ireland, as I admit, does he contend that the Parliament of Ireland is as well adapted to have that degree of connexion and union with the great mass of the people as the Parliament of Great Britain? Will he seriously maintain that the desired remedy is to be hazarded in that country?—The wildest speculation, the most extravagant flight of modern political theory in all its new fangled doctrines, attempted in any other country, would be more likely to be crowned with success, and more reconcileable to reason than such a proposition. It would upon every principle of common sense be superior to it. I do not deny that even the deformed resemblance of the British Constitution is superior to any proceeding from the new system, but the imperfection of the Irish Constitution is admitted, and to that must be added the complicated grievances and defects in the state of the country at large. With respect to the want of a diffusion of property, to the extraordinary disparity of rank, and to the scanty means of social improvement, all producing in a proportionate degree misery in one extreme and oppression in the other—how can these grievances be remedied but by a closer connexion with Great Britain, which is superior to every other nation in every thing that constitutes the independence, wealth, and civilization of a State? The situation of Ireland must also be remedied by the influx of capital and the circulation of wealth, and whence are these necessary ingredients to be supplied but by assimilating it with

with Great Britain, which enjoys a portion of practical blessings superior to any other country in the world? If these statements be correct, I am authorized in maintaining, that according to the principles advanced by the Hon. Gentleman himself, nothing can tend more completely to redress the unhappy and distracted state of Ireland, than uniting, blending, and consolidating its interests and views with those of Great Britain. Therefore, Sir, upon the Hon. Gentleman's principles it is not only a measure worthy of consideration, but a specific remedy for the specific evils of which he complains. He does not scruple to tell us, and wishes Parliament to record, that the final adjustment with Ireland in 1782, has been found incompetent to settle every difference, and he told us yesterday, that he wished to perpetuate the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland; but I am not content with saying, that the connexion shall be perpetuated, and that Ireland shall form a part of the British Empire, but I wish she should participate in all the blessings, enjoy her just share of all the distinguished happiness of every part of the British Empire, and consolidate the strength and energy of the whole. I do not merely say let Ireland be united, let her be blended with us, but let her partake of every solid benefit, of every eminent advantage that can result from such an incorporation. The question then is, how are these great objects to be attained? When the connexion with Ireland was something more than a name, when that connexion was ascertained, and the Imperial Parliament of this country exercised a supremacy over Ireland, it did happen, that during that period the narrow policy of Great Britain, influenced with views of trade and commercial advantages, tainted and perverted with selfish motives, treated Ireland with partiality and neglect, and never looked upon her growth and prosperity as the growth and prosperity of the empire at large. I reprobated as much as the Hon. Gentleman, that narrow-minded policy as mischievous and pregnant with the most fatal consequences to both kingdoms. Thus a system radically defective existed, but another was substituted in its place. One branch, that of the Executive Power, was left the same in both countries; but there were also left two independent Parliaments without any permanent tie between them, and that at a time when every honest Englishman and every honest Irishman sincerely wished the connexion might be drawn closer. The countries were left in a situation of intimacy which the breath of accident might at all times destroy. They were liable to be separated by a thousand accidents which no human foresight or wisdom could prevent. It is now the duty of both Legislatures to render their happiness mutual and permanent. I am now, Sir, about to notice that which has been alluded to by the Hon. Gentleman as a final adjustment; and I can undertake to state, that this final adjustment was made under the pretence of redressing existing grievances, without looking to future consequences, or taking a general and necessary view of circumstances—it was dictated by the spirit of momentary popularity, and was not founded in the solid interests

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of the country. Having created two distinct Parliaments equally able and competent to decide and dictate on questions of peace and war, on all points of trade and commerce—it left them as divided in all material points about which nations may contest as any two Powers on the Continent. That such was the issue of that arrangement cannot now be denied, and I can therefore maintain, without incurring the risque of contradiction, that there is no reason whatever for calling it a final adjustment. Such, however, was the boasted achievement of the great patriots who took the lead in the emancipation of Ireland. The fabric which they had raised was popular, but the very men who raised it knew it was not sound. They looked at their work, and they saw that it was imperfect. One of these great patriots was gratified with a large donation from his country, and the other was celebrated in the publications of the day. When the Act was passed which gave independence to Ireland, I think it necessary to observe, that it was accompanied by a resolution which contained a salutary provision. The resolution stated, that it was the opinion of the House that the connexion between both kingdoms should be consolidated by future measures or regulations founded upon the basis of mutual consent.—[Mr. Pitt read the Resolution from the Journals of the House.]—That Resolution was also carried in an Address to the Throne. Therefore, Sir, I have the authority of that Resolution to prove that no final adjustment was then made, and nothing has been since attempted to provide for that defective settlement but the partial and inadequate measure of the Irish Propositions, which were defeated by the persons who framed the resolution, and who found no substitute in their room. The *onus* of shewing that it was not a final adjustment, lies with those who framed that resolution; I mean with the Hon. Gentleman and his friends. The *onus* lay with the Hon. Gentleman to state what means and what resources he had in his mind to answer the pledge given to the country. But, Sir, is there no probable case in which the Legislatures of both kingdoms may differ? Has the Hon. Gentleman forgotten that one case did arise, and that within the short space of 16 years? With that experience before my eyes which we foresaw, no arguments can at present be necessary to shew that the possible recurrence of such a case should be precluded. The case to which I allude, is one which has been noticed by the Hon. Gentleman, but noticed only to be glossed over. I mean the Regency. The difference of principle was evident, for the Irish Parliament decided upon one principle and the British Parliament upon another. They both led to the appointment of the same Person, but that was accidental, for that Person must have governed Ireland upon one principle and England upon another. He would have been Regent in one capacity in one country, and in a capacity directly the reverse in the other. It, therefore, followed that the office might, upon grounds equally justifiable, have been vested in two distinct persons. Will any man, with so instructive an example before his eyes, talk with sincerity of a final adjustment? Will any man tell us that the security of the empire is in its present view

view founded on a permanent basis? In the only war which has taken place since the establishment of Irish independence, the question of mutual interest has been so exactly the same, that I cannot quote any difference of opinion on that head. Fortunately, the only great instance in which two countries could act in opposition had not then occurred, and the local interest of Ireland has in the present war been so intimately connected with this kingdom, and her existence and welfare has so much depended upon us, that there is no opportunity of citing a case of dispute between both nations on the great questions of peace and war. But will the Hon. Gentleman pretend to maintain, that when the habit of discussing the foreign relations of the Empire shall take place, the Parliament of Ireland may not, as it might naturally think itself entitled to do, proceed to enquire into treaties and alliances?—On a supposed difference of local interest, will the Hon. Gentleman tell me it is impossible that the Parliament of Ireland should take one step in giving advice to the Sovereign and the Parliament of Great Britain another? If in the present contest, the Opposition were to have as much influence in Ireland as they formerly possessed, a vote for peace might be passed, and the efforts of Great Britain paralyzed. Will the Hon. Gentleman tell me, that the Parliament of Ireland might not in such a case neutralize its ports, prevent the raising of recruits for the army and navy, and strike a fatal blow at the power, and endanger the existence of the empire. Let any man maturely reflect on the dangers that may possibly result from the present situation of both countries, and he will tremble at the perils to which they are exposed. Even with regard to the contest in which we are now struggling for the dearest and most valuable considerations, is there not ground for just alarm? It is true, that the influence of the Opposition party in Ireland, has been less prominent than ever. The influence of the great Patriot is extinct in Ireland, nearly in the same way that the reputation of the other great patriots here in England has expired. But if we wish to render the connexion perpetual, and to make the ties indissoluble, shall we do our duty to either country if we neglect to bring forward this proposition? I have, Sir, been arguing to provide for the prosperity and safety of Ireland, and to remedy the miserable imperfections of the arrangement made in 1782. But how does it stand at present? The situation of the country is indeed deplorable. Rent by party distraction, torn by the divisions of sects, subject to the revival of inflamed hostility, a prey to the hereditary animosity of the old Irish and the English settlers, the scene of constant prejudices proceeding from superstition and ignorance. Add, Sir, to this true colouring, the infusion of the last deadly poison, Jacobinism, and they will altogether produce a picture of the most horrible kind. There we may clearly distinguish a miserable state of ceaseless contention, of perpetual distraction, of the most rooted animosity, which, however great the exertions of the Legislature of Ireland may be, and I heartily give them all the praise which they have received from the tardy panegyric of the Hon. Gentle-

man, they can never succeed in removing. These considerations, without entering into any minute details, which, as I have before observed, are in this state of the business unnecessary, are, I trust, sufficient to induce the House to agree to the investigation of means that may be deemed adequate to establish the internal tranquillity of that country, add to the store of our common resources, and consolidate and strengthen the general interests of the Empire. If any institution be inadequate to provide an effectual remedy for these evils, it is, Sir, I do not hesitate to say, the Irish Legislature; not from any defect of intention, not from any want of talent, but from its own nature; and it is and must be incapable of restoring the internal happiness of the country, and fixing the prosperity of the people on a firm and permanent basis, as long as the present state of that kingdom, with respect to its relation to Great Britain, continues. That Legislature, formed as it is, must continue ever radically defective. I have, Sir, spoken an honest and a fair opinion. I have not been deterred from it by any apprehension that it may not prove acceptable to any set of men on this or on the other side of the water; but there is no circumstance of probable difficulty, no idea of the loss of popularity, no personal consideration, however weighty, can prevent me from using every exertion and every effort in my power to accomplish a measure which, in my firm conviction, directly tends to promote the happiness of the people of Ireland, to establish the mutual relations of both countries on the most solid and advantageous basis, and to consolidate in the most permanent manner the genuine interests of the British Empire."

THURSDAY, January 31, 1799.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. PITT, rose, and spoke to the following effect: "Sir, when I proposed to the House to fix this day for the consideration of a subject so highly important in its nature, and so intimately connected with the safety of the British Empire, as that which was recommended in His Majesty's most gracious Message, I indulged in the hope that His Majesty's communication to the parliament of Ireland with respect to the same object, would have opened a speedy and effectual way to secure the happy accomplishment of a measure which was calculated to draw closer the ties of mutual interest between both countries, to perpetuate a connexion essential for their common security and happiness, to augment the power and resources, and consolidate the strength of the British Empire, and more immediately to establish on a firm and permanent basis the tranquillity and prosperity of Ireland itself. That hope I am sincerely concerned to observe, has been disappointed by the measures which have since occurred. I know that the parliament of Ireland, in the discussion and decision which have followed His Majesty's most gracious communication, has exercised that competency which I do not mean to question, but admit it fully possesses, to reject or adopt any measure proposed to them by the Executive Government. One of the Houses of Parliament in Ireland has how-

