

A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
NECESSITY
OF A
Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland,
INVOLVING
A REFUTATION OF EVERY ARGUMENT
WHICH HAS BEEN OR CAN BE URGED
AGAINST
THAT MEASURE.

BY A PHILOSOPHER.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.

—D U B L I N:—

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A

DEMONSTRATION, &c.

WHEN the recluse moralist contemplates in his closet the powers and affections of man, what a flattering picture of the perfection of human nature, may not his fond speculations paint ! In delineating the comprehensive draught he may even riot in the enthusiasm of imagination, and the severe deductions of reason will almost confirm the warm colouring of fancy. But if, quitting the calm retirement of study, he views on the busy theatre of life the hero of his abstract research, how shall he recognize that being, whose perfections he has traced with such self-complacency and triumph ! Should we suppose him capable of observing without mixing in the crowd, it might cost him many an anxious moment of painful investigation to explain the melancholy contrast. But, does he himself make one of the motley multitude, his doubts may vanish, and his wonder cease, he may relinquish, perhaps

with a sigh, the ideal object of philosophic enquiry, and exhibit in himself the meanest slave of prejudice and passion. The various questions in religion, in morals, in politics, which have agitated, perplexed and inflamed mankind, and which in this refined age of science and of arts, distract and desolate the most civilized portion of the earth, exhibit humiliating proof of the malignity of the human heart, and the perversion of human intellect. Sophistry and bigotry, and superstition, and fanaticism, and ambition, and tyranny, still triumph on the ruins of reason and humanity. But amidst the barbarism and convulsions of society produced by the depravity of man, amidst the ravages of the sword and of the pen, some superior minds have always soared above the morbid mass of human vice and folly, and if they have not been able to enlighten and reform the brutes around them, they have at least in themselves vindicated the ways of providence in the creation of man. Philosophy follows at a distance the footsteps of priestcraft and ambition, and strives to heal the wounds which they inflict. But while thousands have usurped, few indeed have deserved the sublime distinction, and honourable title of philosopher. The true philosopher must possess an understanding clear and comprehensive, and a heart pure and benevolent. Eagle-eyed sagacity, quick perception, nice discernment, solid judgment, vigorous comprehension, strong memory, a mind at once analytical, and synthetical, erudition, various
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and extensive and yet neither imprinting prejudice nor system, a heart untainted by vice, unswayed by passion, candour, moderation and humanity, these are a few of the qualifications essentially requisite to form the genuine philosopher; to form the man, who may, without the charge of presumption, attempt to discuss any question of importance to the interests of mankind. He must see effects in the womb of their causes, and must trace the concatenation of human affairs with undeviating rectitude of head and heart. A few simple yet comprehensive principles once discovered, and a few strong, leading facts once ascertained, will enable the philosopher to deduce a multitude of remote propositions, and to prophesy a multitude of distant events. With a few such materials he will resolve the most perplexing doubts in physics and morals, and predict the revolutions, which must convulse the nations of the earth. He will demonstrate the combinations and resolutions, which political associations must internally undergo, and the external and reciprocal relations, which they must exhibit. Thus qualified I have thought proper to communicate to a benighted people the unerring decisions of philosophy, the radiant illuminations of truth, or a subject, which seems at present to agitate self-interest, amaze ignorance, and perplex stupidity. And I do this partly for the sake of reforming others, and partly for the self-gratification of shewing my intellectual pre-eminence. For I do not deem it inconsistent with philosophy to pursue my own pleasure,

pleasure, when I do not thereby debase my nature, nor injure my fellow-creatures. And surely the simply foretelling of what philosophic sagacity perceives to be inevitable cannot impede, though it may not promote the interests of mankind. To individuals indeed the fore knowledge of appropriate evil is present misery; but, evils, which affect the mass, the downfall of empires, excite not personal interest; confident in his own peculiar good fortune, each man allots to his neighbour a portion of the common ruin, and exults in his own immunity.

