

THE
PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES
OF A
UNION,
IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED.

Houses of the Oireachtas

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BY A BARRISTER.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED FOR J. MILLIKEN,
32, GRAFTON-STREET.

1799.

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SURELY it must be admitted, that in order to understand the Question of an Union, or any Question, it ought to undergo a temperate and sober discussion, unless we mean to incur the Ridicule of a Blunder, that is, in order to understand the merits and demerits of the Question, or whether it may be an advantage to Irishmen or not, we should prevent the discussion of it.

If the People of Ireland were convinced that a Union, or incorporation of our Legislature with that of Great Britain, would produce general satisfaction, and a permanent melioration of their condition, put an end to religious and party animosities, should they be convinced that their persons and properties would be protected, and that they could live in peace and security at home, (as is the case throughout Great Britain,) and that their manufactures, commerce, and agriculture, would be fully encouraged and protected; and should they be also convinced, that the attainment of these desirable objects cannot be procured without a Union with Great Britain, it would be an insult to the understandings of mankind to suppose that any rational being, and particularly that a sensible people should hesitate what part to act after such conviction; the subject is certainly worthy of cool, temperate, and deliberate consideration, or it will be impossible to determine whether it may be beneficial to this country or not. I shall, therefore, under the influence of a mind unprejudiced, and of a wish to reconcile all parties, submit such observations as appear

appear

appear suitable to the subject, under all the existing circumstances of both countries, to the temperate consideration and discussion of the true friends of Ireland.

History does not inform us, that the people of Ireland, at any time before her connection with England, had enjoyed a state of domestic security, or a constitution, or power, to preserve their persons and properties from violation. On the contrary, it is well authenticated, that, before the Irish people had connected themselves with England, they were constantly disturbed by civil wars, or foreign invasion; from both causes no country ever experienced more misfortune without any advantage: hence, the people, composed of different contending nations, with opposite interests, manners, and customs, disunited, and, distrustful of each other, existed in a continual scene of animosity and warfare; without commerce, arts, or industry, and accustomed to superstition, bigotry, and to the most savage and ferocious kind of warfare, set all manner of civil and commercial intercourse with foreign nations at defiance. Such was the miserable

rable and distracted situation of the Irish, when some of their petty tyrants, with which the country abounded, having fled from the persecutions of others more powerful, invited Henry II. of England to come over, invade, and conquer this country. Ireland divided, became an easy conquest; and thenceforth, tired of her former distracted and unhappy circumstances, submitted to Henry, and became, with common consent, a part of the possessions of, and dependent on, the Crown of England. Then the jealousy of France (evermore the common enemy of mankind, but particularly so of England, whom she considered as her rival,) arose to an high degree, and she never omitted an opportunity of attempting to separate Ireland from England, from a well-grounded supposition, that both countries, if well united, would become an over-match for her: this is a matter so well known and understood, that it seems perfectly unnecessary in this place to comment further on it. It is generally admitted by all well-informed persons in Great Britain and Ireland, that the condition of Ireland has been gradually improving since her first connection

connection with England, and particularly since the commencement of his present Majesty's Reign, her population has doubled; arts, industry, manufactures and commerce have been introduced and well encouraged, and a general confidence and friendship seemed to, and actually did, exist, among all ranks of the people; when France, in the career of Revolutionary madness, aided and invited by a few factious and desperate adventurers who had nothing to lose, blew up afresh in this country the dying embers of religious bigotry and national jealousy, the consequences of which are too recent to require further explanation.

It is certain Ireland cannot support herself as a free, separate, and independent nation, enjoying the fruits of commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, in that degree which her soil and situation have so eminently qualified her for; and the reason is obvious, even were experience and example wanting to prove it. Ireland, situated in the neighbourhood of the two most cultivated and powerful rival nations in the world, must
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be dependent on one or other of them. France, from her immense population and vast armies, has obtained superiority on the Continent of Europe only, while Great Britain, from her insular situation, superior industry, and wealth, arising from her unlimited commerce, supported by a Navy, the envy of France, and the admiration of the whole world, can alone check, and has always checked, the wicked and tyrannical ambition of France. Ireland, from her insular situation, and being so very near a neighbour and convenient to Great Britain, need not dread the armies or power of France, while our ports and trade are protected by the invincible navy of Great Britain. Hence it is obvious, which of the two rival nations it should be our interest to connect with. Britain is our nearest and dearest neighbour; already connected by every tie of mutual interest; and, what can be more certain, than that the closer our connection, the greater will be the benefit to both, particularly when both Countries enter into a just and fair agreement to that effect?

