
L E T T E R

TO THE

RIGHT HON. MR. HOBART

John Sanelly No 19
Dublin

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RIGHT HON. MR. HOBART,

Esq. Esq. Esq.

S I R,

FROM the man, who thinks it necessary to address you, in the language of truth, an apology for offering the following thoughts to your consideration, is not to be expected. To decline that solicitude, for which there might not exist a necessity, would be the natural result of very

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little reflection. To with-hold those sentiments, which might appear to be erroneous or untimely, would be but a slight sacrifice to him, who desires to continue nameless, and does not covet to be known.

But our circumstances require some scrutiny and some resolution: and to assist you in the one, and to confirm you in the other, are labours of that kind, which, however they may be executed, you will not treat with disregard. Your situation in this country makes it necessary, in a great crisis like this, that you should, perhaps, alter that tone of moderation, by which, while men are contented to argue, the ostensible Minister will be most properly distinguished. And, if you shall be driven to vindicate the Constitution, and the Laws, by any signal act of punishment, it is but just to apprise you, by how great a number of the public

public such a measure will be approved, and, if necessary, be seconded. If you shall think it prudent, silently to permit those unmasked traitors, who are instigating the people of this country to levy open war upon the Crown, I shall have one consolation—that my tacit acquiescence, in a popular delusion, did not contribute a millioneth share to countenance its propagation.

This language, Sir, is, possibly, somewhat plainer than that to which you have been accustomed. It is, in general, the quality of the executive power not to want a stimulative to its energy. And, the popular complaint against ministerial jealousy has been too long, and too loud, to justify a supposition, that it will be suspected, groundlessly, of winking at sedition.

If the recommendation I am venturing to give be bold, I honestly confess I do not otherwise intend it.

When there are circulated through the country, in thousands, and tens of thousands, letters of invitation and summons to all the rioters and lawless in the land, exhorting them to array themselves in battalia for rebellion—when there are issued from the Conventicles, in which, it is said, *all the power of the country is represented*, letters of marque against the Constitution——it is time for us, who have something at stake, to try, whether there be not still left, power enough in the Executive Government to bring, upon the heads of those who are *illegally* and *unconstitutionally* contriving plans of general ruin, the punishment of the law—it is time for us to inquire, whether we

shall

shall be driven, by the confederate strength of private associations, to protect our properties, our liberties, our families, and our religion, against the crazy and vicious disorders of an unlicensed banditti—it is time for us, if the horrors of a civil war threaten the land, to provide for our defence. It is not a question with us, like that which is put in a vain and vapid declamatory publication of a Club in Dublin, “ Whether we may venture to settle
 “ in a country, which we love with the natu-
 “ ral preference of men, not the puerile ac-
 “ quiescence of children.” The question is, whether we, who are settled in the land, in general the descendants of those, by whom its liberty was preserved, and its people were delivered from the principles of slavery, shall be stripped of our fortunes, and turned from our habitations, the outcasts of a society, to the protection of which; we could by possibility have

have no claim, but through the compassion of our rulers—and upon the solution of this, another is contingent—whether, for our rulers, we shall chuse all the rabble in the land.—To determine our minds, and to regulate our conduct, upon these subjects, I do not see a more eligible mode than this, of a public appeal to the first Minister of a country.

I had hoped, Sir, that such an Address as this would not be necessary. I had, not without much, and, I trust, not a reprehensible anxiety for the Roman Catholics of Ireland, addressed that Body, somewhat at large, upon the calamities in which it was attempted to involve them. And, I had the satisfaction to find, that the wealthiest, the highest, the wisest, and the best amongst them, concurred in my sentiments. I had it in my thoughts to address the Protestants of Ireland, with a similar view,

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of exposing the falsehood of those rank assertions, by which they have been overborne. Stormed, as we are, in the intrenchments of the Constitution, and bearded with the unfounded and impudent taunt, that our security is no better than a rampart of tyrannous prejudices, and inhuman bigotries, erected by a narrow vicious policy upon the foundation of self-interest, or reared on the ruins of morality and justice, I could not suppose there was much danger in attempting to repel such assailants. A man, who knew his ground, while reasoning, only, was resorted to, would, by reasoning, defend himself: while facts, only, were appealed to, by facts would he be corroborated: he would oppose recital to recital; he would place profession against profession; he would resist falsehood with truth; and he would conquer.

