

A
R E P L Y
TO THE
M E M O I R E
O F
THEOBALD Mc.KENNA, Esq.
On some Questions touching the
PROJECTED UNION
O F
GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

By MOLYNEUX.

———" Thou'rt no more !
———" Thy Land of Liberty !
" Thy House of Heroes, and thy Seat of Virtues,
" Is now the Tomb where thy brave Sons lie speechless,
" And foreign Snakes engender !"

GUSTAVUS VASA.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY H. FITZPATRICK, NO. 2, UPPER ORMOND-QUAY.

1799.

REPLY

TO MR. O'CONNOR

THOMAS MAC KENNA, Esq.

On the Question concerning the

PROJECTED UNION

GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND

BY JOHN HOLLYN

DUBLIN

1833

TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN.

I NATURALLY inscribe this Essay to you, for whose advantage it was written: Could I awake my countrymen from the fatal delirium and torpor that renders them so indifferent to their interest, and persuade them of the high importance of the subject on which I now address them, my object would be fully compleated.—A subject of greater importance, I will be bold to say, was never discussed, than that of an Union with Britain; for should it in the end prove detrimental to Ireland, it never can be revoked, altho' jealousies, misconceptions, and collisions of a mercantile nature, may occur—it is Great-Britain that will decide—you may rest assured, in her own favour; nor can you blame her for it, for you *yourselves* will have weakly acquiesced to be united to her FOR EVER—"for better or for worse." If an Union, my friends, was advantageous to Scotland, why were her Peers and Commissioners, &c. purchased *for gold*? If an Union, as we are *told*, is *so very advantageous* to Ireland, why did not the *sagacity* of a Pitt discover it ten years ago? If beneficial to poor Ireland, why should the people have been hitherto so averse to it? If advantageous, why have the *real friends* to Ireland ever supported her independence, and invariably opposed violations of her Constitution, *less*—VERY FAR LESS injuri-

ous to her interest, than an Union? Let the advocates for taxation reply, for they are well acquainted with the *reasons* for an union of Legislatures; but I must confess, I cannot—never will suppose that the Irish Parliament, who so spiritedly and strenuously supported the Constitution—who in 1795, suspended the Habeas Corpus Act—who in the same year passed the Convention Bill, the Indemnity Act, and the Insurrection Bill—who appointed Secret Committees in 1797 and 1798, and who in the latter year continued the Insurrection Act!—that Parliament who supported the Constitution, and punished with death those who attempted to subvert it—I never can admit that the Parliament of Ireland are about to destroy that Constitution, by an union of Legislatures! But should my speculations prove erroneous, as an Irishman I address myself to Irish freemen, for the last time, perhaps, to warn them of their danger—for the last time *certainly, as a freeman*, should an Union take place—Ireland then for ever sets in the West, “to rise no more!!!”

MOLYNEUX.

R E P L Y,

&c. &c.

A MEMOIRE, with the Author's name annexed, having been published, is a sufficient justification of this Address. But I must here premise, that the following Essay is intended only to answer *that part* of the "*Memoire respecting the projected Union*," where that pamphlet has a reference to the Union. I have read productions of that writer with great pleasure, in favour of a numerous description of my countrymen—the Catholics of Ireland; to which body, if I do not mistake, the author of the "*Memoire*" belongs. With what regret, then, did I read a work, sanctioning a measure so injurious to Ireland, as an Union—an overthrow of the Irish constitution! One who had so ably, and so successfully distinguished himself in the proud career, of supporting three-fourths of the people of Ireland, against penal laws, now sallies forth to overthrow the liberties of *all* the people of Ireland, and becomes suddenly the champion of a junto, he had so ably and so honourably opposed!—I reflect with regret, that infallibility is not the lot of mankind—that changeableness is not the partial characteristic of any particular soil, nor apostacy confined to any allotted portion of the globe—that France had a Raynal, a Mirabeau—England, a Pitt—and Ireland, a Burke.

You

You will do me, Sir, the justice to believe that, throughout this Reply, I do not mean any disrespect, nor I hope, written any thing that can give you for a moment an unpleasing reflection ; one sole motive actuates me throughout the whole—my love and partiality for my native country—to endeavour to represent the pernicious effects, the almost incalculable mischief, that would result to this country from an incorporation of legislatures!—these are the considerations that have dragged me once more reluctantly on the political stage. I may receive the disapprobation of many, but I hope not from the real friends to my country. At all events, my exit will be accompanied with the pleasing reflection, that my efforts were intended for the best.

No one can lament more than I do, “ our dissensions and our calamities ;” but I cannot see how this should call forth for an Union, which you mean, I presume, by “ a final arrangement “ of the politics of this island.” It does not appear, that an Union would terminate those dissensions and calamities, but have a contrary effect, and tend to alienate, in a most alarming degree, the affections of the people of this country from its connection with Great-Britain. It is not, Sir, by what you write, or any gentleman for or against the measure, that the Parliament of Ireland will be directed ; no, it is by *the wishes of the mass of the people of Ireland*, and not the selfish views of any party ; it is not by the embryo Irish Representative, studious to catch the Minister’s nod, in the Parliament of the British empire ! It is not by the self-interested Merchant at Waterford, Cork, or elsewhere, who is *told*, “ an Union will be advantageous to those places.” It is not by any description of persons, but the preponderating majority