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ever thought proper to adopt the recommendation. Feeling as I do a firm persuasion of the great, solid, and extensive benefits that must result to Ireland from consenting to carry into effect the object proposed; feeling as I do the immense addition that must also accrue to the Empire at large, and the consolidation of strength, interest, and affection that must be derived to both countries from the execution of it—I cannot avoid saying, that I am impressed with the deepest regret for the disappointment which has taken place. But, Sir, knowing at the same time the undoubted right of Parliament to come to such resolutions as it may think most proper, and to act in every manner most conformable to the sentiments by which it is actuated, I do treat the decision of Parliament on that momentous consideration with the greatest deference and respect. I have not the most remote intention of agitating matters, which might possibly, in the course of their discussion, give rise to a spirit of animosity, or lead to hostilities between both countries; but while I treat that decision with every mark of respect to which, as the act of an independent House of Commons, it is clearly intitled, I must say, that I have a duty to perform, which, consistently with my conviction and feelings as a Member of the British Parliament, I am bound to execute. That duty is to state to the House the outlines of the plan which has been deemed just and effectual for settling a complete and final adjustment between both countries. I am ready to admit that there is no chance of bringing it to a happy termination while it is opposed by the sense of the House of Commons of Ireland; and having allowed that, I must observe, that it is upon that very ground that I feel it the more necessary to urge it now, and by stating the outlines of the measure, to shew the vast and permanent advantages which have been neglected, in consequence of the vote which precluded the discussion of the proposed arrangement. It is therefore my duty to explain the motives by which the measure was dictated and brought forward, and to state openly and fairly the plan to this House, in order that it should remain recorded here, as that on which the Parliament of this country, if it be sanctioned with our approbation, is willing to close with the Parliament of that kingdom, leaving it to that country to reject or adopt, as it may judge most expedient, at any future opportunity. When a great question like the present was brought forward in Ireland, unaccompanied as it was by any details, it was not unlikely that it should meet considerable opposition from national pride; from misrepresentation; from misconstruction, and a variety of causes; yet to whatever motives the sentiments of dislike which have been manifested against it may be attributed, it is, I must observe, essential and necessary it should be known on what grounds the Parliament of Great Britain came forward to promote a more intimate and lasting connexion between the two countries. In this point of view, I have no hesitation in saying, that I am convinced, under the apparent discouragement which prevails, notwithstanding the prejudices which have been displayed, that this measure is founded upon such principles of reciprocal benefit and

prosperity, and is so materially connected with the general interests of the British Empire, from which Ireland cannot be separated for a moment in argument or in fact, that it should be stated clearly and dispassionately by us, and be left open to the free, sober, and unprejudiced discussion and decision of the Irish Parliament for rejection or adoption on any future occasion. It will not, I trust, be denied, that it is necessary time should also be given to all those in any manner connected with the result of it, to deliberate on the probable effects of the plan, and to form a just estimate of its consequences. It is necessary that all those who are in any degree implicated in the event, should be at full liberty to weigh the various reasons which may operate on their minds, either in favour or against the measure, with respect to the present and future state of trade, commerce, and manufactures, and their extensive and complicated relations; with respect to the present distracted state of Ireland, and the satisfactory prospect of allaying and suppressing for ever all party animosity and religious prejudice; and with respect to the present want of improvement in the manners of the people, and the probable speedy progress of civilization and internal happiness. These weighty topics cannot be candidly and impartially determined without minute investigation, unremitting attention, and cool, mature, and dispassionate discussion. I am the more encouraged in the hope that a plan pregnant with such blessings, will prove ultimately successful, when I observe that the majority which rejected all discussion, without wishing to hear the grounds on which the recommendation was supported, consisted of barely more than one-half of the Members present. When I observe in the other House of Parliament, containing so very large and valuable a proportion of the property of the kingdom, a decided opinion expressed in favour of the measure; when I observe that on the very outset of the business, when popular prejudice and clamour were industriously excited against it, that much of the trading part of the kingdom, and a considerable share of commercial interest came forward with the acknowledged declaration of its utility: These, Sir, are sufficient grounds to justify me in entertaining every rational expectation of success. But notwithstanding all these great and satisfactory reasons that offer themselves to my mind for expecting a favourable conclusion, I cannot say that I look to an adjustment crowned with the unanimous concurrence, though, I trust, ratified with the full and deliberate consent of the Parliament of both kingdoms. It is, Sir, with a view of these objects that I think it my duty to bring forward this day a plan for carrying into effect the object of His Majesty's gracious communication; not for the purpose of being immediately acted upon, but that it may be known, and that the just grounds of success may be ascertained. With this intention it is my duty to open to the House the outlines of the plan, observing that I do not mean to make them the subject of debate at present. Acting upon this plan, and I trust consistent principle, it appears to me that the fairest way of proceeding will be

to state to the House a string of Resolutions which have been prepared for that end. When the consideration of them comes on, that cannot be done while you, Sir, remain in the Chair, and it will be necessary for me to move the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House. If it shall be agreed on by the Committee that the resolutions are fit to form the basis of the out-lines, my opinion will be that Parliament should adopt them, vote an Address on the subject of them, and lay them at the foot of the Throne to be communicated to Ireland, when an opportunity favourable to the dispassionate investigation of them shall occur. I have now, Sir, explained to the House the motives which have induced me to submit the plan to Parliament, and I will now endeavour to explain the general grounds of the measure, and the general arguments by which it is supported, and to give at the same time as short a view as I can of the whole. As to the principle on which all the out-lines are founded, I am happy to find that no difference of opinion exists on that head. I am happy to find from what has happened in this house in the late Debate, when the subject was first introduced and agitated, that the general principle of the necessity of perpetuating the connexion between both countries was fully recognized. That principle, which once admitted, and which indeed cannot be denied, was forcibly stated by an Hon. Gentleman opposite to me, who deprecated all discussion on that night. But the necessity of the connexion thus acknowledged, leads necessarily to the most important considerations. We are bound to consider that connexion with due regard to the interests of Ireland—we are to consider it with regard to its trade, manufactures, and commerce—we are to consider it with regard to the permanent establishment of its domestic peace and happiness; with regard to its perfect security from the avowed designs of the enemy to effect its separation from this country; with regard to its strengthening the power and resources of the Empire at large, and with regard to admitting it to the full and unqualified enjoyment of all the blessings by the possession of which Great Britain is so eminently distinguished from all other nations. Admitting this principle, on which the Legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland must act, let me now ask, what is the present situation of that connexion, the necessity of preserving and perpetuating which is so amply allowed, even by those who declare themselves unfriendly to the measure now under consideration? That connexion, so necessary to the prosperity, and even to the existence of Ireland, and so advantageous to the common interests of the Empire, has been attacked both by foreign and domestic enemies. Our foreign enemies have failed in every attempt, though the prospect of dissolving that connexion forms perhaps the only remaining hope of the foe. But he has been hitherto baffled in every endeavour to accomplish an object so desirable to his interests; he has been successively defeated with disgrace, and all his attempts have been triumphantly turned into additional means of our own security. Perhaps the means used

by the enemy to accomplish the separation of both countries, may be the means of knitting closer the union that exists between us, and of strengthening the barrier which in the present crisis we oppose to the perfidious principles and boundless ambition of France. That connexion has not only been attacked in an alarming manner by a foreign enemy, but it has been attacked in a still more dangerous way by domestic treason, excited by France; and in addition to the distracted state of Ireland, all the horrors of Jacobinism have been engrafted on the complicated miseries of the old system. Let us then see if any new order of things congenial to the exigencies of the moment, suitable and calculated to ward off impending danger, and adapted, as far as human wisdom can make it, to remedy the growing evils can be devised to secure the connexion which is confessed in the fullest sense to be absolutely necessary. We know that the connexion, as it is at present formed, is such, that the greatness of the danger likely to result from it is admitted by all. We ought to be wise in time; we ought to provide against the insidious and tyrannical encroachments of an enemy, who, though not truly wise, enjoys a pre-eminence of wisdom in knowing how to invent and apply with success all the means of mischief, murder, and devastation. If there exists any doubt of the precarious state of the present connexion, this circumstance is alone sufficient to justify us in viewing it with apprehension and fear, and in finding out means to alter, improve, and perpetuate it. But it is sufficient, without any extraneous reference, to look at that connexion which all men wish to preserve and render permanent; and I do not hesitate to maintain, that it does afford the security we desire for either country. I took the liberty of stating on a former night, that the settlement of 1782, so far from deserving the name of final adjustment, was one that left the connexion liable to perish by every breath of accident, and subject to be broken by the slightest casualties. It was in truth inadequate, incompetent, and in every respect ill calculated to secure the end for which it was framed. Let no man think that I consider the conduct of Great Britain before the settlement of 1782 liberal. We certainly had previously acted with a narrow selfish policy towards Ireland. Jealous of their commercial prosperity, looking upon them as the rivals of our prosperity, we only regarded them as the instruments of our own aggrandizement. But afterwards, when that selfish, that illiberal, that defective system was altered in 1782, what was substituted in its room? We demolished one system, and we furnished nothing in its place. This, Sir, is not presumption, it is not bold and unsupported assertion; it is not forced conjecture. I take it to be so from the settlement itself. I prove it to be so from the declared opinion of the British parliament. I assert it to be so from the recorded opinions of the ministers themselves who made it. It is proved from the acts of the men who formed it—from their own knowledge who made it, that it was incomplete, partial, and defective. Two independent Legislatures, without any common bond of connexion, and which the occurrence of any casualty might for ever separate, were established. The ties between both countries, which ought to have been strong and lasting, were slight and fleeting, and the very

men who brought forward the new arrangement were dissatisfied with their own work; they saw the imperfections of it, and wished to provide for them by a subsequent proceeding. Yet nothing since had been done to remove the defects under which it laboured, and that boasted settlement remained to the present hour in the same precarious and nugatory state. But I have great authority for going farther in this mode of argument; and I can state, without exposing myself to the danger of contradiction, that even in the opinion of some of those persons who have recently opposed the present measure in Ireland, the settlement of 1782 was not calculated to perpetuate the connexion between both countries, to secure the commercial prosperity of Ireland, or to increase the common interest and power of the British Empire. I have, Sir, in favour of this position, the authority even of one* for whom I certainly entertain the highest respect—one, Sir, who in that country fills the important situation which you do here. His opinion was, that the connexion of 1782 could not last. Sir, I stated to you on a former occasion the history of that transaction, and it fully appears from your Journals. A Message was sent from the Throne, stating the grievances complained of in an Address from the Lords and Commons of Ireland, and the subject matter of the complaints was by His Majesty's command laid before the Parliament of Great Britain: it was immediately followed by acts of redress. The repeal of the Declaratory Law was moved and carried, and satisfaction was given to the existing discontents with respect to the independency of the Irish legislature: but the Ministers of that day were clearly of opinion, and Parliament coincided in that sentiment, by resolving that a further connexion was necessary; and as a supplement, it was recorded in the Journals, that such other terms should be settled as might be agreed on between the two nations." [Here Mr. *Sheridan* observing across the table that Mr. Pitt ought to read the resolution to the House, Mr. Pitt continued] "It is certainly my desire, Sir, that every paper and document should be read before the House proceeds to the discussion; but I beg not to be interrupted in the course of my observations. I say, Sir, that a further connexion was deemed necessary. The Hon. Gentleman may read as much as he pleases, but he must also state to the House the particulars of the subject, and the reasons by which he thinks himself enabled to support this explanation of the text. An Address was voted to His Majesty in consequence of that proceeding, and a gracious Message from His Majesty was delivered by an Hon. Gentleman, a Member of this House, who was then one of the principal Secretaries of State, but who is not now in the House. Measures were recommended to be taken in order to extend the Settlement, but no such measures have ever since been adopted. It is therefore unde-

* See Mr. Foster's Speeches in the House of Commons of Ireland, August 1785, on a Motion "for leave to bring in a Bill for effectuating the Intercourse and Commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, &c."—at the end of this Publication; taken verbatim from Mr. W. Woodfall's *Impartial Sketch of that Debate*.

niable, that such measures were recommended for the purpose of making that Settlement perfect, which was admitted to be altogether imperfect. It consequently remains to this hour in its original imperfect and incomplete state. We say that Great Britain and Ireland ought to be inseparably united. On that general principle there is no shade of difference of opinion; yet the Parliaments were different in both kingdoms, and the Crown which governed both had only the power of rejecting or accepting the Acts of the Irish Parliament under the Great Seal of that kingdom. If to guard against the fatal effects of party and local prejudice,—if to provide an effectual remedy for the alarming discontents excited by hereditary feuds—if to extinguish for ever the inveterate animosity of jarring sects, and constant dissensions, be the great end to which we should direct our attention, and for the attainment of which we should exert every effort, it would be sufficient barely to state the measure, in order to evince its salutary operation. But, Sir, I have an opinion in additional support of my sentiments which must go, from the authority of the person who delivered it, a considerable way in my favour. It was delivered on the commercial propositions, which were not accepted, and consequently can be no bar to any further arrangements, and it must have great weight with the House. I am not, Sir, about to discuss the nature of the commercial propositions in 1785, though they went, in the opinion of many, to palliate the evil. But those who maintained the settlement of 1782 with undiminished perseverance,—I speak, I am sure upon better record than that of Parliamentary proceedings,—those who maintained the settlement of 1782 were particularly zealous and indefatigable in their support of the commercial propositions of 1785, and their opinion on that point was contained in a statement drawn up by those who were the parties in the previous arrangement. I find, then, Sir, that the Gentleman whose authority I mean to cite, and who was at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Irish House of Commons (Mr. Foster), did not scruple to express his sentiments in the following terms, which are contained in the statement to which I allude—“If this infatuated country gives up the present offer, she will, I fear, look for it again in vain.”—Now, Sir, I hope that will not be the case, and that the offer will be given again, even upon more advantageous conditions. But this Gentleman goes on and observes—“Things cannot remain as they are.” (*A general cry of Hear! Hear!*) Yet, Sir, all this language, all these strong and decisive declarations are forgotten, and the boasted final adjustment of 1782 is pleaded as an unanswerable argument against all further settlement. But the Hon. Gentleman proceeding still more forcibly to impress his sentiments, remarks—“Commercial jealousies must arise. The connexion cannot last.”—I beg leave to observe, that I do not quote this against the opinion of the Hon. Gentleman, but with a view of shewing, that the connexion of 1782, on which so much reliance is placed by the enemies of the present measure, was in reality never felt to be final and sufficient for its purpose. Permit me, Sir, to ask, how will Gentlemen opposite to me, get rid of this