The question which now occupies, or seems to occupy the public attention in this miserable little island, this speck upon the globe, is what I wish to set at rest, and consign to that repose, which Philosophy prepares for the perplexities of man. Will an UNION between Great Britain and Ireland be beneficial or injurious to Ireland? What is meant by this Union it is surely unnecessary to define; that about which all employ their thoughts, their tongues, or their pens, all must understand. Philosophy is not so arrogant as to suppose men ignorant of the very language, which they invent, it only presumes to unfold those eternal essences, and relations of things, which are altogether independent of human invention, and human reason; which may be discovered, but cannot be controuled by finite intelligence. Will an Union of Great Britain and Ireland be beneficial or injurious to Ireland? Now, I do pronounce this to be as idle an enquiry as ever consumed the most precious of all things—time. For

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I do pronounce this same Union to be as inevitable as any consequence that ever flowed from determinate, adequate, moral causes; and to depend as little upon the solution of the question, whether it will or will not be beneficial to Ireland, as the death of Socrates did upon the solution of the question, whether the hemlock which caused it, was good or bad for his constitution. The life and conduct of Socrates in the times in which he lived, and among the men who were his judges, unavoidably produced his condemnation and death; and the chymical properties of the plant, which furnished the poison, only supplied the place of some other instrument of stupidity or malice. For any effect it could have had in rescuing Socrates from the execution of his sentence, the people of Athens might have been just as wisely employed in analyzing these properties, as the people of Ireland are at this day in analyzing the properties of an Union, for any effect it can have on the final accomplishment of that event. The death of Socrates of old was an event in philosophic contemplation, altogether independent of the chymical analysis of cicuta; and the Union, when it happens, will be an event in the same contemplation, essentially independent of all political analysis of the ingredients, which may compose it. The remote determining causes of the one event and of the other, are equally unconnected with, and uninfluenced by, such idle disquisitions.

Another

Another question, in the eye of Philosophy as immaterial as the former, has been started on this subject. Has the Irish Parliament a right to agree to this Union? And some very clear, but every unimportant propositions, with respect to its incompetency, have been stated and enforced. Now this enquiry is just as nugatory, and inapplicable to any useful purpose as the former. The causes which will essentially produce an Union, existed before ever an Irish Parliament had existence, and the competency or incompetency of that Parliament can no more affect the influence of these causes, than the dog, who bays the moon, can affect its influence on the ebbing and flowing of our sea.

The laws of matter irresistibly determine the tides of the ocean; and events happened centuries ago, which as irresistibly in their necessary consequences will effect the Union of Great Britain and Ireland in Legislative combination. Events happened centuries ago, which in their unavoidable tendencies have made Ireland a dependent accessary to Great Britain, finally to be undistinguished in the mystic legislative unity of the whole empire: events, which will annihilate the physical repugnancies of Nature, and make the sea as dry land; events few and simple, which, while they escape the observation of the short-sighted Vulgar, the Philosopher marks with piercing ken, and easily pursues thro' their remotest influences.

When

When in these latter days, I have heard men luxuriantly expatiate on the advantages of Ireland, her geographical position, her insular strength, her temperate climate, her fruitful soil, her hardy peasantry, her numerous bays and harbours, safe and commodious, opening their capacious bosoms to the Atlantic, and inviting the commerce of the world, her mines, her rivers, her lakes, her canals, her corn fields, her flocks, her herds, as proofs at once of independent structure, and as incentives to follow the loud and imperative call of Nature, I have admired the eloquence, but I have smiled at the delusion. On the face of Ireland Nature with a bold hand has traced the outlines of independence, and had Ireland remained morally as she is physically insulated, Ireland would, no doubt, at this day, be what the warmest fancy could paint, or the fondest heart desire. But from the moment the first English adventurer landed in Ireland, the apparent destiny of Nature was reversed, and war, and carnage, and civil strife, and religious dissension, and brutal manners, and brutal vices, barbarism and beggary, and dependence, became the inevitable lot of Ireland.

What! could all these dreadful consequences follow from this single cause? Was not Ireland, at the very time of this invasion, barbarous in her manners, and distracted in her political institutions, a prey to domestic contentions, and savage crimes? Ireland was then what most nations in their early stages of civilization have been,—the