majority of the Irish people that will direct our Parliament in the measure. As to "simplifying" our constitution" by an Union, it is an incomprehensible position, monstrous, enigmatical *quod-cunque ostendes mihi sic incredulus odi.* "Simplifying:"—No, Sir, it is ANNIHILATING the Irish constitution FOR EVER!!! And I am firmly convinced that an Union, so far from tending to "tranquillize Ireland (*as you assert it would*) by removing a great domestic cause of "irritation," would but establish a greater "domestic cause of irritation, to ALL the people of Ireland," when they would be continually reminded, that her legislation was not simplified, but annihilated, irrecoverably annihilated! "An Union (you say) considered in the abstract, does not strike you with that assemblage of horrors, which some persons appear to feel." I cannot answer for any gentleman's feelings, but my own, which are highly repugnant to any Union, *on any terms that Great-Britain could now, or even hereafter, bestow.* Once Ireland is besotted, or weak enough, to give up for ever, or for any period however short, her separate legislation, that is, her power of making and repealing laws—once she surrenders the right and power of taxing the people, and the grand check of the Irish constitution, the palladium of Irishmen, *the granting or withholding supplies*—this country is no longer free, whether she be under the government of the British constitution reformed, or under a foreign Republican form of government, a country so submitting is an abject slave, a contemptible colony. As to an Union, being "a question merely of terms." Would to God its merits rested on the mere terms, and it would not, I think, be difficult to prove, that however specious the terms may be (and alluring they certainly

certainly will, should the measure be proposed) that we never can have any security for the inviolability of those terms, which is proved by the instance of the breach of the terms of the Scottish Union; and were I to rake up the history of Ireland, I could point out a treaty that was violated in defiance of the most solemn compact, by England; but let it be buried in oblivion; “I am no friend to posthumous resentment.” What security can a subordinate and a weaker power have against the attempts of the stronger? Self interest sways mankind, from “*Indus to the Pole*;” and whenever it might be the convenience of any manufacturing town in England, to do away *any*, or *all*, of the terms of an incorporate Union of the British and Irish legislatures, that town or borough would but have to instruct its Representatives in the Senate of the empire. It then would be proclaimed to the Commons, how highly advantageous to Great-Britain that measure was, altho’ injurious to Ireland!! The question is put, and Ireland is outvoted by *five to one!!!* What terms, then, can induce Ireland to be weak enough to resign her separate independent legislature? Assuredly by none, save the enslaved and the corrupted! And never can I suppose, altho’ the question of an Union might be agitated, that it would pass the Legislature! a measure that would at once annihilate the Commons of the Irish Parliament, render the Peerage of Ireland a mere nullity, and the whole Body of the Irish People a mere morbid mass, a drove of Irish live stock, whom their herdsmen may then go sell to the highest bidder at Smithfield, or Westminster! I do then, Sir, think that no Treaty of Union, however advantageous the terms may profess to be, is admissible on the part of this kingdom. Ireland, to give
up

up her liberty as an independent state (altho' allied to Britain) her legislature, and every advantage thence derivative! no, never. "But it would be an Union;" *it would not be an Union*; it would be tearing up by the root the scion of the Irish constitution, and engrafting it on an aged trunk, to cause an absorption of power, of consequence, of every thing dear to man on the one part, to blossom forth on Britain! a monstrous aggrandizement of power and wealth on the part of Britain, and the total privation thereof on the part of Ireland, *This is the Union?* Such a monster could never be long-lived, could never resist the invader; he would fall lifeless at the feet of the first assailant, and throw open those gates to the enemy, that he was stationed to guard. We then might say,

*Hence wasting ills, hence se'ring factions rose,
And gave large entrance to invading foes.*

An Union, so unnaturally pressed on, or forced against the inclination of one of the parties, could never be binding; disgust and separation must inevitably ensue; and the injured party being studious to seek retaliation, a divorce *a Vinculo Matrimonii*, must ensue forever!!!

You assert, Sir, "You have no grounds to form a conjecture, that the liberties of the Irish people may not be as secure under the superintendence of an imperial, as of a domestic legislature." This is begging the question; and yet, in your next sentence, I find your own refutation, in your own words, thus: "Few men have ever been invested with power, who did not feel a

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" disposition

“ disposition to exceed the limits regularly pre-
 “ scribed!!!” Are you, Sir, arguing *for* or
against an Union? If such be the disposition of
 mankind as *you* have represented, why should
 Ireland give up that power, by an Union, to
 those who feel, or may be inclined, “ to exceed
 “ the limits regularly prescribed?” I know not.
 Your words are decidedly against it. I believe
 you are against it in your own mind, or you would
 have argued “ the worse cause” better than you’ve
 done. I don’t know exactly what you mean
 by “ Parliamentary Tribunals.” Had you men-
 tioned *Military*, we should not have been in the
 dark. If you speak of the Secret Committees of
 both Houses of the Irish Legislature, you must
 be aware, that those *Tribunals* would then neces-
 sarily be no more. “ A single institution (you
 “ assert) of controul, may be productive of es-
 “ sential service, and yet, Two as well as
 “ Twenty, may be excessive, inconvenient, and
 “ dangerous.” That is to say, the power of an
 absolute Monarch over his people, “ may be pro-
 “ ductive of essential service.” But the check
 of the Two Estates of the Constitution, the Lords
 “ and Commons of England, and the Lords and
 Commons of Ireland, “ as well as Twenty, may
 “ be excessive, inconvenient, and dangerous.” This
 indeed is reviving the *quod principi placuit, legis
 habet vigorem*, with a vengeance! It hence follows
 from your proposition, that the Two branches of
 the Legislatures of both kingdoms, the Lords
 and Commons, should be removed, as being “ ex-
 “ cessive, inconvenient, and dangerous,” and no fur-
 ther necessity for them, under the existing cir-
 cumstances!!! O excellent advocate for arbitrary
 power! But there was a time, when to promul-
 gate such doctrines, would have met with im-
 prisonment

prisonment from the legislature, as a gross and flagrant breach of privilege.