this weighty authority which goes so strongly against them and which they now begin to respect?—Will they undertake to prove, in opposition to this opinion of the Gentleman to whom I allude, that the present connexion does not carry in it the seeds of future separation, that it is not likely to produce a constant round and succession of commercial jealousies arising from the jarring acts of two distinct and separate Legislatures? If they cannot prove this, and I believe they will hardly attempt so very arduous a task,—the question that naturally presents itself is, how can these evils, and the dangers which threaten both nations be prevented? I answer, that they can only be averted by one compact, or by blending both Parliaments together in an incorporate Union. What then is the state of opinion on this important point? Why, in spite of the opinion of the Gentleman to whom I have referred—in spite of the advantages that must be derived to Ireland in particular from this measure, in spite of the consolidation of the strength and resources of the empire, it so happens that opinions borrowed from this side of the water converted the Irish Parliament, and convinced them that it was improper to admit any arrangement as inconsistent with the independence of the Legislature. The consequence is plain and undeniable. The seeds of separation must be suffered to remain, and the existing connexion between us may be completely annihilated by mere accident. The only mode of providing an efficient remedy is by compact or by union. But if to all the weight of these authorities—if to the opinion of Gentlemen who have maturely considered past transactions and the relative situation of both kingdoms—if the experience of what has since happened—if facts melancholy and deplorable, which are recent in the mind of every man, fail in shewing the necessity of the measure, there is however one solitary event, the only great occasion which has occurred since the final adjustment, which shews beyond the possibility of doubt the practical defects of that arrangement; and after this proof, which had been previously seen in argument, will any one oppose the necessity of some further proceedings to improve and perpetuate the connexion? The circumstance was indeed of a most interesting kind, and was pregnant with the most imminent perils; and if we had not been relieved by a happy event from the perplexities and embarrassments into which it must have involved us—an event to which we must look with complete satisfaction, exultation, and gratitude, we should have been essentially separated from Ireland. Every Gentleman must know to what I allude. In the question of the Regency, the decision of the Irish Parliament was in direct opposition to that of the Parliament of Great Britain. It was founded upon principles directly opposite to those by which the British Parliament was influenced, and it was but mere accident that those principles led to the nomination of the same person as Regent, but with different restrictions and opposite offices. They certainly might with equal consistency and justice have led to the appointment of different persons; and can any man, after that instructive example, hesitate to say, that

the security for the stability of the connexion between the two countries is insufficient, partial, and defective? In one kingdom the office of Regent was to be held by one tenure, and in the other by an opposite one, and thus the link of connexion was completely destroyed. Such an act would have been politically and practically the cause of discord and separation, and must have impaired the security of the Empire. If then a question has arisen of so very dangerous a tendency in the short space of 16 years, and that we have found the actual system established between us to have failed in promoting that connexion, in the necessity of which there is no diversity of opinion, I ask, are or are we not authorized, are we not rather compelled by the irresistible dictates of our duty and our own conviction, to provide against any future contingency? But entering somewhat deeper into this most serious consideration, and looking at the distinct powers of considering of peace or war, of discussing foreign treaties and alliances on any supposed or real grounds of national advantage, which in their unqualified extent must be allowed to belong to the Parliament of Ireland, will any Gentleman tell me that the decision of the Irish Parliament might not be one way, and that of the Parliament of Great Britain another? Will any Gentleman undertake to assure us that the Parliament of Ireland would not give different advice to their Sovereign from the Parliament of Great Britain. Will it be advanced that questions of such moment should not occur on which the independence and even the existence of either kingdom might be at stake? I believe, Sir, no man will be found bold enough to advance such assertions. Are we contented with saying that the suppression of party distinctions is sufficient? Are we satisfied with providing a partial cure for the evils and grievances which are so justly complained of? No, Sir! I wish to speak out largely for all that are involved in the result of this great question. I sincerely wish I could discuss with every man in Ireland his respective interest, with a just reference to the prosperity of all. Suppose the Parliament of Ireland should think the present war unjust? do Gentlemen mean to say that such a difference of opinion could not exist between us? I should be glad to have an answer to these considerations which have been already admitted as just by every man, and even by the Hon. Gentleman whom I have only heard on the subject as a warm friend to perpetual connexion. Admitting then this principle, the question is, have we or have we not sufficient grounds to proceed in strengthening the ties of union between both countries? We are now engaged in a contest the most awful and important that has ever called for the combined exertion of wisdom, magnanimity, and perseverance. If then we have a weak point exposed to the open attack and insidious arts of the enemy, and which has been actually attacked in both these ways by the enemy, I should say, let that point be fortified. I should say so more decidedly from the nature of the struggle in which we have so gloriously opposed the horrors of revolution with increasing spirit and proportionate perseverance. I should say so because

we are involved in a contest of order and regular Government against confusion and anarchy, of morality against boundless and savage licentiousness, of religion against impiety, of virtue and social happiness against vice of the most detestable kind, and the violation of every social duty, of property against plunder and depredation. These expressions have been treated as idle declamations, but they are now practised and attested by the bleeding wounds of devastated Europe; yet realized as the language has been, it is too feeble to paint in their genuine colouring all the horrors and all the miseries of revolutionary success. Is there then, in the actual crisis of public affairs, any man that will not feel that to bind Great Britain and Ireland together in a closer union against the fatal inroads of France, is a benefit so important and inestimable, not only to ourselves but to the whole world, that even commercial advantages, local considerations, political importance, must all sink and appear weak in comparison of that great and indispensable object. But even these considerations will suffer no abatement from the present measure, for they will be greatly increased, while we shall unite to form an insurmountable barrier against the inordinate and sanguinary power of the enemy. The accomplishment is the more easily to be attained, as they are necessary in securing us mutually from danger and in defeating the ambitious and turbulent hopes of France. There has not been, there is not a single Statesman, there is no man, however little acquainted with the real interests of Europe, who will not tell you that the union of Great Britain and Ireland is a most invaluable accession of strength to the whole, as a consolidation of the power and resources of the British Empire; and can any man deny that the component parts of it are more deeply interested in that grand point, without which they must all fall to pieces, than in any benefits, however great, that may result from local advantages? All authors who have reasoned with any degree of sound political argument, have been uniformly of that opinion. And, Sir, if any thing in particular could infuse terror into the heart of the enemy, it would be, that the system which between this country and Ireland was before nominal and precarious, should become real and permanent. But in what degree does it tend to increase the security and happiness of Ireland? In the exact proportion which all the parts must bear to the whole, when all are equally consolidated in giving power to the empire. A proportion too strong, too evident, and too cogent to require the support of argument. That which has hitherto enabled us to make a formidable and triumphant stand against the eccentric, extravagant and extraordinary power of France—that which gradually leads to open to each other our respective markets—that which by reciprocal intercourse improves the state of manners—that which by introducing the common use of capital to the encouragement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures—that which extinguishes the illiberal and destructive spirit of national prejudices and party feuds, must have an evident and natural tendency to increase the prosperity and augment the power of both countries. With

respect to the permanent security of Ireland, there can, I believe, arise no doubt on that topic. We have seen Ireland distracted and torn by domestic treachery, and exposed to the danger of foreign invasion. We have seen the military force of Great Britain, not required by the Constitution, interfere with ardour, and acquire true glory in restoring the tranquillity of that country. We have seen and admired the gallantry, courage, and perseverance of Volunteers and Yeomanry, who, by their patriotic exertions, have deserved every thing that has been said in praise of their heroic ardour, and of whom it might be justly said, that they deserve to be in reality the brethren of Britons. But the very extent of the difficulties in which we have been engaged, has carried along with it their cure. It never has happened that Great Britain has so truly flourished, as when attacked in Ireland, and when that country was threatened with the friendship and blessings of French fraternity. If the danger were less marked, and the crisis less decisive, would the same means have been in our power? It is then to the spirited perseverance of Ireland, seconded by the gallant exertions of this country, that we are indebted for our common preservation and present safety; and is not this a weighty motive in us both to improve and perpetuate the established connection between us? What, Sir, is the effectual cure for such dangers hereafter, but to blend the people of that kingdom with ourselves, to identify them with ourselves, to make them share all the advantages which we enjoy in peace and in war, to inspire a generous emulation into the whole, and to enable them to participate in all the resources and in all the blessings of this nation, permanent as we are in every acquirement that can distinguish and exalt a country? I do not hesitate to say, that the man who does not at once perceive the beneficial effects of this great plan, must be blind to every consideration of the most ostensible importance and necessity. If therefore it comes to us so strongly recommended, what are we to look to next? We must look to the internal state of Ireland. I know that any attempt on our part to arrogate the right of judging of the claims of contending sects, what the Protestants may think proper to grant, or what the Catholics may think just to demand, is improper. I disclaim all right to any interference with respect to the internal regulations and arrangements of an independent country. Yet we cannot be altogether blind to what passes there, more immediately when we consider it as an assailable point. Whoever upon that ground looks upon all the miseries which have happened there—whoever reflects on all those lamentable but necessary severities which have been exercised, and have been in fact aggravations of the guilt of the offenders—whoever was convinced of the calamitous state of the people in general; of the want of improvement and refinement in manners; of the unequal distribution of property; of the distraction of religious sects; of the rooted animosity that has descended from generation to generation, and still subsists between the native Irish and British settlers; of the want of capital, so necessary to promote the extension of commerce, must also be convinced

convinced of the necessity of the present plan. But how much more forcibly must that conviction be, when to all these irresistible motives are added the poisonous principles of Jacobinism, the deadly spirit of innovation and anarchy, undermining the small portion of happiness left, and converting into the instruments of despotism a people deluded with the mockery and cant of French liberty. Such, Sir, is the unhappy state of that country which we have so much reason to deplore, and shall we hesitate to apply as far as we can go, a remedy we have the most substantial reasons to deem decisive? I do not believe the Hon. Gentleman is likely to enter into a vindication of a situation of such complicated horror and distress. I know no remedy for these evils but an Imperial legislation, to allay distraction, to heal the wounds of intestine faction, to restore general peace and domestic comfort. And looking at Ireland separately, we cannot speak of it but as a part of the whole empire. We cannot, considering its intimate relation to ourselves, speak of it but as true Irishmen: nor can the people of that country speak of us on the same principle but as true Englishmen. But, Sir, if it were even possible to separate the consideration, which I completely deny—I say, even in that case, that it would be for the sake of Ireland itself to apply that remedy in conjunction with Great Britain, which alone can restore it to the enjoyment of national happiness and domestic comfort. If the want of improvement, and of all those blessings which have been enumerated, is granted, where is the remedy to be found but in an Union? What is the situation of the Protestants and Catholics now? The Protestants may say, that any concession to the Catholics will threaten the Protestant ascendancy with ruin: the Catholics, on the other hand, are so superior in number, that a state of fear prevails on one side, and a state of disquiet and discontent on the other. Such is the situation as to render it a delicate and dangerous topic to discuss. The Religion of the State is on one hand, that of the bulk of the people on the other, and the property of the country in the hands of the smaller number. It must unquestionably be a very excellent and strong system that can provide for all the defects of such a state. Distracted as it is with the agitation and inflammation of religious opinion, it may probably be for some years the subject of discord. I believe no man will say that a full concession to the Roman Catholics of their claims can take place in the actual situation of the kingdom. I beg leave to say, Sir, that I am now deprecating any discussion upon that point, but I have no difficulty in saying, that two propositions with respect to that subject are, in my opinion, indisputable. And I do not hesitate to assert, that if ever the day should come in which it would be thought just and expedient to admit them to the full participation of all the privileges enjoyed by their fellow subjects; such a measure would, in the United Parliament, be free from every prejudice and party motive which might be supposed must prevail in the Parliament of Ireland. An impartial Legislation, far enough removed from the scene of contention to act