theatre of rude virtues and of rude vices. Ireland was then what England had been at a similar stage of social existence. But the invasion of Henry the Second arrested, by its necessary effects, the natural progress of civilization, which Ireland would otherwise have shared in common with England herself, as well from the natural course of things, as from her peculiar commercial capabilities inviting the intercourse of the most civilized nations. But was not England herself the victim of foreign invasion, and brutal conquest, yet England is at this day a great and independent nation? The present degraded state of Ireland then has not necessarily followed from invasion and conquest, but must be attributed to other causes inherent in the nature of her people. To this I answer, every fact must be considered under all its circumstances, and when thus considered, no two facts will ever be found precisely similar. When Rome, at that time all powerful, whose object was universal dominion, invaded and conquered Britain, Britain was reduced to the state of a subject province. This was the natural consequence of weakness contending with insatiable ambition supported by superior strength. But, when upon the dismemberment of the Roman empire, Britain was left to herself, no subsequent invasion of that island terminated in conquest properly so called. The invaders were often successful, but their success did not subject the country, which they invaded, to the countries from which they came. It only procured them a per-
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manent settlement, and final incorporation with the natives. Britain, really possessing more natural advantages and more permanent sources of greatness than the countries of these invaders, though accidental causes of debility invited their rapacity or ambition, and secured their success, yet by her manifest superiority soon converted the invader into the citizen, conscious of her pre-eminence, and zealous to support it. When William of Normandy invaded England, he aspired to the throne of an independent nation, and obtained it, partly by treaty, and partly by force. But no conquest, however compleat at the first, could ever have converted England into a provincial dependency of Normandy. The first William had too much sagacity not to perceive, that the title of King of England was far superior to that of Duke of Normandy. And all his policy in his new kingdom, in the introduction of the feudal system, was only to render more powerful, and despotic, the sovereign of an independent island. The invader and the invaded, the Saxon and the Norman, became blended in the common mass of subjects, with the common interests and the common feelings of Englishmen. But when the relative situation of England and Ireland, at the time England invaded the latter, is considered—England strong in her superior policy, in the unity of her government, in her military institutions,—Ireland weak in the multitude of her petty sovereignties, and domestic feuds, in her civil combinations, and her mili-

tary attainments—the conquest of Ireland was inevitable. And when the character of a proud, selfish, ungenerous, jealous, commercial, military, feudal nation, on the one hand, and that of a turbulent but divided people, naturally rivals of the former in commercial capacities, on the other hand, is considered, that conquest must have been necessarily calamitous to Ireland. From the relative situation of the two countries, it necessarily became a conquest peculiarly calamitous, inasmuch as it produced provincial subjection without at the same time producing provincial peace and civilization. When ancient Rome had reduced any people from the state of a nation to that of a province, by annihilating all power of effectual resistance to her stupendous strength, she considered the province no longer as a rival, but as a subject state, altogether incapable of resuming an independent station; therefore, with a policy flowing from her greatness, and enlarged views of dominion, she introduced into the provinces her laws, her manners, and her arts. The ravages of her armies were succeeded by the wisdom of her institutions, and the monuments of her artists. Hence, though the provinces were oppressed by exactions, they were not torn by civil and religious feuds, they were not a prey at once to the crimes of civilized society, and of rude and savage barbarism. As the historian remarks, “the gentle, but powerful
“influence of laws and manners, had gradually
“cemented the union of the provinces. Their
peaceful

“ peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury.” But England, sufficiently strong to annihilate national independence, but not altogether to sink the rival in the subject, her views being partly directed to military glory and partly to commercial aggrandizement, partook of the ferocity of the one, and the selfishness of the other. She possessed the lust of dominion without that grand unity of design, which a simple plan of universal dominion produced in ancient Rome : because, from her insular situation, she is fitted only for commercial pursuits. When England invaded Ireland, though sufficiently powerful to devastate, she neither possessed the resources nor the armies, to produce general and peaceful subjection ; and through all the subsequent wars, which fill the bloody annals of Irish history, we observe neither the splendor of conquest, nor the liberal plan of an enlightened commercial policy. I have heard men declaim on the true interests of England, and gravely insist that it would be the true interest of England to pursue a different line of conduct towards Ireland ; that it would be the true interest of England that Ireland were really independent, and that the two countries were connected only by the ties of reciprocal advantage, and mutual affection. If such men will point out a single instance in the history of the world, of a nation such as England pursuing its true interest, I then will grant that the landing of Fitz-Stephen in Ireland was not necessarily productive of all the calamities

calamities of Ireland. But until that instance is produced I must be allowed to call the men, who thus declaim, shallow rhetoricians, and to dignify myself with the title of philosopher, who takes things as nature has made them, considers men as they are, not as they ought to be, and thus traces the remotest consequences to their primary efficient causes.