You define the liberties of the people to be, “ the confidence which every man ought to feel, “ that he may safely and freely do every act. “ which is not forbidden by the laws, for the “ welfare of the community.” They have the *liberty* you speak of, in Portugal, in Spain, in China, in Japan ; but then *the laws are there tyrannical*. If the laws be tyrannical, how can a people possess *liberties*, let their conformity and obedience to those laws be ever so great ? The definition is a bad one ; I am aware it is that of the Emperor Justinian, and taken for granted by Judge Blackstone. But Mr. Christian, a Professor of the Laws of England, reprobates the definition, which he calls an “ *absurd one*,” and adds, “ *in every country, and under all circumstances*, the subjects possess *the liberty* described by “ this definition.” As you defined Liberty, allow me to give you the definition of Slavery, as it is defined by Justinian, whom you have quoted from. “ Slavery (says he) is that constitution of the law of nations, where any state “ is subject to a foreign rule, contrary to the “ law of nature*.” Yet such is the state Ireland would be reduced to, when her Legislature would be no more, but incorporated with Great-Britain !”

You speak of the laws, you are a Lawyer, and you must know that the man who endeavours to subvert the Constitution of Ireland, is guilty of high treason, whether that person be a Secretary or a Barrister. In your catalogue of the

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advantages

* Servitus autem est Constitutio Juris Gentium, qua quis dominio alieno, contra naturam subicitur.

Justinian's Institutes, L. 1. T. III. 2.

advantages of the Irish Constitution, you state the consequences, but slur over the cause of them, the constitution of King, Lords and Commons of Ireland. It is this constitution, that is the sole “guarantee,” of the rights, the laws and the happiness of Ireland. ! You say, “Peers, and Representatives are but the means.” If you give up the means for ever, how can you secure the end? If you destroy the originating prolific cause, how prevent the effect from being annihilated? You say “what reason is there to *suppose* that the supreme tribunals of the Union, “may not be as open to complaint, &c. &c. as “our Irish Parliament?” I answer in such a momentous subject as an Union, supposition should be laid aside; nothing but *facts* should be held out by the *advocates* of such a *monstrous* measure as an Union.

You say, “to many it would be highly pleasing to erect an independent government on “every ten square miles of Europe.”—I never heard of these *new lights*—they are not at least imported from the *one and indivisible*! the French Republic.

The policy of that Government has been, to consolidate its possessions, and every state to which its plunder and its oppression extended, was certain of being *fraternally* joined, not of having “an independent Government erected on every ten square miles!!!” Do you hold out such conduct as this, for the adoption of England? I am aware I am sure you do not—you might as well hold out the example of the piratical corsairs, as an example to England, as such a dogma as this. But Sir, “this argument (as a late learned Law Lord expressed it) cuts the other way” and with greater force, for admitting the argument in its fullest

fullest extent, it would go to prove that from experience it was found, and from "the passions arising from local attachment," (as you express it), from pique, prejudice, passion, interest and a variety of causes; that war had been waged for those 1800 years and upwards, and finding from the plurality of governments, (altho' not on every ten square miles of Europe) that it would be highly advantageous for the peace, security and happiness of mankind, that those plurality of States, Empires and Dominations, should be done away, and one government, *one and indivisible* should dictate laws to a willing People. ! Suppose one of those three, the Grand Turk, the Dey of Algiers, or the Cham of Tartary, was to be selected out as the Chief of this Political Milenium—this second Saturnian age !—How would Great Britain scoff and despise such a mad proposal !!! Suppose the King of Great Britain, was with the consent of Parliament, to make the island of Anglesey, Wight, Jersey or Man, the seat of Government; in such case, it would prevent "*avenues being thrown open for faction, and disunion, among the people as you say*, to have the Empire consolidated, and enable that Isle so chosen as the seat of Government, to have a Parliament of its own; suppose that to effect this consolidation of the Empire, the Parliament, or rather the two estates, the Lords and Commons, upon meeting, should consider of an incorporating Union with the isle of Man, or Jersey, and have a Parliament *one and indivisible* to be annually held !!! suppose this to pass into law; would the people of England be bound by it? they would not; so far from it, they would be absolved from their allegiance—allegiance and protection being reciprocal,

cal, and the King and People bound to preserve the Constitution and Laws of the Realm!! You say, "how much more real importance Ireland will derive when by the share in the general representation, which she is entitled to obtain, she will be enabled to influence in *some respects* the councils of the empire." I deny the position, has Scotland derived more importance since she has shared in the representation? she has not, what are her 16 Peers and her 45 Commoners? do they influence the councils of the empire? 45 to 500 are rather too great odds! the influence you hint to, is, I presume that of the mother state? I apprehend you—but this is the very reason that Ireland should never acquiesce in an Union on any terms, as her representatives would for ever in a collision of interests be outvoted by Britain—one to overpower* or even influence five!!! *risum teneatis?* you say Sir, it is "the essential interest of Ireland, to be closely combined with Britain"—it certainly is the "essential interest" not only of Ireland but of England, that the connection should continue between the two countries; but how they can be more closely combined, without the Irish sea retires from its channel, and leaves dry ground, I cannot devine! An Union, would for ever prove "a great" and serious "domestic cause of irritation" to all the people of Ireland: I cannot agree with your proposition that, "an incorporation of all the powers of the two states executive and legislative, is *the most permanent and eligible form of connection.*" I think it would have a contrary effect, that instead of rendering that

* This would be the ratio of Irish Representatives to British, that is supposing Ireland to have *so many*, as 100 Members in the Senate of the Empire.

that connection permanent, it would be the direct means of the dissolution of the connection—during the late Rebellion (supposing an Union to have been effected) will any one be so credulous as to believe that the Yeomanry would have acted with the zeal and loyalty they then so eminently manifested? surely not—if during the late Rebellion, the mass of the people of Ireland had been disgusted with Great Britain; (still supposing the Rebellion to have happened subsequent to an Union) and that the Nobles and Gentry of Ireland, had headed their Tenants? what situation would Ireland be in at this day?!!! “