as the common parent of all, and influenced only by the dictates of temper, candour, moderation, and a strict attention to the respective claims of the different parties, and to the common interests of the whole empire, would be better adapted to decide than any other Assembly. If the Legislature were not local, but impartial, the Catholics and Protestants would consequently be in the judgment of men divested of every prejudice, and intent only upon promoting and establishing on a satisfactory and permanent basis the rights of the various claimants. But, Sir, whenever that time shall arise, the question of concession will be perfectly free from every local consideration, and the Catholics will be put under the impartial protection of an unprejudiced Legislature. It may then become a question, whether the payment of tythes, and the payment of their own Ministers, may not be altered. I merely state these matters as subjects of fair and impartial consideration. I shall now, Sir, take a more particular view of the benefits which will result to Ireland from an incorporative Union with Great Britain. The first great and solid gain which will arise to the sister kingdom, will be the secure and permanent preservation, by an unalterable compact, of all those commercial advantages which Ireland now holds at the discretion of Great Britain, and by a tenure which must always be considered contingent and precarious: and here, Sir, it will be impossible for me to follow a better guide than that Hon. Gentleman, whom I have had so frequent occasion to quote, and who so strenuously urged the commercial propositions of 1789 in the Irish Parliament. [Here Mr. Pitt read a passage from Mr. Foster's speech upon the mutual exports of the two countries, stating those of Ireland from Great Britain in the year 1785 at 1 million, and those of this country from Ireland at 2 millions and a half, and representing the certain continuance of that and all the commercial advantages Ireland enjoyed as entirely dependent upon the adoption of some such propositions as were then made.] Such, Sir, were the sentiments, at that period, of this Hon. Gentleman, who has since represented a final adjustment of a more liberal and extensively beneficial nature than that which he then so vehemently pressed upon his countrymen, as tending to abolish for ever all the advantages which they now possess. So far, indeed, was he then from entertaining any of those apprehensions which have induced him to reject the present propositions, that we find him telling his colleagues, that the secure enjoyment of their own fortunes depended on their embracing the opportunity which was then offered to them, of participating in the commerce and prosperity of Great Britain upon a firm and permanent basis. I do not mean, Sir, to rest the merits of the present measure upon arguments used at the distance of several years, because I know that it may be said, the circumstances which warranted these may have since totally changed; though I cannot see what change of circumstances should justify so diametrical an opposition of opinion, as that of the Hon. Gentleman I allude to. An alteration of circumstances has certainly taken place, but it is such, Sir, as gives still

still greater weight to all the arguments which he used, so far as the commercial interests of Ireland were concerned. This will be immediately obvious from a short statement of her commerce as it now stands with this country; and here, Sir, I shall again refer to the words of the same person for the state of the argument as it relates to the articles of which the exports and imports are composed, and which I the more willingly refer to on account of their peculiar conciseness and force. I have already said that he states the total amount of imports from Great Britain in 1785 at 2,500,000*l.* and that of the exports to this country at one million. In this comparative estimate, he justly observes, that almost every article of Irish produce is imported into this country duty free, while there is scarcely one article of British produce or manufacture, upon which a duty is not levied on its importation into Ireland, though nearly one half of the whole of our exports to that kingdom consists of articles of indispensable necessity—of salt, for carrying on their fisheries; of hops, which the Irish cannot grow; and coals, which they have not yet been able to raise in sufficient quantity for general supply. But, sir, if the honourable gentleman whom I have mentioned, then saw how much the commerce of Ireland depended upon the free will and generosity of this country, and thence recommended with an earnestness proportionate to his conviction of this truth, that the Irish Legislature should close with the terms then held out to them, how much more zealously should he inculcate the same sentiments, when the present state of the commerce between the two countries is fairly balanced. As far as respects the interchange of manufactures, this country does not at this moment export to Ireland much more than one million sterling yearly, whilst the articles which she imports from it, amount to between four and five millions, almost all of which, as I have already observed, are duty free; and upon every one of them have we given her a preference over every other nation, and in many instances over our own manufacturers. Four-fifths of her whole commerce is consumed by ourselves; and yet, sir, such is the country which has been taught to depend for the continuation and extension of commercial blessings exclusively upon its own Legislature, while their existence for a moment is in almost every branch dependent upon the generous discretion of that of Great Britain. We have not only exempted its linens from any duty on importation, but have secured them a double market by granting a bounty on their re-exportation, while we have prevented the competition arising from the cheapness of the linen manufactures of the Continent by subjecting their importation to a duty of 30 per cent. It is to these sacrifices, sir, upon the part of the British Legislature, that the people of Ireland are indebted for a branch of their exportation, which amounts to three millions a year. I do not mean, sir, to arraign the propriety and wisdom of these sacrifices; but at a time when they are supposed to flow not from the affectionate concessions of the people of this country, but from a source entirely independent of their influence, I think it is no more than just to shew that we have made such sacrifices. The loss which the British revenue annually

nually sustains by foregoing the duties upon Irish linens, which are levied upon those of other nations, cannot be estimated at less than 700,000 l. and if the cheap rate at which foreign linens could be brought into our market, were it not for the heavy duty to which it is subject, be taken into account, it will be found that the real annual sacrifice which we make in favour of this branch of Irish manufacture, is very moderately stated at one million. Yet this is one of those advantages, sir, of which the complete confirmation is by one set of men looked upon as pregnant with the most destructive consequences. But, Sir, I am happy to find myself again supported by the sentiments which one of those persons, to whom I have repeatedly alluded, formerly delivered upon this subject, in maintaining that a free communication between the two countries must ultimately be productive of incalculable benefits to both, and that a perfect freedom from taxes should be granted to the manufacturers of each, by which every branch of trade would find its true level, and capital be more productively employed to the separate advantage of each, and to increasing the power and riches of the whole. I have also the satisfaction to find that the objections which are now so warmly urged, in reference to the supposed injury to the commerce of Ireland, were refuted in 1784, by the same person, and with his usual force of argument. He observed, that Ireland having as good a climate, and being in every respect as favourably situated for commerce as England, while her taxes were much lighter, when, by the extinction of the rivalry now subsisting between them, trade should be permitted to take its natural course, it must rapidly rise in opulence and grandeur. It appears, therefore, Sir, to have been the opinion of an able Statesman, intimately acquainted with every branch of the commercial interest of his native country, that the system which I conceive to be most necessary for settling the connexion of Great Britain and Ireland upon a basis of unalterable security, must be eminently advantageous to the latter. I do not conceive, Sir, that by agreeing in this observation, I shall excite any alarm in the minds of the people of this country. I am convinced that they feel every disposition to admit their brethren of Ireland to a share in all the proud distinctions which they enjoy above every other nation, and that they would have no reluctance to communicate a portion of their wealth, if they could be sure that what they poured into the lap of Ireland would redound to the general happiness and strength of the British Empire, instead of being transferred into the scale of their enemy. It is from my perfect conviction that such is the temper of all the enlightened portion of my countrymen—from a full belief that if those jealousies which have so long, and so unhappily, subsisted between the two countries were finally extinguished, that a participation of every blessing which they possess themselves, would be cheerfully granted to the sister kingdom—that I for one will never be deterred from making every experiment short of the last extremity, to effect a measure so essential to the interests of both. That fatal extremity, Sir, I hope never will arrive; nothing that temper and conciliation can effect will

be wanting on the part of this country to prevent it ; and if ever it should arrive, it will be entirely owing to the blind counsels of those who may unfortunately have the management of the affairs of the sister kingdom. Of the conciliatory disposition of the British Parliament, every act that it has passed with respect to Ireland for a series of years, affords multiplied proof ; and the people of Ireland must be sensible, Sir, that whatever advantages they at this moment possess, are all originally derived from the British Legislature, and not from the independent Legislature of their own country. Thus, Sir, have I endeavoured to give an outline of the important considerations which ought to induce the Parliaments of both kingdoms to deliberate on the last means of effecting the object recommended in his Majesty's Message, and slightly touched in my progress upon the various objections to it which may have arisen from political or commercial jealousies. I am aware, however, that in addition to those which I have stated and refuted, and which arise in a great measure out of the detail of the contending interests which are to be reconciled, objections of greater magnitude have been urged, and unfortunately with too much success in the sister country. The first, and the most important, is that which questions the competency of the Legislature of Ireland to entertain the discussion in any shape. But upon this I shall not enlarge at present, as there will be an opportunity of distinctly arguing its merits in the course of this night, or on any other, if the Honourable Gentleman opposite should be disposed to press it. I believe, however, that on more deliberate reflection, neither he nor any other person within these walls will assert that the Irish Parliament is incompetent to the question ; unless he means to do one of two things—to distinguish the authority of the independent and co-equal Legislature of Ireland from that of the Parliament of Great Britain, and thus while he invests it with a sacred character, divest it at the same time of the characteristic functions of a Parliament—or, unless he be prepared equally to deny the competence of the Parliament of Great Britain. If he maintains the latter alternative, then, Sir, I will contend that he might at the same time deny the validity of the Union between England and Scotland—he must deny the authority by which we now sit—he must invalidate every law which we or our ancestors have enacted—and from an unrestrained application of the same principle, every great transaction in our history on which the power of parliament has been exercised, and every maxim upon which he himself has acted in his capacity of a legislator. I will explain myself, Sir, a little farther :—I say, that if fresh delegated powers from the constituent be necessary upon every occasion, when it is proposed to alter any part of the constitution, then must the incorporation of Wales, and the counties Palatine, and the Union with Scotland, have been gross violations of the constitution, and totally destitute of legal validity. I must apply the same principle in a more special manner to every law which regulates the

various qualifications of our electors—to that, for instance, which requires that an elector for a county shall be possessed of a freehold of 40s. a year; and in the same manner with respect to all the charters on which are founded the several modifications of the elective franchise throughout the whole country. If he look to Ireland he will find a still stronger instance to illustrate the absurdity of such a position. Is there any one, Sir, who doubts the competence of a protestant parliament chosen by protestant electors, who possess almost the whole property of the kingdom, to emancipate, and assimilate to themselves the great body of the catholics? And shall it be said to be a greater stretch of power to associate itself with another kingdom possessing the same laws and the same religion? Or referring to a subject which has of late years been much agitated within this House, I mean that of Reform, I will ask, whether at the time of their discussing that question, any of the Gentlemen opposite to me entertained any doubt that they had not legal power to disfranchise those who had sent them into this House, and to enfranchise those who had not sent them. I will deny, Sir, that sovereignty can exist in any country separate from its Legislature, or that notwithstanding the existence of a supreme Legislative Body, the controuling sovereign power, in the modern interpretation of it, remains in abeyance in the great mass of its subjects. This doctrine, Sir, is the fertile source of all the mischiefs which have convulsed the civilized world to its center, and which, wherever it has spread, has involved both Government and People in one chaos of misery. I confess, Sir, that it has been the subject of much anxiety to those who have had the arduous task of conducting the affairs of this country at a period beyond example critical and dangerous; and it is not without concern that I perceive it brought forward in a more latent form, after being foiled in its open undisguised attack. It is untrue, Sir, that any national assemblage of men can exist under Heaven, without delegating a supreme unlimited power to their Government. The question whether that Government exceeds the powers necessary to the preservation of society, or abuses it to its dissolution, is a question of perilous responsibility, too delicate to come within the code of human regulation, or form a chapter of human jurisprudence. The next obstacle, Sir, which has been thrown in the way of identifying the interests and existence of the two countries, arises from an erroneous national pride. Upon this subject an appeal has been delusively made to the quick feelings of a nation distinguished for its high sense of honour. It has been told, that no compensation can be made to them for the surrender of their independence. I am really desirous that Gentlemen would dispassionately examine the principle upon which this objection is grounded. Do they mean to say that any society of men, comprized within a given local district, who are desirous to enlarge their sphere, by uniting themselves with other societies of the same description upon equal terms, are by the very act of Union

less members of an independent community, or less in possession of all the privileges which they formerly enjoyed, whether civil, political, or religious? Let us trace the history of those nations of Europe who exult most in the pride of independence, and we shall easily be convinced that they never could have attained that lofty eminence of glory which they now enjoy, if their forefathers had acted upon those narrow principles—Europe, Sir, would have still remained a prey to all the miseries of sanguinary warfare and barbarous anarchy, which are peculiarly incident to petty States.” Mr. Pitt then touched upon the peculiar circumstances of the relative situation of Great Britain and Ireland, which rendered a Union desirable between the two Countries—the unity of their established religion, the sameness of their language, laws, and manners. He admitted that the number of absentees would be increased by it, but contended that the advantages accruing from the influx of British capital would more than countervail all the inconveniences that could be urged against it.—“The same clamour which had been raised against it in Dublin, prevailed in Edinburgh against the Union with Scotland; yet the population and wealth of the latter was more than doubled since that period, and the increase of Glasgow in both those respects was in the proportion of six to one. It had been argued, that after an Union the commercial privileges of Ireland would be more insecure than at present; but he had already proved that all her present advantages flowed from the generous acts of the British Parliament; and it was as futile to suppose, that, after an Union, they would make any more distinction between the Commerce of Great Britain and Ireland, than they now do between the interests of Lancashire and Yorkshire. But this apprehension, and that of Ireland being subjected to an unequal taxation, was practically obviated, by reviewing the conduct which England had held towards Scotland. As in the Union with the latter, he should propose, that the Revenue to be raised in Ireland should be in a certain limited proportion for a number of years. He should now proceed to read a series of resolutions, upon the general principles which he had developed. It was his wish that they should be deliberately examined in a Committee of the whole House; and if upon due investigation they should be adopted, he thought it would be advisable to lay them before the Crown, stating their object in solemnly recording them, and leaving it to his Majesty to communicate them to his Parliament of Ireland, when to his wisdom should seem meet.”