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I should not be afraid, Sir, to prophesy such a victory. Nor, should I blush in the hour of triumph, at wearing my portion of the laurels, though all the Society of United Irishmen should execrate my success.

But, the time for argumentations and reasonings, it seems is gone by: and the propositions for derangement were scarcely become objects of consideration, when the derangement was planned.—To this letter I annex, for your perusal, a declaration of war against the constitution, which has been circulated through the kingdom, at first under enclosures to private persons, and, afterwards, by means of a public impression, unhesitatingly emitted without shame or terror.

It is published, circulated, and avowed, by a society calling itself *The Society of United Irishmen,*

men, and authenticated, under their associated character, by the superscription of the name SIMON BUTLER, as their chairman, and the signature of JAMES NAPPER TANDY, as secretary to the meeting.

On the evident purport and intention of this manifesto it is unnecessary to dwell long. From the beginning to the end, it is a seditious rhapsody, recommending open war against the established government: a firebrand thrown at the people, for the purpose of kindling amongst them, the flames of civil discord, and smothering every principle of loyalty, religion and morality, under the ruins of the constitution.

Having, in the original Declaration stated, as facts, positions, which unequivocally assert the established government to be but a tyrannous

and illegal violation of political and natural liberty, they call, by their circular letter, on the body of the people to rise in arms, and wrest, by force, out of the hands in which they are placed, all the legislative and executive functions. To abolish the national religion, to degrade the national nobility, to dethrone the king, and to disband the parliament.

They say the House of Commons does not contain the legitimate representative of the people—that the majority of that House are the hired servants of the English Government; whose minister, here, is appointed for the purpose of dealing out corruption to them—which, they say, he has so effectually done; that he is now the sole representative of the people of Ireland.

They tell you, a more unjust and absurd constitution cannot be devised than that, which condemns

demns the natives of a country to perpetual servitude, under the arbitrary dominion of strangers and slaves: and, in this state of abject slavery, they call for a sincere and hearty union of all people for accomplishing *a compleat and radical reform in Parliament*, by which Irishmen of all religious persuasions shall be eligible as legislators.

They tell you, we have no national government—that by the anarchy which exists, the strong tyrannize, the rich oppress, and the mass are brayed in a mortar; and that to resist the Government we groan under, with effect, only requires *unanimity, decision, and spirit*, in the people.

They then call upon the public, to unite with them, and act together against *their common enemies*: to concentrate the public power into one

solid mass; the effect of which *once put in motion* must be rapid, momentous, and consequential. And they expect that tranquillity which rests on the rights of human nature, and *leans on the arms* by which those rights are to be maintained.

They entreat us to look around for men, fit to form those stable supports, on which Ireland may rest the lever of liberty; to form an assemblage, resistless in its power; to draw together our best and *bravest* thoughts—our best and *bravest* men: if there be but ten, the ten must be taken: the friends of liberty are to be rallied; the spirit must be brought into mass; and the mass must be refined into spirit. *They fear no men: in great undertakings* they have always found it more difficult to attempt, than to accomplish—and they must perform all they wish, if they attempt all they can.

To discover the palpable meaning of these addresses, Sir, requires no penetration. Against a government, which they declare to be illegitimate, they summon the bravery of the valiant, and co-operation of the people. Bravery is a talent of use only in war. Power, put in motion, is only the operation of force. And this force they desire to concentrate against the Government; and upon their principle they are right: it is like the case of a madman, who fancies himself the emperor of the moon, and thinks it very unjust and outrageous, that he should not be put in possession of his territory.— It is acquiring right from wrong premises. Government not national is usurpation, to be justifiably resisted by force. Illegitimate government is tyranny, against which the sword is the resistance warranted by the constitution.—It is too evident to be illustrated by explanation.

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But one word more on this subject : The laws of this country are not yet formally abrogated : and, by the law of the land it is treason, if a man do levy war against our Lord the King in his realm, “ And this,” says Sir William Blackstone, “ may be done, by taking arms, not only to dethrone the King, but, under pretence to reform *religion*, or *the laws*, or to remove evil counsellors, or other grievances, whether real or pretended.”