I do agree with you Sir, that Ireland should “cultivate the connection, “with every *reasonable* assiduity.” But I cannot see how reason authorizes us to transfer to another state our liberties, our power, and our constitution, to which we are indebted, for the independence of Ireland—a Free Trade, independent Judges, the extension of our Commerce, Manufactures, Canals, and the improvements of the Metropolis, and of the nation at large.!!! That Constitution to which we are indebted for those great advantages, we are required to surrender to another nation! By the same mode of arguing, you might as well propose that England should surrender her Constitution and graft it on the stock of that of the Irish! Certain it is from the deductions you lay down, this is to be inferred: You say, “suppose France, should intrigue herself into an establishment in this country.” I answer, at present I cannot admit this supposition; France has already endeavoured

deavoured to "*intrigue*" herself into this country, and she has failed. What *intrigues*, then, can she successfully carry against this country? But suppose an Union with Great-Britain; it would be the watch-word to France, instantly to fit out a fleet against this island, and by intrigues and every effort, to wrest it from Great-Britain. France receives the British newspapers, and she cannot be ignorant how decidedly unpopular, how expressly hostile, the measure of an Union with Great-Britain is to *every Irishman*. I think an Union replete with unceasing "dissensions, "factions, discontents, fluctuating, discordant," and perpetual! And I shrink back with horror at the event! We then, indeed, would be "in jeopardy," "confirmed beyond all "hazard."

"But people talk of the national debt of England, and what then?" (you assert) "though not legally, we are at this hour effectively pledged to support, with our resources, the credit of Great-Britain." When it shall have passed into a law in the Irish Parliament, we are; but I strenuously contend for it, Ireland would not be bound *de jure*, in case of an incorporation of Legislatures, to participate the national debt of Britain, however the measure might be forced at the bayonet's point. O, "*what a blessed consolation!!*" the disadvantages, "dissensions, factions, discontents," attendant on a resignation of our Legislature, are incalculable. Judge Blackstone, speaking of the Three Estates of our constitution, says, "it is highly necessary, for "preserving

“ preserving the balance of our constitution, that
 “ the Executive Power should be a branch, tho’
 “ not the whole of the Legislature.” And what
 is an union of the British and Irish Legislatures,
 but the surrender, *for ever*, of the Two Branches
 of the Legislature of Ireland, ONLY retaining the
 Third ! Giving up our Houses of Peers and
 Commons, as mere nullities, and throwing the
 power of the Two Estates into that of the Crown,
 which the same learned Judge I have just
 quoted, positively says, “ WOULD BE PRODUC-
 “ TIVE OF TYRANNY!!!” The imminent dan-
 ger of such an *innovation* need hardly be menti-
 oned. If we look back to the History of England,
 we will *there* find, *that* the enormous power of
 the Crown, created AN UNION between the No-
 bility and the People; that they both successfully
 opposed King John, and Henry Third. And if
 we look still farther back, we will find that the
 enormous power of the Crown, created that
indissoluble Union of the people, so early as under
 the Norman Monarchs. By acquiescing to an
 Union, the people of Ireland give up—*for ever*,
irrevocably give up, the greatest privilege a nation
 can possess, namely, that of “ framing and pro-
 posing New Laws*.”

But it may be said, even if an Union takes
 place, we will still have *Representatives* ! I will not
 cavil at the term ;—granted; you will have *Repre-*
sentatives ! But I reply, the merely appointing or
 electing them for the Parliament of the empire, is
 very inconsiderable—it is nugatory, when you
 by an incorporation of Legislatures, transfer the
 Legislature of Ireland to another realm, and re-
 sign the authority of *what was* her Parliament,
 to that of the empire !! But believe me, (grant-
 ing an Union to succeed) your Representatives

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in

* De Lolme on the Constitution.

in the Parliament of the empire, will be but as a drop in the ocean! when Ireland shall be jostled out of her Two Branches of her constitution, indeed her Representatives at the Cockpit, Whitehall, will prove not strong enough to espouse the cause of Ireland; besides, it will be unfashionable to do so; it would not pourtray the air of a fashionable gentleman to smell of the turf of boggy Ireland; one would not be singular, and therefore would be *ashamed* to exhibit the *Irish brogue* in the British Senate—"the very Irish dogs have a brogue," as Mrs. Diggerty says in the play. Our Representatives, at all events, will prove ineffectual to Ireland, in their efforts to assist her, when she shall cease to be a nation, and they will prove to be an useless, unnecessary expence—the most obnoxious of our Absentees. But supposing them ever so virtuous, and friends to their country, what impression can they make on the selfish isolated owners of India stock, &c, their efforts, however well-intentioned, would prove ineffectual to their country's weal, and but remind her, when she reads the public papers that would record her downfall, and *her loss of national honour*—what she was—and *what* she then would be!

How is it possible to gloss over, or cram down this dark—this deep-laid political artifice—an Union?—But "it will be of advantage to the empire—it will heal the politico-religious differences;" and if Ireland should suffer in the contest—in population—manufacture, (which you acknowledge England *was not ever inclined to increase*) in wealth and in agriculture.—*Oh!* still Ireland will serve as a Barrack, a Prison, a
Barrier

Barrier against the *One and Indivisible* — the French! Yes,

*Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
May stop a hole, to keep the wind away.*

a very pretty consolation truly!

What is it, Sir, you are contending to give up? *The important Right of Taxation*, forsooth, and generously break our own necks, by participating the national debt of England! Believe me we are unequal to the task; England does not require it of us; that great and commercial nation has great and incalculable resources in herself, and she need not strangle a younger sister in its cradle, to possess herself of its birth-right! No, I cannot believe it; nor can I for a moment think, that an Irish House of Commons, who have ever jealously and vigilantly vindicated *that Great Right of Taxation*, against the encroachments of their own House of Peers, will ever tamely or pusillanimously resign it, to a House of Commons *beyond the seas*; nor *can* they resign the power of making and repealing laws, which “is not a gratuitous contract, and in which the people are to take what is given them, and as it is given them.” No; “it is a contract in which they buy and pay.*” As “to the national debt of England being effaced by a bankruptcy,” I do not see the slightest probability of it, and therefore will not pursue this calamitous *ignis fatuus*. The credit of Britain gives efficacy to her resources,” undeniable. She is the very “Colossus” of Rhodes! and never “may that Colossus that bestrides the world,” crush the youthful efforts of Ireland, in her population, her commerce, or her manufactures! “What

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“would

* De Lolme on the Constitution.