The Resolutions were then read, to the following purport:

I. THAT in order to promote and secure the essential Interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the Strength, Power, and Resources of the British Empire, It will be

adviseable to concur in such Measures as may best tend to unite the Two Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into One Kingdom, in such Manner, and on such Terms and Conditions, as may be established by Acts of the respective Parliaments of His Majesty's said Kingdoms.

II. That it would be fit to propose, as the First Article, to serve as a Basis of the said Union, That the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, upon a Day to be agreed upon, be united into One Kingdom, by the Name of "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

III. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That the Succession to the Monarchy and the Imperial Crown of the said United Kingdom shall continue limited and settled in the same Manner as the Imperial Crown of the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing Laws, and to the Terms of the Union between England and Scotland *.

IV. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That the said United Kingdom be represented in One and the same Parliament, to be stiled "The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;" and that such a Number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and such a Number of Members in the House of Commons, as shall be hereafter agreed upon by Acts of the respective Parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said Parliament on the Part of Ireland, and shall be summoned, chosen, and returned in such Manner as shall be fixed by an Act of Parliament of Ireland previous to the said Union; and that every Member hereafter to sit and vote in the said Parliament of the United Kingdom, shall, until the said Parliament shall otherwise provide, take and subscribe the same Oaths, and make the same Declarations, as are by Law required to be taken, subscribed, and made by the Members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

V. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That the Churches of England and Ireland, and the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government thereof, shall be preserved as now by Law established.

VI. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That His Majesty's Subjects in Ireland shall at all Times hereafter be entitled to the same Privileges, and be on the same Footing, in

* See De Foe's History of the Union.

respect of Trade and Navigation, in all Ports and Places belonging to Great Britain, and in all Cases with respect to which Treaties shall be made by His Majesty, His Heirs or Successors, with any Foreign Power, as His Majesty's Subjects in Great Britain:—That no Duty shall be imposed on the Import or Export between Great Britain and Ireland of any Articles now Duty free; and that on other Articles there shall be established, for a Time to be limited, such a moderate Rate of equal Duties as shall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective Parliaments; subject, after the Expiration of such limited Time, to be diminished equally with respect to both Kingdoms, but in no Case to be encreased:—That all Articles which may at any Time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from Foreign Parts, shall be importable through either Kingdom into the other, subject to the like Duties and Regulations as if the same were imported directly from Foreign Parts:—That where any Articles, the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of either Kingdom, are subject to any internal Duty in one Kingdom, such countervailing Duties (over and above any Duties on Import to be fixed as aforesaid shall be imposed as shall be necessary to prevent any Inequality in that Respect:—And that all other Matters of Trade and Commerce, other than the foregoing, and than such others as may, before the Union, be specially agreed upon for the due Encouragement of the Agriculture and Manufactures of the respective Kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from Time to Time by the United Parliament.

VII. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That the Charge arising from the Payment of the Interest or Sinking Fund for the Reduction of the Principal, of the Debt incurred in either Kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively:—That, for a Number of Years to be limited, the future Ordinary Expences of the United Kingdom, in Peace or War, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such Proportions as shall be established by the respective Parliaments previous to the Union; and that, after the Expiration of the Time to be so limited, the Proportion shall not be liable to be varied, except according to such Rules and Principles as shall be in like Manner agreed upon previous to the Union.

VIII. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That all Laws in force at the Time of the Union, and all the Courts of Civil or Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction within the respective Kingdoms, shall remain as now by Law established within the same; subject only to such Alterations or Regulations from Time to

to Time as Circumstances may appear, to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, to require.

He now moved, that the Speaker should leave the Chair.

Mr. *Sheridan* rose, and spoke to the following effect :—‘ Sir, I know how difficult it always is to make any impression on men’s minds, even by argument and obvious fact, if the imagination has been dwelling with delight on great or difficult subjects, or the attention detained by animated and flowery declamation. The Right Hon. Gentleman, who has just sat down, with a great display of eloquence, introduced this question, and only talents great as his own could be expected to produce that effect in their exertion, which it is to be apprehended the speech the House has just heard very generally produced. It is, however, easy on some questions to arouse those feelings, in the fulness of which the most vigilant may be deceived, and the most cautious misled, But much as I admire the Right Honourable Gentleman’s talents in debate—indeed in the same proportion that I do admire those talents, I must critically pursue him in the mazes of his dexterous declamation—I must narrowly watch him from the avenues to national prejudice, up to the source and fountain of national passion. The Right Hon. Gentleman yields to no man in charms of diction ; and as beauty captivates sometimes to such a degree that reason is superseded, and the sober calculations of prudence abandoned for the more dazzling, though airy speculations of romantic but opulent fancy ; so do the powers of his mind in the selection and application of epithets, fascinate the gay, and they may seduce the unsuspecting. There are some questions on the discussion of which it becomes the Members of this House to be suspicious of talents and eloquence, whatever may be the weight of phrase in which declarations of rectitude of intention may be conceived, and in spite of every appearance of honesty of purpose. I hope, Sir, the House will not be led away by the seductions of eloquence, and the attractive force of talent ; but that every man who hears me, every man who cherishes in sincerity a love of freedom, and a genuine respect for the principles of that Constitution which in the purity of its operations is freedom, that every well-wisher of the British Empire, that those who entertain not enmity but friendship towards Ireland, will this night distinguish between the flowing and rapid elocution of an admired Orator, and the steady and well tempered voice of unaffected reason. The whole world knows that never was there a period when fine speeches more powerfully affected the public, and never a time when, from fancied security or habitual indifference, the public appeared less eager profoundly to examine any question. Those who cannot be hurried along with the torrent of that impetuous declamation, which more or less excites the astonishment of us all, will, however, pause to recollect the arguments, and pursue the speech of the Right Hon. Gentleman in its elaborate detail. But, conceiving

as I do, that the House is not free from the influence ever attained over easy tempers by bold and ingenious sophistry, apprehensive that we are in the situation of men who just begin to free themselves, by a collected vigorous effort, from the chains imposed by beauty, or the seductive allurements of an amorous sportive imagination, I must adjure the House not to dispose of a question that is perhaps to decide for ever whether a great and generous Nation is to retain its independence, and by implication, to determine whether a set of Representatives, chosen by a free people, must vote themselves out of existence, and give up the liberties, the property, the acknowledged constitutional rights of their constituents, to the domination of a Power, that under the mask of friendship, has introduced among them a force, originally said to be intended solely for their defence against a daring insidious enemy, whom all deprecate, but who is not more to be detested than the pretended friend who assists only that he may acquire confidence enough to delude, and strength enough to destroy. I must think the House has been hurried along by the Right Honourable Gentleman from one degree of transport to another, until, in the groves of his Elysium, they have been elated with scenes of grandeur, and fatigued with that variety, or enfeebled with that richness of prospect, which is to render enquiry loathsome, and which will inevitably prepare the human mind for the reception of any doctrines, however wild; and any assurance of future advantage, however illusory. I took an opportunity last week of opposing the measure of Legislative Union with Ireland, in the first stage of the discussion, which, as matter of course, was to lead to that question. I did so then, as well from a conviction that measures of such magnitude and of such novelty should always be opposed in the infancy of their progress, as in the contemplation of what I naturally anticipated would be the effect of the eloquence of the Right Hon. Gentleman. I then said what I am at this moment prepared to repeat, after much considering the subject, that under the present circumstances of Ireland, in this crisis of her convulsed and necessarily disordered system of polity and general Government, it is not only impolitic, but unsafe to urge, nay even to agitate, the discussion of topics, in the issues of which are to be seen developing themselves, the poison and the horrors which are to lay the most hardy and stout of heart prostrate at the feet of a British Minister—that are to intimidate and appal the most heroic spirits. Ireland in her present temper must be beaten into this measure, and that Minister who shall make the bold experiment of flogging a whole nation into stupid beings, insensible alike to the duty she may owe to herself, insensible to the rights of the present generation, and the interests of the race yet unborn, as much as to the arrogance and cupidity of those who shall inflict the blow, or direct the torture—such a Minister may have secured his minions, but it may not be altogether unbecoming him, if he be desirous ultimately to prevail, to measure his power by the force of his antagonists,

gonists, and in the estimation of his means of victory, to seek an antidote against national pride and local attachments. It was after very solemnly and very fully considering these, and matters such as these, that I opposed on the evening to which I have alluded the measure at present under discussion; but the Right Hon. Gentleman appeared at that time, as he continues to do this evening, to think differently. But, except the Right Hon. Gentleman and some few who sit near him, I scarce suppose there are many persons in the Country, I hope but very few Members in this House, who have not seen good reason within this day or two, entirely to change their opinions of this great constitutional question. Seeing the manner in which the subject was brought forward in Ireland, and in the recollection of the fate of the question in the Parliament of that kingdom, it might be doubted whether the Right Hon. Gentleman would persevere in the measure; but when we consider how solemnly he has pledged himself that it should be the favourite object of the remainder of his political life to effect a legislative Union of the two kingdoms, that no weight of personal labour, that no loss of popularity, that no opposition of friends, and no clamour of opponents on this, or on the other side of the water should deter him from pursuing that object—from doing that which he held to be necessary to the preservation of Ireland; necessary, indeed, to the existence of the two countries: we are not to wonder if to this hour he continues to set all experience at defiance, and, in the face of the Irish nation, to spurn the assertion of her rights, to fawn and flatter her guileless mind, and by seeming to respect her declared unequivocal opinion, to lull her into inactivity, the more successfully to enslave her for ever. But let not the Right Hon. Gentleman deceive himself whilst he is exerting his ingenuity to deceive Ireland. Let him remember, Sir, that some plots have been so close wrought, some measures of surprize and delusion so intricately planned, and attempted to be carried into effect with such novelty of means, that the authors, the actors, even the subordinate characters in the drama, have been themselves entangled in the mazes they have contrived for innocence, and overwhelmed under the ruins of that fabric which they have erected to overawe the independent. The Right Honourable Gentleman has this day not quite given us the same strong pledge of his determination to persevere in the present measure, which on a former day the House received from him. We are even now to take for granted that he will persist in it; but although he may persevere, thank God the House has not given a pledge to support him; and I hope and trust they will not entertain it at all. Sir, the Right Hon. Gentleman has set England and Ireland in a perilous situation. He assumes in argument, and we are to infer that he thinks so in fact, that his power must be committed against the force of opinion in Ireland, and that the existence of Ireland as an independent nation is incompatible with his existence as a Minister. I hope the House will check his rashness: I hope we are not to be precipitated into a war against
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the feelings. the prejudices, the passions, and against the security of the people of Ireland ! The Right Hon. Gentleman has sown already the most frightful dissensions in that unfortunate country. He has divided its Parliament against itself. He has held it up to scorn by libelling its measures and traducing its wisdom, and he has yet to array the British Parliament against it with all that pertinacity which distinguishes ignorance, and with all the fierceness of men who are to be told that a country struggling for its liberties, only wages the war of faction—only wields the weapons of disaffection and treason. I now come to that part of the Right Hon. Gentleman's speech, in which he has commented with such freedom of manner—has combated with such asperity of tone, a speech made some time or other by a Right Hon. Person of the sister kingdom—Mr. Foster. And Sir, if without breach of order, I could suppose that there is in our gallery a stranger who has been a Member of the Legislature of Ireland, or in the habits of hearing its debates, I am persuaded he would at once imagine the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) has detained you and the House almost half an hour to hear him in reply to the speech of that Gentleman. Now, Sir, I think I can shew you, that the arguments drawn by the Right Honourable Gentleman opposite to me, from the topics in the speech of the Honourable Member of the sister kingdom, do not in any one tittle apply to the present question. He has attempted, indeed, to shew the inconsistency of sentiment by which he tells us, the conduct of Mr. Foster is to be distinguished. Mr. Foster's opinion was, that the adoption of the commercial propositions was necessary to the existence of Ireland, and that they could not be rejected without incurring the certain risk of sowing dissensions, and of exciting commercial jealousies. This, according to the Right Hon. Gentleman, was that Statesman's opinion in 1785, and the inconsistency consists, as he has this night told us, in his having insisted in his published letters, that the adjustment in 1782 was final. Now, Sir, the Right Honourable Gentleman himself entertained the same opinion at the period alluded to, and instead of the tame language of Mr. Foster, that the rejection of those propositions would lead to commercial jealousies—we then had the dashing periods of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of Great Britain ringing in our ears—that if those propositions were not adopted, he could not continue to hold his situation. Yet neither had any ill consequence arisen to Ireland from the rejection of them, nor had that, which would have been a still greater calamity, befallen the country—the resignation of the Right Hon. Gentleman. Now, how does the argument stand as it really affects Mr. Foster ? Why, he imagined that the commercial prosperity of Ireland would be advantaged, if those propositions were adopted ; and certainly there was no inconsistency of sentiment in his present opposition to Legislative Union, because the question of the propositions was purely commercial, whilst that of the present period is one which is to decide the independence of the Irish