If, in a space of twenty years, Ireland has flourished in a degree beyond all former example, and unexpected by her, as it is certain she has done, through the friendship, protection, and assistance of Great Britain, what degree of improvement in wealth, industry, commerce, liberty and laws, may she not expect hereafter, when cemented with Great Britain, under their united Legislature and Government? then no distinction or preference will obtain; but mutual interest will operate throughout the united Empire of Great Britain and Ireland, acting as one nation. The result of such a Connection is obvious to every unprejudiced mind; the united kingdoms will become impregnable to France, or any other power; personal security, and property of every kind will be equally protected, and encouraged, and internal tranquillity and domestic comforts will be enjoyed by all his Majesty's subjects, while the Commerce of the Empire will bring us a degree of wealth, affluence, and consequence, never known before in Ireland; and pride, poverty, ignorance, bigotry, idleness

idleness and misery, so long our companions, will vanish for ever.

It may be asked, how can a Union extinguish religious bigotry and animosity? I will answer, that an equitable Union once established, will be the most probable and certain way of extinguishing all religious bigotry and party animosities.

The Roman Catholics amount in number to about three-fifths of the inhabitants of Ireland, and we have the authority of their nobility, bishops, principal clergy, and of their most respectable gentry, that they consider themselves, (since the principal restraints and disabilities, they formerly laboured under, were removed, by the kindness and affection of a beneficent Protestant King, and a liberal Protestant Parliament) to enjoy nearly as great a share of civil and religious liberty, as they could or ought to expect, with safety to that King, that Parliament, and to the Constitution; and which Constitution, and King, the greater part, or I believe the whole body of the principal Roman Catholics in Ireland, have from time to time sworn to protect,

protect, maintain and defend ; nor in fact is any thing to be feared from that respectable body ; notwithstanding the great number of the lowest order of that religion were by the wicked insinuations and artful conduct of a few unprincipled and desperate republicans, of no religion, seduced to join in the late unnatural and savage rebellion ; but which infamous rebellion, the great and respectable body of Roman Catholics in every part of the kingdom, assisted with heart and hand to suppress and extinguish. Even supposing, though not in any degree admitting, danger to be apprehended from the Roman Catholics, on account of their superiority in numbers, even in that case, an Union is the most certain and probable way of extinguishing any foolish claims that might endanger the safety of the Constitution of these kingdoms, and particularly the prosperity of Ireland ; for their numbers in the united empire of Great Britain and Ireland, would be very inconsiderable, in proportion to the number of Protestants ; and when once they find themselves and their neighbours of every other sect alike engaged in extensive commerce, manufactures and agriculture, all foolish

religious disputes and animosities will effectually subside, sink into indistry, and for ever vanish throughout the united kingdoms. And I am confident every honest and unprejudiced Roman Catholic in Ireland, conscious of the kind and paternal intention of our gracious Sovereign, in establishing a proper seminary for the education of their clergy; and when a suitable provision is made for their comfortable subsistence as in the event of an Union, would be the case, will find himself interested in supporting and maintaining a constitution and establishment, that protects their civil and religious liberties.

Much has been said by the United Irishmen, and their malevolent abettors, about the conduct and views of Orangemen; they have insidiously and industriously propagated every where, that the institution of Orangemen, is merely to exterminate the Roman Catholics. I am happy to have it in my power, to prove that the Orangemen never associated against the Roman Catholics, or any other religious sect; for their principle was, and is, to defend and protect the King and Constitution, against all enemies

enemies of whatever description they might be; and surely it is past all doubt, that the late rebellion was not a Popish rebellion; for though it is admitted that a great number of the lower order of the people concerned in it, were Roman Catholics, yet it will never be forgot that mostly all the leaders, instigators, and promoters of it, were either professed Protestants, Presbyterians, Methodists, and republicans of every sect, who, through desperate circumstances, arising from their profligacy and idleness, and the want of any just principle of religion or morality, after the recent and infamously tyrannical example of modern France, expected to get that wealth and independence, in the general confusion, by murders and robberies, which, in a settled state of civil society, their abandoned infamy, idleness, and want of industry, must have refused them; when a loyal and well-minded part of the people find such encouragement and protection as is consistent with the general safety of the whole, they will not only continue loyal and faithful, but they will with their lives and properties support and defend that Constitution and Govern-
 ment

ment that gives them security and protection; and the Roman Catholic, once enjoying such protection and security, will prefer that establishment and constitution to any promised, and delusive innovation, which if successful would certainly destroy and overturn, all religious and civil societies, and render property of every kind precarious, and dangerous to the existence of its possessor.

The experience of many ages has fully proved, that the prosperity of Ireland has been principally and constantly checked by religious and party quarrels; and it is also certain that Ireland has been, from the earliest time that history informs us of, until her connection with England, a bone of contention among the several powers of Europe, and that she never could maintain herself independent of either of them. Why then, should we hesitate, to put ourselves in that situation which only can procure, and protect, our future peace, prosperity and happiness?