“ *would become of this island*, (you tauntingly ask) unprotected and unprepared for the event, “ if the artificial power of Britain were subverted?” It don’t necessarily follow that we should be sunk in the sea, or carried off by the “ artificial power” of this political earthquake! I am at the same time aware of the advantages that result from the British connection. Still, however, the balance is not on our side; those advantages are mutual and reciprocal.

I will invert your question, “ *What would become of England*, if Ireland were for ever separated, ultimately, from her thro’ the *medium* of “ an incorporating Union?” “ Britain covers “ the ocean with her fleet!” She does, but they are manned for the most part by Irish sailors; two-thirds are Irishmen; the armies of Britain are composed in a great degree of Irishmen: add to these, the other points in which Ireland is of consequence to Britain, she victuals her fleets, she supplies the British markets with linens, and supplies England with the redundancy of her corn.— “ *What will become of us?*” What became of us during the American war, when unprotected by the navy or by the armies of Great-Britain, our coasts lay exposed to the invader? We did very well. Irish courage, the immortal heroic Volunteers of Ireland (*that an impudent publication presumes to traduce*) sprung up, armed to defend their country’s rights, and support the connection with Britain. “ What became of us” in 1796, when the proud invader was anchored in Bantry? The Yeomanry, and the People of Ireland, opposed the foe with success; he perceived he was deceived, that the nation was armed to oppose him, and he retired! What became of Ireland in May last, when a dreadful and formidable rebellion

lion raged? She out-lived the storm of faction.

You admit that Great Britain's "former treatment of Ireland was culpable," that is before 1782, and yet you are pleading for an Union; but this is explained in a passage that soon follows; where you say "I must not dissemble that these "sentiments originate in a great partiality to the sister nation," (that is England.) I am no friend, no more than you, "to posthumous resentments," but as the former conduct of Great Britain to Ireland was culpable,—should an Union be effected, we can only judge of the *future* conduct of that country towards us by inference—the retrospect of her *past*—we can only judge what the probable conduct of England would be after an Union, towards this Island, by recollecting, without the slightest "*posthumous resentment*," "that England's former conduct was culpable," and as you so well express it, "we all know how prone we little mortals are to fall on each other."!!—how cautious then should we be, never to resign our Legislature, or surrender that important trust.—*Oh, never let it perish in our hands, but piously transmit it to our Children!* I agree with you, no intercourse can be so beneficial to Ireland, "as that of Great Britain," and I lament it is not more extended; that is not the fault of this Country? we ardently wish for an enlarged participation of the trade of England; but to effect this, we will never barter our Constitution for traffic. Never!!! "The finances of Great Britain can never fail whilst they are managed with ability." It may be so; but as to the simile of "the right hand settling accounts with

with the left !” It is above my comprehension : I believe often, too often, the right hand knows not what the left gives away ;”—not in charity—and too often the greatest proportion of the body politic is numbed and distressed, by this political gambling, and juggling of “ right and left !” With regard to the various inventions, and discoveries in mechanics, and chemistry, I cannot see, how they are either “ better than paying off the debt of the American war !” which cost England £.130,000,000! or why those discoveries, and inventions might not have taken place, altho’ Columbus had never discovered America ; and that the British nation had been unembarrassed by a debt of £.500,000,000,—might not those discoveries have been found out on at least as equally advantageous terms, if neither of these contingences had occurred ? As you are so strenuous an advocate for the “ exertions of the Empire,” I will do you the justice, altho’ you pass by America “ being lost thro’ the impolicy of ministry, to suppose that you regret her being cut off from the empire, by the very measure you are now contending should be adopted to this kingdom !!

But “ from France we will draw back, *as we have done from America*, a part of the expences of the contest.” I never heard of any *draw back* from America, save the one hundred and thirty millions of debt, we incurred from our impolitic conduct towards her! But “at the return of peace” you say “ France will disgorge the plunder of the Continent into the English counting-houses. ! This certainly is a pretty rhetorical figure—it would be a fine subject for a Hogarth ; France disgorging by anticipation all the plunder of the Continent,

Continent, all the images of gold and of silver, the crucifixes, the bells, the paintings of Raphael, Rubens and Vandyke, the plunder of the chapel of Loretto, all the antient statues, the famed Lacon,

* *The Statue that enchants the World,*

and the Apollo of Belvidere, all tumbling pell mell, *headlong*, into our merchant's counting houses, by anticipation.!!! You say, "those sentiments originate in great partiality to the sister nation; but it is a partiality founded on a sense of her virtues," has Ireland no virtues? Read the English papers, look under the head of the King's-Bench, or Doctor's Commons, title *crim. con.* and you will have "a sense of her virtues." I do not wish to detract from the greatness and virtue of the British nation; but I never can admit that Ireland is inferior to her in virtues, however she, may be her proud superior in that respect; as to the country being disgraced by the rebellion, England had years of rebellion; so that that position does not militate against the virtues of my country. You next come to speak of the Irish Catholic, and say "his habits" "do not indispose him to the glory of the British Empire." I am sure they do not; and I hope that the habits of the Irish Catholic, will never dispose him, *under any circumstances*, to wish for the annihilation of his native country; and am certain there are men amongst that body, of as great virtue, honour and true patriotism as amongst any description in the state.