Parliament. But, Sir, the principal reason why I take up this question now is, that the Right Hon. Gentleman has this evening developed his plan of intimidation and corruption. He says, that the commercial advantages derived by Ireland from her connection with this country, are necessary to her existence; and since, in the same breath, he adds, that to have those advantages continued to her, Union is indispensable, the inference obviously is, that she must abandon all her commercial advantages, if she reject the proffered alliance with Great Britain. Hence I do contend, Sir, that the people of Ireland cannot come with unbiassed minds to this discussion; and it is impossible to suppose that a free choice is left to the Parliament of that Country. If we wanted additional corroboration of the evidence that such is his system, we had it amply afforded us in those parts of his detail which followed. He tells you Ireland ought to consent to a Union, because she is incapable of defending herself against her internal and external enemies without the assistance of her powerful neighbour." [A cry of hear! hear!] "No such inference can be fairly drawn," was whispered by Mr. Pitt.] "Mr. Sheridan insisted that the inference was irresistible—that unless she consented to a Union, Ireland was to be deprived of all her commercial advantages—Is this generous: is it fit to hold out such language to Ireland: is it wise to press the discussion at this moment, and force all Ireland loudly to ask, not indeed free from anger, Why have not we had those advantages yielded to us, on which, according to the opinion of the British Minister, our prosperity depends? We must owe it to the injurious policy of Great Britain, exercised in various acts of restraint and privation these 300 years past, that we have been deprived of those advantages which God and Nature so eminently adapts our country to afford us." But, Sir, let His Majesty's ministers grant to Ireland those advantages of which they boast—they may be conceded to her without Union—they can be improved by her without abjectly surrendering her independence. Thus much with regard to her means of acquiring distinction as a commercial nation. And as to her power of defending herself, does not the Right Hon. Gentleman know that her Volunteers have defended Ireland? and what they were equal to in a period of considerable danger, during the American war, when the enemy rode triumphant on her coasts and in our channel, surely they are at present as capable of achieving in the zenith of our envied superiority as a naval power. It is a most cruel taunt uttered in the face of the whole people of Ireland, to say, that while you have 40,000 British troops in the heart of their country, you will awe them by the presence of such a force; reproach them with weakness, notwithstanding that you have had 200,000 of her best inhabitants to support you in the present war, while 100,000 fighting men of their nation have fallen in your battles in the West Indies and elsewhere. What is this but to say, It is true you have assisted us; but you are now naked; you are ignorant; you are uncivilized; you are weak; and if you do not accept from us the bene-

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fits we offer you, we will proceed to confer them upon you by force. Look to what the Right Hon. Gentleman says, when he tells you that he will leave it to the unbiaſſed judgment of the Irifh people, and the independent diſcretion of the Irifh Parliament finally to decide on the preſent queſtion. Are the recent diſmiſſals from office in that kingdom the proofs he would exhibit to us of his ſettled purpoſe to leave it to that Parliament to adopt or reject the meaſure. It is truly a mockery to tell the Parliament this: Parliament muſt ſee that what has been done in the caſe of individuals may alſo be acted over again in the inſtance of the Legiſlature; and that the ſame power which effected the diſmiſſal of Sir John Parnell, may be ſucceſſfully employed to diſſolve the Parliament. Will Gentlemen only be ſo kind to themſelves as to reflect for a moment on the tendency of ſuch proceedings. If in the Parliament of the ſiſter kingdom thoſe meaſures are to be adopted, the ſame and a worſe tyranny may be acted in our own. Sir, I am afraid the political creed of the adherents of the Miniſter in Ireland has been adopted by his ſupporters in the Britiſh Senate. I do ſincerely believe, that if any one perſon who now ſupports his Majeſty's Miniſters were to vote with me this night, he would be diſmiſſed to-morrow from all his places. We are to reflect on theſe things, Sir, while we carry along our minds to that part of the Right Hon Gentleman's Speech, where he peremptorily ſays—"I do think the meaſure good for Ireland and good for this Country, but time ſhall be given to the people to examine it—time ſhall be given for their heats to ſubſide—time ſhall be given to the Parliaments of the two Countries fully and deliberately to diſcuſs it." Now, Sir, what do theſe fine limbs of a ſentence collectively mean? Why that time is to be given for the operation of corruption—time to intimidate the people of Ireland—time for the peremptory diſmiſſal of the oppoſers of the meaſures—time for the diſſolution of the Parliament. [Here Mr. Sheridan, with ſome efforts of irony, expreſſed his ſurpriſe, that among the ſupporters of the meaſure was his honourable friend Mr. Canning, whom he ſaid had breathed the pure morning air of manly thought and ſentiment, but who having been latterly ſurrounded by the atmosphere of a foul corruption, was now tainted by its peſtiferous blaſts, and ſought no other meaſure for his guilt, but in an attack on the independence and right of the whole nation of Ireland.] With reſpect to the meaſure in an abſtract point of view, I own, ſir, I am friendly to a cloſe connection between this country and Ireland; but the right honourable gentleman ſays he will wait for a day, an hour of greater weakneſs, and well he knows that it is always in his power to create ſuch a moment, and wring from Ireland her legiſlative independence. This plan is not one of the moment: we muſt either not believe the miniſter, or take for granted that it is as old as the commercial propoſitions. He indeed calls it a beneficial plan of Union, but if he muſt be paying compliments to himſelf on his meaſures, ſurely, ſir, the right honourable gentleman might have

been a little sparing of the ministers of 1782, among whom were the Duke of Portland and some other persons at present in his Majesty's councils. But if he has always thought that only Union can guarantee the existence of Ireland, why not bring forward some measure of concession, something for the advantage of Ireland in the course of the last fifteen years. I do assure you, sir, I dread the consequences of this crooked policy. If a lord lieutenant is to be sent over at one time with propositions of Catholic emancipation, if when the cup is not only in their sight, but at their lips, you are to dash it in their face, I know not, indeed, I almost shudder to conjecture, what will be the consequence. With this conduct, fresh in the minds of Irishmen, it will put them on the alert, and may induce them to take every step which shall intimidate the right honourable gentleman, and drive him from his project of annihilating their independence. If the honourable gentleman ever considers the infirmities of human nature, why does not he think of the infirmities of the poor and distressed Irish: why does he provoke their irritable minds: why does he heighten the gloom that now darkens their prospects? I have said, sir, that British connection has a warm friend in me: that at all times I have been decidedly hostile to the Union of Ireland with France. But when that nation finds the right honourable gentleman exerting his power to divide them that he may ultimately enslave them, it will, I fear, be enough to provoke them to look forward to any kind of connection by which they may fancy they can repel his attacks. I would ask him, sir, what right we have to say that he will drive them to the adoption of any means of asserting their independence against his innovation; and feeling this, I do conjure him to abandon the project. [Here Mr. Sheridan vindicated the measure of 1782, and maintained that the whole of Mr. Pitt's arguments on that subject went to this,—that while he thought it necessary to do something more for Ireland than was yielded to her by that adjustment, he had now been 15 years a Minister, and had never brought forward any thing.] Would the Right Hon. Gentleman say that he has till now brought forward nothing, because Ireland was at no period of her political existence so weak as she is at this moment. It is a terrible thing, Sir, if Ministers are to look forward to the feuds and miseries of that people, to draw from them the means of conquest. The Right Honourable Gentleman says, that there was a majority for the measure in the House of Lords, and a large body favourable to it out of doors. Of what consisted that majority? Of a body of interested Peers, or of men who had not the firmness to resign their places to maintain the independence of their country." Having gone over his old ground respecting the situation in which the Union would relatively place the Catholics and the Protestants, Mr. Sheridan observed, that he had heard a great deal about foreign Statesmen, and what they thought on the present question—that it was their opinion it would drive France from her project of invasion against Ireland. This was the question; but he would ask, was not the Right Hon. Gentleman an ally of France on the present

present occasion? He was told France had increased her preparations since the measure was first introduced; and if the Minister would distract and weaken Ireland by his obstinacy, he feared she would effect the separation of Ireland. Mr. Sheridan next rapidly examined the question of experience, and maintained that, having stepped by experience as far as it related to Ireland, referring wholly to the case of Scotland, Mr. Pitt was not entitled to infer that Ireland would be benefited by Union; it was all guess-work and hazard. With respect to the argument, that the Legislature might differ on great constitutional questions, I think, said Mr. Sheridan, if we look to the period of 100 years, during which Ireland has been tranquil and co-operated with us, we shall find good reason for presuming that she can not only do better with her own independent Parliament, than as a province of Great Britain, but that she is incapable of deserting us in the hour of difficulty, or of not co-operating with us in any crisis of danger.—He discussed over again the question of the Regency debated by him on a former evening, and contended that if his question respecting the independence of Parliament were carried as far as it would go, it would be found to convey one of the grossest libels that ever was published against the British Constitution, which he was proud to consider the best basis of Government that ever existed in any Country. Gentlemen were fond of regularly mixing with their arguments a great deal about the animosities and crimes of France. And one Honourable Gentleman knew so much more of these matters, that in the funeral oration which he recently delivered over the departed greatness of the King of Sardinia, he had found a son for that Monarch, though he never had a son; but this deepened the horrors of the scene, and, as a poetical licence, was of course to be tolerated. Jacobinism was another instrument of terror on solemn occasions. And now, what was Jacobinism?—A Jacobin is a man who, under the pretence of defending a people, and of giving them commercial advantages, deprives them at a sweep of their independence and their property. And, said Mr. Sheridan, “Mr. Pitt, according to my hypothesis, is the greatest Jacobin in England. He will take advantage of the weakness of the Irish, and give them a coarse fraternal hug. The Hon. Gentleman speaks of his great favours to Ireland, that he went to war to defend her, and to prevent France from making dangerous acquisitions. Have we succeeded? Perhaps the Right Hon. Gentleman means to participate the advantages of the war with Ireland—[Hear! Hear!]
—if any advantage it is to participate in the 250 millions of debt accumulated since the war.” He urged his former arguments against the system of the Land-owners, and resumed his position that ignorance was only to be corrected, and civilization introduced by changing this system. It was said that the mischief resulted from absentees; and this mischief was to be cured by an Absentee Parliament. The Union would cause emigration. He combated generally the arguments of Mr. Pitt on the topic of the

surrender

surrender of the rights of its Parliament by Scotland. He maintained the British Parliament did not exceed its rights, or at all act inconsistent with the character of a free Legislature, in accepting of the independence of men who had surrendered it into its hands. Still it was true, that the act of the Scotch Parliament was an act of power, and not of right : yet if ever Ireland gave up its independence in a similar manner, much as he might regret it, the question would be altered, and he must act according to those feelings which might be induced by the occasion. He closed his speech with stating, that he did not mean to oppose the Speaker's leaving the Chair; but would propose two Resolutions, the first giving a pledge that Ministers should not pursue a system of corruption and intimidation in Ireland; and that no measure should be adopted without the concurrence and perfect approbation of the Legislature and People of Ireland; and the next, that whoever shall adopt a system of intimidation and corruption, shall be considered an enemy to his Majesty's Government.