Of the effect of this publication, which I presume to be as complete a specimen of sedition, as the scope of genius or malignity, in the Society of United Irishmen, will have ever arrived at, much will be determined, by the immediate conduct which his Majesty's Minister shall think it expedient to adopt. Silence, neglect, or inattention, may do much, in contributing to encrease that forwardness toward
 confusion

confusion which is now too notorious to continue unregarded. A resolute, firm, steady, and dignified assertion of the laws, and the constitution, will be equally effectual in checking a temper, which has undisturbedly grown into a size, portentous of danger, merely from the contemptibility and foulness of its source.

We have hangmen for rebels, and axes for traitors. We have gaols for rioters, and pillories for libellers. And, melancholy a duty as it always is, to visit upon vice, the punishment of its transgressions, it is a duty, which ought cheerfully to be discharged when mercy threatens to become ruinous, and impunity encreases, both the numbers of the guilty, and the measure of the guilt. Two or three ringleaders, brought to condign punishment, in time, may prevent the necessity of involving thousands in their misfortunes : and, it is surely a more humane

mane and politic exercise of power, to correct the open levying of war upon the constitution, by a few striking examples, in the persons of mischievous and designing men, than to wait until, of necessity, the visitation must be extended to numbers, who shall be objects of pity rather than severity. It is in the nature of man to judge, with natural feelings, and to draw natural inferences from obvious facts. He will naturally conclude that that power cannot resist the force, by which it is unresistingly assailed, and unavengedly insulted. He will think those assertions are true, which are advanced with effrontery and heard without contradiction. He will think, that men possessed of property, endowed with privileges, or enjoying rank, should be willing to preserve these advantages, if they could. If their property be called plunder, their privileges an usurpation, and their rank be branded with the opprobrium

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of tyranny, why should he contradict aspersions, to which they listen without resentment? If it be demanded as matter of right, that the rank shall be abolished, the privileges annihilated, and the property abandoned, who shall we expect to advance in their support, but their possessors? And they, who witness so much outrage with so little opposition, will easily be misled to think, that that cannot be punished which is suffered to pass without notice.

I am not unaware, Sir, that it will here be replied to me, that I only encrease the importance of these men (their malevolence is beyond aggravation) by treating their extravagance seriously. It will be told me, that no man in his senses can fear the constitution of this country shall be levelled with the dust, by an unassociated commixture of meannesses, ambition, turbulence, bankruptcy, and desperation. I shall

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hear it said that the order of things will long remain unconfounded, and whole, against the attempts of those, who are labouring for their confusion, only to occasion a general scramble, in which their dexterity may filch whatever is useful and valuable from the general stock. I may be told, that meanness will aspire to fame, even through martyrdom, and that obscurity will pant for the irradiations of glory, even through the medium of punishment: That he, who has no house, will be contented with the shelter, even of a prison, and it will be little mortification to his feelings, who cannot feed himself, if he be fed by the public.

In the country I shall be told, that this spirit of disorder has gained but few converts, of bitter name, or of little sagacity. And in the capital, it will be said that it is treating with too much dignity that, which is in itself but a burlesque,

burlesque, to suffer any real anxiety about the anonymous Declarations that are published from taverns, by a few unknown, or unnoted, midnight conspirators. He, who is impeded in the street by a squadron of politicians, blustering, in their ragged majesty, about rights and reforms, and the people, feels any sensation as soon as terror at the appearance. It impresses him with no apprehensions, when he beholds, flinging out of their lurking places, or vomited out of some drinking house, a club of speechless orators, full of the rights of men and porter, belching out their inarticulate mutterings about declarations and test oaths; and revolutions, and staggering in the way of every sober passenger.

I am aware, Sir, that, in such observations there seems much force. It is not by a few insignificant men, that much mischief, of any kind, is apparently to be dreaded. And it will

be thought, that the frame of our constitution has stood too long and weathered too many storms, unhurt, to be effected now by the light breath of angry declamation and frothy discontent. I hope it may long continue the object of our love, and the bulwark of our security.— But, we must remember, Sir, that the noblest edifice that ever was erected by human contrivance, may, if neglected, be undermined to its destruction, by the vermin, toward which the notice of few eyes will be attracted, and which never can become entitled to our observation, without exciting disgust.