You observe "how many controversies have been moved on the reciprocal obligations of Great Britain and Ireland, as fraternal states," if you acknowledge this, in the name of candour or

* *Venus de Medicis.*

or sense, how can an Union be effected? If on trivial questions, "controversies" have arisen respecting the *reciprocal* obligations of the two countries, how great must that controversy prove, where the interests of both are to be taken into consideration? that of Great Britain in the first place, and Ireland in a secondary point of view. Would not (supposing an equal participation of trade and capital on the part of Ireland) the measure of an Union prove a constant source of contention; where the interests of the two countries would necessarily be constantly at issue, a source of serious controversy, that might end in a dreadful and inevitable separation? add to this, that the Irish Parliament would no longer exist, to check exorbitant demands on the part of the people, or to prove a barrier to the monopoly of British factors? So that as you express it "the two nations would incline variously"—and "only be employed in watching each other." Would not then such a measure as an Union, prove the very climax of impolicy? You remark "you are sure the Irish Parliament has done well in preserving on many questions, a coincidence with the Minister." If so how can you consistently write for the annihilation of that Parliament? Your own deductions overthrow your own propositions. You say "how insidious the task we impose upon our Parliament, by majorities under the suspicion of influence, to thwart the opinions, which their own discontented minority disseminates through the people." But what does this prove? nothing more than that there was an opposition in the Commons House. There is the same in Great-Britain; and as to the language in the Commons House, no one has a right to question it, where it does not militate against the public weal—and there the subject has a power to petition the House, mentioning its disadvantages, &c. You cannot

cannot do away the freedom of debate in the Parliament, unless you destroy the Parliament. If all the People of Great-Britain and Ireland consent to the annihilation of the British and Irish Parliaments, they have a right so to do; but the King's Coronation-Oath is a stumbling-block in the way of this ladder to arbitrary power! If the Parliament act conscientiously and uprightly, they may contemptuously disregard the invidious insinuations of any party—" *boni soit qui mal y pense*."—If they are deserving of those imputations, the people will not fare better when they shall have exported an hundred representatives to Whitehall.

You say, "to reject a permanent settlement, on the ground of vanity, resembles the simplicity of a poor man preferring gaudy tatters to the comforts of industry."—But Sir, rejecting a Union is not "rejecting a permanent settlement," but on the contrary, *refusing to abdicate that "permanent settlement"* of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, for a political chimera, a new-fangled experiment in the "horse-play of politicians"!! as to the application of the elegant simile of "gaudy "tatters" I leave it to those more conversant in such matters, to the Jews of Duke's-place, or to the cast clothes mongers in Monmouth-street. Indeed "I cannot see the wisdom" of an Union; I think it to be totally destructive of liberty, and neither "useful" nor "ornamental." I deny that Ireland would be enriched by an Union of Legislatures, that her commerce would be improved, or her laws or her institutions, under the Parliament of Great Britain, *constituted as it is*. Ireland has been "improved in her agriculture," I grant it, and also that "the repeal of the penalties against adhering to the Catholic Religion have much added to the wealth of Ireland,"

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admitted;

admitted ; but I must insist that an Union, so far from “meeting the exigencies of the population,” would but diminish our population. De Lolme, a writer extremely partial to England, confesses that the Union of Scotland with England, *diminished her population*, and he allows, that after the Union, Scotland complained of the drain of specie, in consequence of her Absentees!!! He further makes this remarkable observation, (although ever partial, as I have before observed, to every circumstance appertaining to England) “Scotland* CANNOT perhaps be said to have “been a gainer by the Union, in regard to the “rate according to which she bears the *burden of* “*public taxes* ; THOUGH THE CASE IS REPRESENTED SO. Scotland now pays the same “extensive excises, customs, and stamp duties, “as are paid in England!! So much for the *advantages* of an Union, as they operated on Scotland! It would not prove difficult to draw the inference with circumstances of deterioration to Ireland, should a similar measure be adopted. You observe, “where the linen manufacture has not taken root, the people at a certain distance from the coast are wretched.” Why are they wretched? if so, why does not the legislature relieve them, and establish some mode of industry? If their own legislature does not, is it to be supposed, much less to be expected, that a *foreign legislature*, will? If the landholder “can fix what value suits him on the labour he purchases,” why should not this be long since redressed? If it has not, what is to prevent that redress to take place *now* without an Union? I can see no reason.

You say, “a great change of manners” is only to be effected *by a great change of Constitution!!*

* Vide, De Lolme’s “Historical Sketch of Scotland.”

tion!! that is, the total destruction of the Irish Constitution! to render Ireland a prey to the caprice of British stock-jobbers: “*a great change*” indeed, “*of the Constitution;*” *but how fallen, how changed!!* May that God who has hitherto not forsaken his Irish People, or forgotten them, ever protect the same nation against so self-destructive a measure as AN UNION!!!

You remark, “*contest, for power among the upper circles would be innocent, if to them they were confined;* but, acting on the tenacity of the Protestants, and the expectations of the Catholics, they carry bitterness to every fire-side in Ireland;” and therefore the abominable conclusion is to be drawn, that an Union is an eligible measure! that is to say, the “*tenacity of the Protestants, and expectations of the Catholics*” cause an unpleasant and invidious distinction in the state, and therefore, as the Catholics will not be placed on the same base with the Protestants, we will pull them down to the same that base, by an Union, and reduce the Protestants to the same humiliated situation as ourselves!!!

—————“*here, at least,*
 “*We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built*
 “*Here for his envy—will not drive us hence:*
 “*Here we may reign secure.*”

This is the language of fallen unsuccessful ambition; it may apply to every sect individually, but as a body, I am certain it no more applies to the Catholics than to the Protestants. Sampson instigated by repeated insults, pulled down thro’ revenge, the pillars of the temple;—it is true he killed his enemies, but he perished himself in the ruins!!! This might be inferred from what you have laid down, but I cannot credit it. You must be aware, that upposing the Catholics to obtain their emancipation as an accom-

accompaniment of an Union, that still they could not fit in the Parliament of the Empire; so that it would be but a nominal advantage, scarcely a feather in the Catholic plume.