Lord *Hawkebury* was not surprised at the opposition which the Hon. Gentleman had given to this measure, but he was surprised at the grounds upon which he had placed it, especially when he recollected his conduct during the last Session of Parliament; where was the Hon. Gentleman's respect and deference for the Irish Legislature, when he made a motion for an enquiry into the causes of a formidable rebellion which existed in the sister kingdom? What consistency was there in moving for that enquiry, when, according to the principles the Hon. Gentleman laid down, the House had no power to carry any remedy that should occur to them into effect? Now when that rebellion was put down and peace restored, a proposition, calculated to promote the security of both countries, was objected to, on the ground that the House might not interfere with the Irish Parliament; but it was certainly very extraordinary, that this opposition should come from the same person who so lately thought it the duty of the House to adopt a line of conduct so perfectly the reverse of that which he now proposed for them. It had been objected, that the measure was attempted to be carried by intimidation; no proof however had been produced in support of that charge. His Right Hon. Friend asked for nothing more than that the subject should undergo that calm and deliberate discussion which its importance merited. The Hon. Gentleman had asserted, that all the people of Ireland were against the measure. This was certainly not the fact. It was evident that there was a large party in Dublin against it; but there were other places, not of inferior importance, particularly Cork, in which a great majority had declared for it. If however it should appear, that the people of Ireland were against a measure which was for the advantage of both countries, he should not be one who would wish to force it upon them, but he should certainly wish to force them to consider it; such a measure would undoubtedly require much discussion and great deliberation before it could be carried, and he trusted, that upon more mature reflection,

tion, many who now opposed it in Ireland would be convinced of its utility. The Government both here and in Ireland wished to stand upon public opinion: should that opinion, after every investigation, be declared against an Union, he should lament the decision; but he never would regret that the experiment had been tried. The Hon. Gentleman had alluded to what he called a system of corruption, which he pretended was exercised in Ireland, and it was necessary to enquire what ground he had for this charge. It was true that certain Gentlemen had been removed from their official situations in Ireland; but did this imply any corruption? If in a measure which a Minister should think essential to the general interests of the Empire, he should be opposed by those who usually acted with him, would he be acting consistently if he retained them in office? When a Noble Lord (Earl Fitzwilliam), who was placed at the head of the Government of Ireland, attempted to dismiss several persons who held official situations in the Administration of the country, was it not contended by an Honourable Gentleman and his friends that it was very improper to call in question the exercise of that noble Lord's authority? yet it would be recollected, that the Noble Lord alluded to, had stated as his reason for the changes he intended to make, the difference of opinion which subsisted between himself and other Members of Administration upon questions of the first magnitude: indeed, it was evident, that no Government could go on, if upon great and important national points its members were at variance, and entertained opinions upon any question so irreconcilable as to prevent them from acting together. He agreed with the honourable Gentleman in deprecating that system which had long prevailed with respect to Ireland: no one more than he abhorred the code of laws, and the whole policy which England had for ages exercised towards Ireland; but with respect to the settlement of 1782, he never could consider that as a final adjustment: It was evident, that it was not so considered by Parliament, nor by those who promoted it, and experience had shewn that it was insufficient. By the Laws and Constitution of Ireland we were told, that whoever was Sovereign of this country, was also Sovereign of that, but as it had already been observed, the Parliament of Ireland and the Parliament of Great Britain, decided upon different principles on the question of the Regency, and it was merely by accident, that the Executive Governments as well as the Legislature, were not different in both countries. The Honourable Gentleman had said, that Ireland, since 1782, had been encreasing in commerce and prosperity; but he could not conceive how a country should be encreasing in commerce and wealth, and yet remain barbarous and uncivilized, unless some evil existed to counteract these advantages. The argument of encreasing wealth, therefore, could not prevail against the Union. Since it was evident, that the system under which Ireland was governed, was some how or other constitutionally defective. The population of Ireland had

had long been divided into two distinct classes. The Catholics, who composed two-thirds, or, according to some, three-fourths of the inhabitants, were the descendants of the original natives of the country. The Protestants, who were originally Englishmen, formed the other third. It was not in nature but that there must be much hostility between two Sects so situated, and so prejudiced against each other. What then was proposed was to melt them all down in the same crucible, in order to do away all the causes that create dissension. He wished to give to the people of Ireland, the same security of property as their brethren in England possess: the same pledge of future prosperity and happiness. What he wished to see removed, and which was the real great grievance, was the feeling of exasperation and dread that subsisted between the two parties: this never could be removed but by an Union, and with it there was no doubt but that it would gradually die away. When he looked to the Union with Scotland, he saw nothing but a series of benefits and advantages resulting from it for that country. Every Scotch writer, Robertson, Hume, Smith, &c. all had stated the Union to be a blessing to their country. This surely was not said by them for want of national pride, since there were no people more remarkable for love and attachment to their country than the Scotch. He should next notice what the Hon. Gentleman had said relative to Ireland sacrificing her political power. This sacrifice, however, was not objected to by the most zealous partizans of the Settlement of 1782. When Papers relative to the commencement of the present war were moved for in the Irish Parliament, Mr. Grattan opposed their production, not because he thought the war was just, for that was a question into which he would not enter, but because it was his opinion that in all wars the two countries must stand or fall together, and that when Great Britain engaged in hostilities, Ireland had no other course to take, but implicitly to support her. Now, as in all matters of Imperial policy, it appeared that Ireland must blindly follow Great Britain, it would appear that she would make a less sacrifice of her political power if she had a voice in the Imperial Legislature, than she does in her present situation. The importance of being a Member of the Imperial Parliament would also be greater than that of being a Member of the Parliament of Ireland only. When he considered all the beneficial advantages arising from the happy influence of the British Constitution and British Parliament, he could not avoid wishing that influence to be extended to a still greater portion of the human race. An Union appeared to him the only means of tranquillizing the country, and preventing the return of insurrections such as those they had lately seen. Every thing, he insisted, called upon the House to adopt the measure which his Hon. Friend had proposed. Let the measure rest upon the opinion of the Parliaments of each kingdom—that opinion would doubtless be regulated by the general sentiment of the public at large.

Mr. Sheridan explained.

Doctor

Doctor *Lawrence* said, he wished to take notice of something that fell from the noble Lord who spoke last, relative to the inconsistency of those Gentlemen who at present opposed an Union with Ireland, and who had last Session moved for an enquiry into the state of that country. He insisted that there was no inconsistency whatever in their conduct; because, when they had moved for that enquiry, they did not mean that the British should assume any authority over the Irish Parliament. He did not vote for the amendment that had been proposed to the address on a former night by an Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) because he did not mean to say any thing on the business in that stage of it: he was also at that time ignorant of the opinion that might be expressed on the subject by the Irish Parliament; and the message intimated that it should be submitted to the Legislatures of both kingdoms, he had desired therefore to wait and hear what should be done in Ireland. But if the amendment which the Hon. Gentleman had moved, could have been the means of preventing any intimation from being given to the Irish Parliament, he would have voted for it. The Noble Lord had argued, that the late dismissals of men in Ireland were the same with those which Earl Fitzwilliam had, during his administration, attempted to make there. No more authority was exercised on the one occasion, than had been intended to be exercised on the other; and these measures were considered as necessary, on the principle that there might be no disparity of opinions amongst the Members of the Government. He insisted that these two cases were very different: the present was not a question of a Government nature, nor one which required that unanimity in the Ministers of Government. It was a question for the uniting together of two countries which ought to meet by affection; and if they did not, it signified very little by what kind of parchment bonds they were to be united. If Gentlemen thought it possible that those countries could at this time unite by affection, let them look at the majority who voted against the Union in the Irish House of Commons, and consider what description of persons they were. In the majority of 111, there was a much greater number of country members than in the minority of 106. This circumstance proved, that the sense of the country was against the measure. As a friend, therefore, to the general interests of the empire, he would not wish to proceed in any plan that might tend to promote jealousy and discontent. He saw nothing in the Resolutions which the Right Honourable Gentleman intended to bring forward, that had a tendency to quiet the minds of the people of Ireland. He wished to know what effect the measure of one Parliament for both countries could have, in allaying the disturbances that existed in the sister kingdom. He deprecated the idea of the House proceeding upon the adoption of such a measure, because, in the interval between the period of these resolutions being agreed to by the Irish Legislature, a continual jealousy would exist against the British Parliament. If the measure should be agreed to by the Irish Parliament, he would then consider it his duty to

go into the full consideration of it. He saw no importance in the arguments that had been advanced relative to the increase of commercial prosperity which Ireland should derive from the Union. The commerce of that country had been doubled in the course of five years, and was now rapidly encreasing; but he would not say that this arose out of the independence acquired by Ireland, in 1782, as had been argued by some Gentlemen, any more than he would admit the other argument, that the present prosperity of Scotland was owing to the Union. The commercial prosperity of these kingdoms might proceed from a variety of other causes; and therefore it was absurd to ascribe them to any single one. It had been said, that the introduction of English capital into Ireland would be a great advantage to that country; but it ought to be considered that this advantage would only be local; it might not extend beyond the city of Cork, which, from an expectation of profiting by an Union, had stood forward in its support. Considering himself, in case an Union existed, as a Member of the Imperial Legislature of both countries, he must declare, that he should then look upon such a partial introduction of capital rather as a disadvantage, inasmuch as it would not tend to the general benefit of the country; and the commerce of the place enjoying that advantage would be more exposed to the attacks of the enemy than it was at present. It was evident, that a town lying upon the Southern, or South-eastern coast of Ireland, was more easily accessible to the enemy, and would require a great expence to guard its commerce. He would next beg leave to say a word or two respecting the resolution of 1782. There was a great and excellent person (Mr. Burke) who was a friend to Ireland and to human kind; he believed that that person had been concerned in bringing forward this resolution; who certainly meant nothing more by it than something in the way of explanation, and of the same nature with that which Mr. Grattan had presented to the Irish House, namely — “That in all great questions of peace or war, England and Ireland should stand or fall together.” But that resolution never meant, nor pointed at any thing like an Union. It was proper for him next to consider what effect such a measure would produce upon England as well as Ireland. He could see no advantages likely to arise to this country from the Union, that would equal or compensate for the evils that should thereby be done to its constitution. He had often been surprised to see how well the British House of Commons, as it was now constituted, had embraced and practised all the various interests of the different orders of society; and had in fact all the advantages which the finest theory could suggest. But it was impossible to say what change it might undergo, upon the introduction of such a body into the representation as that from Ireland must form. If a small body had any local interests to carry, it was evident that they would for that purpose combine very closely together; and if a considerable number of Members should come from Ire-
land

land, and form a part of our Legislature, it would be natural for them, and indeed it would be a duty they should owe their country to combine closely together for the purpose of carrying any question in which the local advantages of Ireland might be involved. As the two Legislatures now stood, the different interests were easily balanced, by means of that influence which the crown possessed, and which, in his opinion, ought always to belong to the Executive Government; but it was very clear that this influence could not have the same controul, after the introduction of a number of Members from Ireland, as it had at present. The same danger had been apprehended at the time of the Union with Scotland; but it was not likely to happen, on account of the small number of Members that were to be introduced; but upon the introduction of so large a body from Ireland, the Constitution must certainly be shaken. Besides, there was another consideration not unworthy the attention of Gentlemen; such a number of Members coming from Ireland, would greatly embarrass the Debates of that House." After a variety of excellent remarks on the probable effect of the measure, Dr. Lawrence concluded with observing, that as the present question had a tendency to encrease the disgusts and discontents of the Irish, and to render them more jealous of this Country, he wished that it might go no farther, and upon that principle he must oppose the Speaker's leaving the Chair. But if it was determined that the House should go into a Committee, he would think it his duty to proceed with them in the consideration of the resolutions.