Those men, Sir, may continue unnoticed, and be encouraged, by impunity, long enough, to occasion much both of disorder and bloodshed. Those, who have no rights but the rights of man, which, to them, are profligacy, idleness, disorder, and riot, make no secret of their intentions,

tentions, to take the constitution by force : We who have some rights of citizens, and believe, that the wholesome rights of man are property, liberty, and security, cannot sit silent, as the unconcerned spectators of such hostility. We must preserve ourselves, and, therefore, we will preserve the constitution.

This will not be a doubtful task ; tho' it may be a troublesome and a dangerous one. It may become dangerous and lamentable, by the phrenzy of those who are labouring to embroil us. And success in a civil war, never was, and never will be, a matter of exultation to the good, even among the victors. But, we know the principles, and the temper, as well as the numbers of those, who are enlisted under the revolution standard, too well, to expect they can long continue to co-operate, unless in the evil of their designs.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, Sir, among the wonders of the time, there is nothing more extraordinary, than that, apparently, cordial junction, which, it is said, has taken place between the most zealous, and violent, of two sects, whose tempers, manners, politics, and faith, are, and ever have been, in the most wide, and unaccommodating, opposition to each other. The Papists, whose genius is intolerance, whose religion is bigotry, whose politics are despotism : And the Presbyterians, a people, who avowedly detest a king, as more noxious than a pestilence, and have not, in their vocabulary, a term of description for the hierarchy, that is not, also, a term of infamy, derision, or reproach.

That, between two bodies, so adverse to each other, even a temporary coalescence could be occasioned, is only to be accounted for, by that rage for revolution, which it has recently been
attempted

attempted to import from a country, to which, or the fashions of which, as far as I can learn, the morals, the loyalty, or the religion, of these kingdoms, never has been much indebted, and never indebted, for any thing that was good.—
 REVOLUTION ! the *summum bonum* of life—RE-
 VOLUTION ! the grand zest, by which relish and variety are given to the insipid comforts of prosperity—REVOLUTION ! the glorious theme of exultation for those, who burst asunder the bonds of oppression and tyranny, by which they were manacled—REVOLUTION ! the great political mortality, under whose stroke all the orders, and distinctions, and powers, of society, are to be levelled and huddled together in one common charnel-house — REVOLUTION ! the great magical incantation of battle and victory at which Lettres de Cachet vanished Ludibrio Ventis, and the weight of the Bastile, like a pantomimic castle, at the touch of the magi-
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cian's wand, mouldered into ruins—REVOLUTION! the spell, by which three and twenty millions of people, endwarfed under the galling debasement of slavery, roused their faculties at an instant and sprung up into giants.

The misfortune of this country, in considering the French Revolution, has been, that those who were most enamoured with it, had studied it the least. Remembering, only, the waste, which was so recently barren, they looked with rapture on a surface, over which all the verdure and beauty of this mushroom constitution were ripened in a day. And, forgetting all the disparities of season and climate, of place and circumstance, the only object, upon which their imagination rested with complacency, was the change.

The only question now to be considered is, Whether the constitution is to be taken by storm,

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or not. The Papists tell you, that it is their inherent right, a right paramount to all positive law, because it results from the nature of man, that they should have a share in the legislature : and the Presbyterians tell you, that, if the Papists rise to assert this right, they will unite in the insurrection, and the confederate strength of the two bodies will be too much for you to resist.

In such a state as this, Sir, you stand upon a precipice, where, if you yield a particle, you are lost for ever. Give them footing to struggle with you once for the constitution, and you will not be able to grapple with them in your fall ; or, if you do, it will be, only, in the struggle, to bring you both to the ground, in one common ruin.

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If you grant any thing, you grant it to a mob: and by the mob, who have raised the present clamours, not an atom will be sacrificed of that consequence, to be derived from the acquisition.