With respect to an Union, so far from healing the unhappy bigotted differences of religion, I think it would but the more fully confirm them. No one could wish more than I do to put an end to "these feuds," and "banish wretchedness from the land;" but as I have observed, I do think an Union would but fatally confirm the former, and instead of "banishing," *domesticate* the latter—wretchedness in the land! I cannot see, why the cause of those feuds should not be removed without an Union, and much more efficaciously, than if that event were to take place. Montesquieu says, "a state cannot change its religions, manners and customs in an instant, and with the same rapidity as the Prince publishes the ordinance, which establishes a new religion." No one can deny that the Catholic was the native religion, if I may so express it, of Ireland; and therefore it must take time, and measures ought to be adopted to conciliate the jarring of religions. Penal laws against men, merely for holding different tenets in religion, I have ever looked upon as a barbarous policy, to effect selfish political purposes. "Penal laws (observes the same writer I have just quoted) ought to be avoided in respect to religion; they imprint fear, it is true; but as religion has also penal laws which inspire the same passion, the *one* is *effaced* by the *other*, and between these two different kinds of fear, the mind becomes hardened." This expression of my sentiments, backed by Montesquieu, will shew I
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am far, very far, from being prejudiced against the Catholics of Ireland.

Again, I cannot see “why the people of Ireland should not have an individual interest,” equally without an incorporation of Legislatures. If an Union is to prove of such advantage to England, from the extension of commerce, &c. in this country, why does not England *now*, without the *cabalistic* term, Union, grant us those commercial advantages and regulations, in the various sects of religion, to prevent the return of those “*politico-religious*” feuds? As it would be for her advantage, ultimately; it appears strange infatuation, and narrow-minded policy, on her part.

I have already observed, that an Union I look upon disadvantageous to Ireland, though painted in all the glowing blandishments a vivid imagination can invent. But in case of an Union, you observe, we will get “Banks and Discount-Offices, which are to be met with in England and Scotland!” You suppose, Sir, we will obtain all those with an Union. It may be so. Go to Scotland, and you will get Sixpenny and Threepenny Notes! It is but the other day, that another “Scotch Small Note Bill,” passed the British House of Commons; no doubt you will have colonies of Bankers * coming here and circulating their Paper Kites; in fact, it would be the best trade then going, and the most profitable mode of converting paper. We might then brag—we turned all our paper “to gold,” as Captain Macheath did his lead, *by robbing the public!* But to return.

* As soon as the Union would take place, we would very rapidly feel the want of specie, which the Scots have experienced since the Union.

return. With regard to the “ Commercial Propositions,” I think they argue very strongly against our agreeing to an Union; if they were mutually and reciprocally advantageous to the countries, why did not they pass? Because the Propositions framed by the British Minister, aimed *vitally* at the Irish Constitution; his were rejected by Ireland with contemptuous indignation; and because the Propositions on the part of Ireland were advantageous to Ireland, for this *sole* reason were they clamorously opposed by the British manufacturers, and rejected ultimately by the Parliament of Great-Britain. With respect to the “ very great resemblance which, previous to the Union (as you remark) Scotland bore to the actual state of Ireland;” I shall observe, there is a similarity, no doubt, but I cannot admit it to be “ very great,” and trust I shall be able to prove prominent and material differences.

The Difference of the Constitution of Scotland and the Constitution of Ireland.

The Parliament of Scotland was not constituted similar to the Parliament of Ireland; it was consequently dissimilar to that of England. The Scottish Parliament, suitable to the aristocratical genius of the government, was properly an Assembly of Nobles, composed of the great Barons, of Ecclesiastics, and a *few* Representatives or Commissioners of Boroughs, and constituted *but one* Assembly, or House of Parliament, in which the Lord Chancellor presided; the whole Assembly at the most did not perhaps amount to one hundred and twenty persons, and these the aristocracy of the kingdom, the feudal proprietors of the greatest estates of the country. Accordingly the people felt,

felt, naturally felt they were oppressed, by a proud and domineering Aristocracy ; that they were thrown into the back ground, unrepresented and oppressed. But on inquiring further into the subject, we find, that a certain committee, (not dissimilar, we may suppose, from the *Re-bearfals* at the Cockpit, Whitehall.) “ The Lords of Articles*, not only directed the whole proceedings of Parliament, *but proposed a negative before debate.* That committee was chosen and constituted in such a manner, as put this valuable privilege *entirely in the King’s hands.*” The historian further adds those remarkable words on this Constitution of Scotland: “ Capable of either influencing their election, or of gaining them when elected, the King commonly found the Lords of Articles *no less obsequious to his will than his own Privy Council!* and by means of his authority with them, he could put a negative upon his Parliament *before debate, as well as after it;* and what may seem altogether incredible, the most limited Prince in Europe *actually possessed, in one instance, a prerogative which the most absolute could never attain !!!*” How differently framed from the Constitution of Ireland, assimilated to that of England, panegyricized by a Montesquieu, a Blackstone, a Coke, De Lolme, &c. &c. Ireland, all must know, has a Constitution of King, Lords and Commons ; that whoever is King of England, is *de facto*, King of Ireland. I have before, early in this Essay, pointed out the advantages of the Irish Constitution, to which page I refer the reader. He will not then be long in doubt to perceive, that all the vaunted advantages, the commerce, and participation of the trade,

* Dr. Robertson’s History of Scotland.

trade, &c. &c. of England, is but a trap to cajole Ireland, to cause her to give up her right and power of taxing the Irish people, to transfer that imprescriptible right to another country, and by that means surrender our liberties and our last guinea, in carrying on a war, impolitic and unnecessary in its beginning, destructive in its consequences, and God grant it may not be fatal in its termination!