When we are united with Great Britain under the same laws, legislature and Government,

vernment, our interests will in all respects be the same, the wealth, happiness and strength of the empire will be perceived and felt in every part of it, and proportionably shared by all its subjects without distinction. Then we shall bless the Union, and with our lives and properties protect it, and that happy Constitution, which all the world envy and admire, and the best informed writers have allowed to be the excellence of human wisdom. Let me here subjoin another reason for an Union: Great Britain and Ireland united in legislation, will through every vein receive the flow of united strength, which under two *jarring, distinct, and separate legislatures* they can never enjoy in a perfect and salutary degree, and the incorporation of the two Parliaments will positively prevent *the continuance of an unnecessary and immense annual expence to both countries.*

If an *equitable* Union is once established, the inhabitants of Ireland will find themselves deeply engaged in extensive agriculture, industry, and commerce; the minds of the people will expand with their means;
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their knowledge and civilization, will sweeten their manners, all parties will be ashamed of, and bury in oblivion, every degree of animosity, from whatever source it had descended, or proceeded; industry will occupy the mind, and the probable consequences will be a constant and uninterrupted internal peace; our numerous bogs and unprofitable mountains will be drained and reclaimed, which will more than doubly increase the population and wealth of the country; and which most desirable improvements the former distracted and miserable state of Ireland has heretofore prevented, nor is it likely, under the present jarring system, to grow better. An equitable Union with so very wealthy and powerful a nation as Great Britain, must attract to us a vast proportion of that wealth and power, which will ultimately tend to improve and reclaim our country every way; so much so, that along with her natural situation and fertile soil, it will then be desirable, and *perhaps fashionable*, to reside in Ireland; but what man in our present and past circumstances would of choice
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live in a wretched and divided country, full of rancour and animosity, among our ignorant, miserable and idle peasantry, addicted by custom to thieving and drunkenness, and impatient of all civil restraint and lawful subordination?

It must be admitted by every candid and unprejudiced person, that this is a subject that ought, at this critical juncture, to be well weighed in the scale of reason, and meet with a temperate and sober discussion. And if the foregoing statement of probable consequences is admitted, and likely to prove the result of an Union, how, in the name of God, should we hesitate to embrace so favourable an opportunity of improving our country and properties, and of securing both, in future, *from the designs of United Rebels, and their French Masters?* However, my Countrymen, if you should, after a fair and temperate discussion of this most important subject, be convinced that you can be better off, and maintain yourselves, without a Union, as a separate, independent State, (which, considering all circumstances, I conceive

conceive to be morally impossible) reject it: but, I foresee your good sense will decide, and conclude, under all circumstances, that you can never maintain the peace, security, and prosperity of your country, without the assistance and protection of Great Britain, which every sensible Irishman ought to promote and encourage to the utmost. For several years past, and particularly since the commencement of the French Revolution, have not the desperate and destructive Schemes of the United Irish Conspirators spread terror through every part of this unfortunate country? Scarcely a nobleman, a gentleman, of any religion, unless he entered into, or winked at the conspiracy, escaped being robbed of his arms! and were not great numbers of the most loyal subjects murdered for resisting such robberies? and is not the system of murder and robbery still continued? have not war and invasion by our enemies, and savage desolation, been carried into practice, by armed and ferocious beggars, influenced by Republican Conspirators, leagued with the infernal

fernal Directory of France, to massacre or banish every man of property or respectability in the Kingdom, and seize upon property in general, for their own wicked purposes? nor could their designs be prevented, (notwithstanding the loyalty and spirited bravery of our gallant Yeomanry Corps and Militia) without the well-timed pecuniary and military aid afforded us by Britain? It cannot be denied, 'tis recorded, and certain, beyond all doubt. Therefore, let us now, or never, effectually guard against similar attempts; for, my loyal Countrymen, beware! the designs of our enemies are not dropped; they only wait for another opportunity of carrying them into effect; and, if not prevented and counteracted by a just and immediate consolidation of the United Wisdom and Force of the Empire, our lives and properties will be the forfeit.

Cannot Articles of a Union be so framed as to encrease our wealth and population, by the encouragement of arts, agriculture, and commerce in general? Cannot residence be enforced, and emigration be prevented,

vented, without inconvenience to individuals? and cannot this Country be benefited without injury to Great Britain? If so, why exclaim against an Equitable Union, (for to no other will we ever consent,) on mere improbable supposition? The arguments used against a Union are not maintainable; and every case cited against the measure, fails in the scale of common sense and reason. Scotland, and Scotchmen, have been highly benefited by their Union, and will ever continue to benefit by it. And surely, by the force of equitable Articles of Union between Great Britain and Ireland, a share of every benefit and advantage may be secured to us, without injustice to either Country, or to any party. That something may be speedily done, in a temperate and friendly manner, likely to protect our persons and properties; to heal discontent; and give Wealth and Prosperity to Ireland and Irishmen, has ever been, and ever will be, the sincere wish, of a Friend to HUMANITY.—

A BARRISTER.

THE END.

OBSERVATION

PAMPHLET

INTENDED TO BE READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST AN

UNION

BY A STUDENT OF TRINITY COLLEGE

UNION

NEW-YORK: PUBLISHED BY J. M. HARRIS, 10 N. 2D ST. 1847

1847

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