The Roman Catholics, you are told, are the majority of the people. They are the power of the state. Let them into Parliament, and it is beyond conjecture or calculation, that they will, in Parliament, have a majority. It is a lame policy, which will trust to such a majority the security of the present landed property, or the toleration of the present established religion. What stands in their way if you give them the power? Your statute-book; a few musty votes passed, as they will tell you, by a set of usurpers, who became, by accident, enabled to violate all the rights of man and nature, and to erect a system of tyranny, which it would, to act consistently,

sistantly, be their duty, and, at all hazards,
 would be their purpose to abolish and obliterate.
 With them, the laws of this country are
 but a tyrannous exercise of power, over weakness.
 With them, the forfeitures of their feet
 are no better than the plunder of conquest,
 taken in times of hostility, and the objects of
 recaption whenever they shall be adequate to
 retake this booty. The Society of United Irish-
 men fortify this sentiment in their new brethren
 the Catholics, by telling them that the situation
 of this country, for a century back, has been a
 state of war. If it have been a state of war, we
 are yet not in peace, and those, who rally now,
 because they think themselves strong, for the
 purpose of wresting, by force, that, to which
 they think themselves legally entitled, need no
 commentators to prove that, whatever they ob-
 tain they will consider as the spoils of battle,
 won from the vanquished.

You are told, Sir, in plain terms, that the Protestant government is an usurpation, from which it is constitutional to drive us by force.—Time, though it has given us age, they say, has brought no strength to our ascendancy. Obedience to our ordinances has given no authority to ordinances, in their nature vicious. Possession has conferred no right of property on those who derive under a title radically illegal.

If the Papists, though unquestionably the most numerous, should not appear to be the most powerful, the other contingency is, that the Presbyterians will become ascendant.

But in fact, and ruinous as it must obvious be, for this kingdom, to be submitted to either party, the prospect, which opens from the present situation of affairs here, unless speedy and
firm

firm measures be taken to prevent it, is that of a complete and irrecoverable anarchy, under the ill-concerted and discordant junction, between the desperate and violent among both those parties. Men, who own no God, who follow no religion, who honour no king, who obey no law ; but think that the constitution is no more than an unshapen mass, which every man, into whose hands it may fall, or who can lay his hands on it, is at liberty to mould into every fantastic form he pleases.

While the dangers, which threaten this country, are yet only imminent, [it behoves you much, Sir, to look to its situation. To relieve the nation from those broils, which are fomenting, and to preserve the national connexion between Britain and Ireland, if you suffer the mischief to get an head, they will offer but two expedients, of which neither the one nor the other

will

will be tolerable to the people, nor palatable to the friends of government. We must be driven to the establishment of a permanent military force, in the shape of a militia, of monstrous burden, and great irksomeness to the people: Or, we must submit, at once, to an union with Great Britain, and so be contented to purchase a merely subordinate and unworthy security, against those calamities, from which our insufficiency shall not have protected us.

These, Sir, are alterations which the landed gentlemen of this country consider with much apprehension, and some jealousy.—The immense patronage, to be immediately added to the Crown, by a national militia, though it may be rendered absolutely necessary on such an occasion as I have mentioned, would, perhaps, ultimately, give the executive power a preponderancy

rancy in the political balance, beyond that measure, which is safe and constitutional.—The country gentlemen of Ireland will view, with great curiosity, and discountenance, by very resolute conduct, every thing which may have a tendency toward the adoption of this measure. The Roman Catholics will do so, because of the taxation; and the Protestants will be no less scrupulous and spirited, because of the taxation—which they must feel no less, and the influence which they dread more than the others.

On an union, it is not necessary to tell the sentiments of any man, who understands the meaning of the term. On that measure, by which all that is elegant and polished, in society, shall be led to abandon the island; by which every man of large fortune, or valuable connexions, must become an alien to the land that supports him;

him ; by which, of course, all the specie of the country must be drained out of it, to be spent on the luxuries of another ; by which the arts must decline, and manufactures rapidly dwindle away—On such a measure as this, there cannot be two opinions. Every man would oppose it : and every thinking man will now feel himself roused to oppose those phrenzies, by which such a step may be rendered expedient.

The time requires the public mind should be satisfied, that the machine of the constitution is too well preserved, to be clogged or overturned by the frothy boasting of a few vain demagogues : and that we shall not be driven, either to a standing national militia, or an union to keep them in order.

There is resulting from the foresight of these two consequences, which I have mentioned, a
third,

third, that deserves no little consideration. It is a constitutional association of the independent landed and monied men of Ireland. By many of this description it is thought that little more will be necessary than such an union, if they shall be driven to form it, in defence of the constitution.