These are the *blessings* of an Union!—Will the people take the viper to their bosoms? If they do, they will awake as from a trance, astounded by its mortal poison, and dash the ungrateful monster to the earth, when repentance will prove but the harbinger of death!!!

Here then the dissimilarity of the Scottish and Irish Constitutions; the people of the former were *unrepresented*; the people of the latter have three hundred Representatives in a House distinct from the Peers, and with those Representatives of the people, the power of making, altering and repealing laws, is vested by the Constitution, and every bill, or vote for raising money for the exigencies of the state, or for the Sovereign, *must originate in the Irish Commons*. Admitting then for argument's sake, for a moment, that the Scotch nation, participating in the English Constitution, derived advantages from thence, the analogy would fail when applied to Ireland.

The Difference of the pristine internal State of Scotland, and the present State of Ireland.

There had been an ancient alliance between France and Scotland, by the intermarriages of the royal families of both kingdoms; and the reciprocal assistance of the two countries to each other.

other. But still Scotland was then, as it is now, separated but by an artificial boundary, from England, "*a line by fancy drawn divides the sister kingdoms*," and therefore Scotland might certainly with great propriety, be said to form a component part of one and the same island; consequently, it was the interest of England, to close the only inlet of a foreign enemy into her country, and put a final period to the dreadful conflict, of a long, bloody and contemninous warfare! Not so with Ireland. This country since the invasion of Henry II. has been annexed to the British crown, and as I have already remarked, whoever is king of England, is *de facto*, also king of Ireland.—But in Scotland, when she was allied to the crown of Great Britain, by the Union of the two kingdoms under Queen Anne, there existed a dangerous claim to the throne of Scotland, from the house of Stuart; it hence became a question, (as the kingdoms were nominally united under the Scotch monarch James VIth. but 1st. of England) whether Scotland was to be united to England, or admit the claim of the pretender, the son of James the second, whose pretensions were backed by the strength of Scotland, supported by a French force, and still further assisted by the English malecontents. Add to this, another material distinction of the internal situation of Scotland and England; the Scots monarch until the reign of James VI. resided in Scotland: this was a serious source of discontent to the Scots, and is totally inapplicable to Ireland, whose monarch has never resided in the kingdom. The Scottish Union, not only thus for ever excluded the family of Stuart from the throne of England, but likewise, prevented in future the bloody contentions between the houses

of York and Lancaster. These are totally inapplicable to this kingdom; no similarity can here be traced: all Scotland, at the period I have alluded to, assisted by English malecontents, had from her alliance with France, received constant reinforcements from that country: Not so with Ireland; during a formidable war with America, her coasts defenceless, and the kingdom unprotected by an English army; (as it has been previously remarked) her gallant, immortal Volunteers, (with pride and glorious exultation I look back) defended her against the invader, and preserved her connexion with England inviolate! and during a dreadful rebellion,—a violent struggle to establish democracy, assisted by a foreign force, in 1798, the majority of the people and yeomanry of Ireland proved faithful to the British connexion, they *fought and conquered*.

An Union of Legislatures, is not the means of securing Ireland to the British Crown.

It has been the policy of France in every war, since William the 3d. of England; during her monarchy, and now under her democracy, by means of her intrigues to establish her interest in this country, and wrest it from Great Britain. France perceived this was the vulnerable part of the empire; she was acquainted with the wretchedness of the lower orders of the people, and from her knowledge of human nature; she learned that a people poor and distressed, who have nothing to lose, but whose expectations of plunder, and whose hopes of gain, might be raised on the invasion of a foreign force, would ever be ready to join the invader, not from affection, but self love. Will an Union eradicate poverty and distress from this country? I fear not; but on the
contrary

contrary increase both, from the absentees, and the drain of specie, and loss of population attendant on an Union: instead of tranquilizing, are not those who are advocates for the Union, raising a new and formidable body of malecontents, who day after day, publicly express in very plain and strong terms, their strong disapprobation of the measure? while there remain discontented bodies of any description, of any class in the nation, there ever will be an inlet to the enemies of the empire, an Union will not close the door of invasion; but on the contrary prove the means of final separation. The best security let every government be persuaded, against the invader, is the affections of the people: convince them that you have their interests at heart, they will not be slow of belief, conciliate their animosities, ameliorate the lower orders, let every man feel that he is recognized by the laws and constitution, and you may laugh at the threats, and attempts of Europe, leagued against such a government!

But to return, you observe that those who frame the union, should attend to “to the circumstances of Ireland, and leave no grievance unredressed, when the adjustment of the Union is completed,” why should not a wise liberal and good government adjust those circumstances, and redress grievances when they exist *without* an Union ever taking place? I can see no reason why they should not, the more particularly so as it strikes me that such measures would be in the end highly advantageous to the government. I must again repeat, that no Union can be advantageous to Ireland, however liberal the terms. —One word more, and finally I take my leave of the subject: You remark, “I do not see that Ireland can attain a prominent rank

“in the affairs of Europe. If my country cannot be great, I wish to see her comfortable” I too wish to see her comfortable; it is my most anxious wish; and for that reason I oppose invariably an Union with Great Britain, as productive of a contrary effect. But, good Heavens! does the monstrous conclusion follow, that, because our country *may not* “attain a prominent rank in the affairs of Europe,” that she should necessarily cease to be a nation? Does it follow as a consequence that she is to be annihilated; to become the partitioned Poland, or the ruin’d Switzerland of the Empire?—No; this is only the language of desperation; Ireland shall never be the province of haughty Albion!—never—Ireland is a nation famed for her valour and virtues throughout Europe; and may she ever continue so to the remotest period of time, great and happy—coexistent with the world!!!

THE END.