The House then divided:

For the Speaker's leaving the Chair 140

Against it - - - - - 15—Majority 125

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND,

August 12, 1785.

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

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

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

Another discovery the Hon. Gentleman has made is that countervailing duties are unfair—why? Because the Brewery of

* "That leave be given to bring in a Bill, for effectuating the intercourse and commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, on permanent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of both Kingdoms."

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

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

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

The Hon. Gentleman talks of bounties, and says, by abolishing bounties, we shall no longer be able to bring corn to this city; our inland corn bounties, he says, are to be turned into Protecting Duties for England. A strange conception! But why has he fixed on corn and flour? If he had read the Resolution on which he is arguing, he would have seen that corn and flour are every where exempted.

Another argument of the Hon. Gentleman is, that the declaring that neither country hereafter can lay any new prohibition on native productions, implies cunningly that it may on foreign. What an argument! when the very first principles of the system is, that a mutual interchange of foreign commodities is for ever to take place between the two kingdoms, and one even of the Twenty Propositions declares it in precise terms—But, the Hon. Gentleman talks of prohibitions on exports, &c.;

Would the Hon. Gentleman wish to leave it in the power of either nation to prohibit their native commodities from being exported to the other? would he wish to leave it in the power of England to prohibit the exportation of coals, salt, iron, bark, hops, and many other articles, or to raise a revenue on these articles when exported hither.

The Hon. Gentleman talks particularly of wool. I admit, if you balance wool against wool, that his argument is right; but the just way is to balance the whole of the exports;—England engages never to prohibit the export of articles which are necessary almost to our existence, and we engage not to prohibit the export of articles which bring us in 500,000 l. a year. We are to engage not to prohibit the export of Woollen and Linen Yarn, which we have exported for a whole century, and without keeping a market for the redundancy of which by export, we could *not* ensure plenty for our own manufacturers.

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

I am ashamed, Sir, of taking up so much of your time on a subject which might be so easily understood by the lowest capacity; I shall therefore quit the Hon. Gentleman and come to the question of constitution, which I do not at all think involved in this subject. If Great Britain grants us a full partnership in all her trade, in all her colonies, if she admits us to a full participation in the benefits of her Navigation laws, by which she has raised herself to be the greatest commercial power in the world; if she does not call upon us to contribute to the expence of the partnership, but merely to receive our share of the profits, and says, we may continue in that partnership only so long as we chuse, can any man say, the conditions of it amount to a surrender of our legislature? surely not, it is idle speculation. Let us then look at the subject, free from all imaginary dread for the constitution.

Britain imports annually from us 2,500,000 l. of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about 1,000,000 l. of hers, and raise a revenue on almost every article of it, and reserve the power of continuing that revenue. She exports to us salt for our fisheries and provisions; hops which we cannot grow coals which we cannot raise; tin which we have not; and bark which we cannot get elsewhere; and all these without reserving any duty, or a power to impose any on them; though her own subjects pay 2, 3, or 4 s. a chaldron for her own coals, sent coast-ways, and in London 7 s. We on the contrary charge a duty for our own use here on almost every article we send to her. So much for exports; now as to bounties, she almost ruined our manufacture of sail-cloth, by bounties on export of her own to Ireland.

Ireland. In 1750, or thereabouts, when her bounty commenced, we exported more than we imported, and in 1784, we exported none, and imported 180,000 yards; she now withdraws that bounty. And let me digress here a little on fail-cloth, which although gentlemen affect to despise when mentioned, will I trust be an immediate source of wealth by this adjustment. For 1. This bounty is to be removed. 2. The export of fail-cloth to the Indies is to be allowed, and Great Britain exported there, in 1782, about 200,000 ells. 3. There is a British law, obliging every British and colony ship to have its first suits of British fail-cloth. Irish now is to be deemed British. 4. There is a preference of 2d. an ell given by British law to British fail-cloth, over foreign, for the British navy. Irish is now to have the same preference. 5. The surplus of the hereditary revenue is to be applied in the first place to the purchase of Irish fail-cloth. All these give a glorious prospect for that valuable manufacture—But to return, were a man to look for the country most advantageous to settle manufacture in, what would be his choice? One where labour and provisions are cheap, that is Ireland; and what would he next look for?—why to have a rich, extended and steady market near him, which England, stretched alongside affords, and to establish that market for this country is one great object of this system. Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of British duties on our manufactures; I agree with them it may not operate soon, but we are to look forward in a final settlement, and it is impossible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to rivalry, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by duties, bounties, jealousies or legislative interference from its natural and beneficial course, this system will attain its real object, consolidating the strength of the remaining parts of the empire, by encouraging the communications of their market among themselves, with preference to every part against all strangers.

I need not mention the Navigation-act, the proper benefits of which we have so long looked for; I will only observe, that Great Britain could never agree to receive the British Colonies' goods from us, unless we prohibited the goods of foreign Colonies as she does, which is a powerful argument for that part of the system against the constitutional phrensy that threatens it. Let us also observe, that now, for the first time, Great Britain offers us a right for ever in all present and future Colonies, without any reservation of power, to call on us either to procure, support, or preserve them; *she* maintains them, *we* share all the profits; and, not only their goods, but all goods of Irish produce, are to pass through Britain duty free. Can foreign nations, after this is settled, make distinction between British and Irish goods?

goods? Our manufactures will be united as our interests, and we shall laugh at Portugal folly.

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

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

AUGUST 15th, 1785.

Right Hon. *Chancellor of the Exchequer* [Mr. FOSTER.]
I rise to state the misconception of the Right Hon. Gentleman, and if any thing can shew the necessity of curing the people of their infatuation, by publishing and explaining the Bill to them, it surely is this, that a Gentleman to whom they look up, and justly look, as one whose wisdom and virtue will guard their rights, is so very much mistaken.

The Right Hon Gentleman in his argument has never once adverted to the Bill on your table, but draws all his conclusions from arguments raised by his own imagination, on the British Resolutions. He dwells now only on foreign Colony trade and Navigation laws; the accepting a full participation of the British Colony trade, upon terms of equal laws, he gives up as not altering our constitution, and he even agrees in the innocence of our declaring it as a principle of the treaty. In this he has shewn his wisdom, for it is already declared in the law of Ireland. The objection then stands as to a foreign Colony trade, and what says the Bill, it declares it to be a condition of the treaty, to protect that trade, in the same manner as Britain does, against the interference of foreign Colony goods. It enacts nothing, and there is the mighty evil which we have introduced, that is to give to Britain the regulation of all our foreign trade with Portugal, with Spain, with all the world. If the Gentleman so egregiously mistakes the purport of what he has not read, I trust the good sense of the nation will see his mistakes and judge for themselves; but the objections to an agreement of rating only the goods from foreign Colonies, so far only as by protecting our Colonies against them, is not so wonderful from him, as his objection

jection to the Bill's affecting Navigation and British seamen in general; from him I say, for in the year 1782 the Right Hon. Gentleman introduced, in conjunction with the late Chief Baron Burgh, and the present Chief Baron Yelverton, a Bill, adopting in the gross all such clauses and provisions of the laws theretofore passed in England, as conveyed equal benefits and imposed equal restrictions in commerce, in the most extended sense, to the subjects of both countries, and also putting the seamen of Ireland on the footing of British seamen. [*The Chancellor here read the words.*] The Bill now brought in does not go so far; he went to commerce in general, and adopted laws without reference to them, or even reciting their title. What does this Bill do? it declares with him the principle; it does no more. This Bill declares for a *similarity of laws, manners, and customs*, in toto. Our Bill declares for a similarity of Navigation laws, on our accepting the benefit of the British, not for the first time offered to us. It is idle to believe, even his authority can have weight in such unfounded objections: nay, *our* Bill reaches *his*, to adopt its principles, and he says ours is mischievous; his was the glory of the nation and the joint labour of the greatest friends of liberty.

The Right Hon. Gentleman says, "we might have foreign trade, without entering into the measure, and that England, as to foreign trade, gives us no right which we already have not." As to colony trade, he says, "she gives us what we had before, on the former conditions, that we give her Colony product a preference in our market, and therefore, he says, cannot we remain as we now are."

With respect to the Colony Trade, I answer, we hold it by the gift of Britain, and she may repeal her act, and reassume her monopoly. As to foreign trade, I have shewn it is no way affected, except by the preference to be given to British Colony goods, against those of foreign Colonies; but why does the gentleman allude to Portugal? it is the strongest measure against him. Portugal has presumed to distinguish between the goods of Great Britain and the goods of Ireland—she will not receive the latter. But if this settlement is entered into, all our goods she can have may go duty free through Britain. The distinction between British and Irish manufacture is lost as to foreign nations, our goods, are made one, physically as well as politically, in respect to foreign, and our union cemented by the freedom of intercourse.

The honourable gentleman seems, with others, to undervalue the British markets for our linens, and that if Britain shall discourage her import, they will find vent elsewhere. I will not pay him so fulsome a compliment as to say he understands commerce, his genius soars perhaps above such reading; but if he did understand it, I would ask him, where would he expect a market to favour the linens of Ireland? Where will he find a market under Heaven for that manufacture, which now brings two millions annually into the kingdom? Will Portugal take them? Will Spain take them? Will France take them? No;
we

we know they will not. Will Russia, Germany, or Holland, take them? They are your powerful rivals, and able to undersell you. Where then will you find a market, if England shuts her ports? Will you go to the West Indies?—you cannot go to the English Colonies—they will be like Britain—there you can have no admittance. The French, Spanish, and Portuguese have shut their ports long since—your only market then is in the *bankrupt* States of North America, that have not money to pay their just debts, and many provinces of which, if they had the money, have not perhaps the honesty to do it.

This bankrupt country is to give you the market Britain affords. No, no; cherish the market you have, you will never get so good, she ever exports with bounty for you. And here let me observe the benefits of exporting, duty free, all our fabrics through her ports, which this settlement secures. You first found the way for your linens to foreign places through her ports, by her capitals and extent of dealing;—do not refuse the like for your other fabrics—the prosperity of the linen should teach you.

The gentleman says England is as dependant on Ireland as Ireland is on England for her products—he instances the cotton yarn and other yarn of Ireland. What, call cotton yarn a fabric of Ireland, and an export to Britain!—It is a mistake of his expression, he cannot be so ignorant of our manufactures. Let us look into the wants Britain supplies—I will take coals first.

Do you think it an object of no consequence to receive coals from England, for ever, duty free, while the duties on coals in England, brought from one of her own ports to another is very high. I remember when I proposed a shilling a ton on the importation of coals into Dublin only, in order to raise a fund for extending and beautifying the city, it met with great opposition; I was abused in all the news-papers; yet now England may raise four times that sum upon the export of her coals, which will fall upon the consumer, and raise a revenue for her advantage; nay were she even to raise the revenue on them to you that she does on her own coast carriage, what would become of you? You have not Irish coal; if the present bounty of 2s. a ton to Dublin, added to 1s. 8d. duty on British, which operates as 3s. 8d. in favour of Irish coal, what will you do; because no carriage can be so cheap to you as that across the channel. Rock salt is the next;—Where will you get it? (some one said from Spain) Rock-salt from Spain! The Gentleman should inform himself a little better.

As to the tanning-trade, where will you get bark? From no place in the world but England. We know that it would not bear the freight from any other, and if England was to prohibit the export of it, that trade must be at an end; and we must not forget, that the British manufacturers of leather have already complained, that by getting bark from Wales, we are enabled to work on as good terms as England.

Let him look to hops; will this country grow them? On the other

other hand, what wants do we supply for England? wool and linen yarn, to our own great advantage; but it is in vain to proceed; the House must see we are talking of a subject not yet understood; when known, and Ireland unprejudiced and in her calm reason, will never reject the many blessings it holds out to her trade;—it gives wealth and security which I trust will never be refused from a wild imagination of Utopian Republics, Commonwealths, Monarchies—God knows what.

I will stand or fall with the Bill, that not a line in it touches your Constitution; it is now left to the decision of the country, it is not abandoned, God forbid it should; and I trust I shall see the nation ask it at our hands, that we may be able then to obtain it shall be my prayers—the Minister cannot promise—he has done his duty—and it will be my pride at a future day, when its real value shall be known, that I bore a leading share in the transaction—that I laboured to procure for Ireland solid and substantial benefits, which even two years ago no man had an idea of even looking to.

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