They think, that those, who have fortune and rank in the country, ought, in such an emergency, to stand up like men, and avow, early, that they will do that to which Nature will impel them, if any commotion render it necessary; that they will support that establishment, and order of things, upon which the advantage of society rests: that the gentlemen of landed fortune and commercial wealth, throughout the kingdom, ought to declare their fixed resolution, to prevent the wretched dregs of a

befotted faction from bringing the whole political estate into a general hotch-pot.—They think it not unwise, to labour with those who are not yet infected by this blighting pestilence, with all their natural and constitutional influence, in checking the progress of a plague which threatens their destruction. It is a constitutional influence, when the rich persuade the poor, without oppression. It is a constitutional influence, when the landlord calls upon his tenant to join him in securing the quiet possession of their common stock. It is a natural influence, when the employer urges to his workmen the necessity of laws, and the comforts of protection. It is a constitutional duty, to labour with every man, in the lowest as well as the highest ranks, in support of that system, by which the peasant, in his cottage, is as fully protected as the prince upon his throne: by which poverty may, by law, withstand the oppression of power, and the

highest

To contingents of the monarch are valid in of this service, only, when they are directed to the good of his people.

To abash, into their native obscurity, and becoming silence, those democratical factions, which are now become too clamorous to be any longer contemptible, it is imagined, that, if recourse must be had to such a measure, the most effectual resistance to them will be made by such a society, comprising none, but men of real independence, in the country, of every persuasion, who will declare their fixed resolve, to uphold a constitution, which time has proved to be better adapted than any other on earth, to preserve the happiness of the people.

To such a body, holding a firm, middle course, between the disquiet of faction, and the abuses of authority, any minister will anxiously look

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for support; and from such a whole poli-
turally receive counsel, which can nev. — They
and communications which will never be ho
heeded.

To such a society the people will successfully
look up, for a watchful and scrupulous guardian-
ship of their real security, against theoretical in-
novation and hasty change, as well as against the
encroachments of power, if by power encroach-
ments shall be attempted. By such a society
will those be kept from wandering into rash and
mischievous speculations, whose temper has all
the restlessness of political enterprize, and who,
by their talents and their station are destined to
be subordinate.

Whether there shall be any occasion to form
an union of this kind, will be, in a great degree,
determined by the conduct which you, Sir, shall
think

To continue the internal peace and prosperity of this kingdom ; to preserve the federal connection between it and Great Britain ; to maintain the constitution, and save the religion of the land, are the objects which may result from your present conduct. And, with views of so great and momentous a magnitude as these, rigour may cease to be severity : lenity may be no longer continue to be humane. Comproportion virtue modulation or strength. The honest, determined aspect of a body respectable, standing on the firm ground of the known constitution, will be able to look their staring horrors out of countenance.

But it is an expedient of great magnitude and some danger. From the combination of force, among a numerous and spirited people, while that force is determined toward extrinsic mischief, perhaps more of the advantage, than evil, will

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To such a society the people will successfully
look up, for a watchful and scrupulous guardian-
ship of their real security, against theoretical in-
government, and hasty change, as well as against the
and preserved. And to you, Sir, shall we
turally look for sufficient measures, for their
security and preservation.

I have already, Sir, suggested the mode which
appears the most eligible.

But, let the time pass, and the same conduct
which would be conclusive now, will, then, on-
ly serve to irritate and encrease the passions of
the discontented.

To

To continue the internal peace and prosperity of this kingdom ; to preserve the federal connection between it and Great Britain ; to maintain the constitution, and save the religion of the land, are the objects which may result from your present conduct. And, with views of so great and momentous a magnitude as these, rigour may cease to be severity : lenity may be no longer continue to be humane. Compromise, or accommodation, of any kind, for the present, must necessarily produce only further arrogance, and more flagrant sedition.

You cannot, Sir, be blinked to the glare of these menaces, with which the constitution is demanded of you. To make any concession, in such circumstances, nothing can be retained.— To retain the liberties and prosperity we have, nothing can be granted : and there is requisite to preserve those blessings to the people of this country,

country, but a firm, a cool and intrepid resolution, to yield nothing of that, of which no portion can be surrendered without the ruin of the entire.

I am, Sir,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

DUBLIN,
June 16, 1792.