The superior power of England at the time of the second Henry, with her subsequent policy flowing from the general vices of man, and the peculiar vices of her political and commercial economy, has unavoidably produced the degradation of Ireland, and will ultimately effect the legislative Union of the two countries as necessarily as the properties of a triangle flow from its figure. Mr. Locke says, that moral truth is capable of strict demonstration, I say so too, and before I have done I will prove experimentally to the satisfaction of the dullest apprehension the justness of that opinion. I am surprised that Mr. Locke, who was a philosopher of the highest order, made such a fuss and parade about so very obvious a proposition; and I am still more surprised, that as he thought illustration necessary, he did not select the very instance of the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, and its unavoidable termination, as most happily illustrative of what he so anxiously laboured to establish. Thus—Ireland an island blessed with more natural advantages than England also an island, a next door neighbour, from accidental causes divided, and inviting invasion——England invades
War

War—Desolation—Subjection—Discontent—Rebellion—Re-subjection, with a system of confiscation and disunion civil and religious—Weakness—Provincial Dependence——By this chain of ideas, thus visibly linked together in train, that is, each intermediate idea agreeing on each side with those two it is immediately placed between, the idea of an island blessed with more natural advantages than England, but from vicinity and weakness inviting invasion, and the idea of provincial dependence, appear to be connected as intimately and essentially as the first and last terms in any series of mathematical demonstration can possibly be. Let us continue the series still further——from provincial dependence follow—Ignorance—Barbarism—Crimes—the triumph of the wicked and the dismay of the good—an incorporate Union of the Legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland. Now I ask, whether the connexion between the extremes in this concatenation of ideas is not clear, and whether the Union of Legislatures does not necessarily flow from the natural advantages of Ireland—from her geographical position, her insular strength, her temperate climate, her fruitful soil, her hardy peasantry, her numerous and capacious and commodious bays and harbours; her rivers, her mines, her lakes, her flocks, her herds, and all the other proofs of her independent structure? It is strange what very different conclusions the vulgar and philosophic mind will draw from the same proposition:—the wild Irishman, from the acknowledged truth that Ireland possesses more natural advantages than England, with all the rashness

ness of uncultivated reason concludes, that Ireland must be independent; whereas the philosopher perceives that, from this very circumstance of the exuberant bounty of nature towards her, has unavoidably arisen the dependence of this blundering country.*

In the foregoing demonstration, an incorporate Union of British and Irish Legislatures is proved to be essentially involved in the natural progress of things; it will follow immediately from the triumph of vice and the consternation of virtue; but remotely and primarily from the relative situation of the countries, originally inviting the rapacity of invasion, and in the advancement of British speculation, provoking the jealousy of narrow policy, awakening and strengthening the malignity of national pride and commercial monopoly. It may be objected, perhaps, by inconsequential reasoners, that in the above series of concatenated events, that of provincial dependence is misplaced, for that provincial dependence cannot precede, though it may follow the legislative incorporation of the countries: and that, since in point of fact Ireland enjoys an independent Parliament, Ireland never can be a province until her independent Parliament becomes merged in Legislative Union. Now here appears the superiority of philosophic over common ratiocination.

* “Le despotisme ecrase de son sceptre de fer le plus beau pays du monde: il semble que les malheurs des hommes croissent en proportion des efforts que la nature fait pour les rendre heureux.” Such is the reflection which Savary makes at the sight of Egypt. The history of man has hitherto too fatally justified the observation. O when may we venture to pronounce

Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.

nation. Had Ireland indeed an independent Parliament, a Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland never could take place. The relative situation and connection of the countries necessarily produced inferiority and dependence on the part of Ireland, and that inferiority and dependence will as necessarily produce the Union of Legislatures: and to say that an independent Parliament could ever be merged in and coalesce with any other Legislative Assembly, so as thereby from the very nature of the incorporation to lose all its properties, its powers, and its faculties, is a manifest contradiction. An independent national Parliament in its very essence contains a principle of individuality and separate existence, and as long as that principle remains, that is, as long as the Parliament is really independent, it is impossible it can ever unite with any other Legislative Body, which Body must from its nature, in the very act of combination, annihilate all the properties of the former. And herein lies the difference between Great Britain and Ireland with respect to the Union of Legislatures, that the British Parliament, an independent national Parliament before the Union, will still remain the same Being, essentially unaffected by that Union. But the very act of Union necessarily involves in it the annihilation of the Irish Parliament, and therefore were that Parliament really independent it never could be annihilated but by force, it never could consent to its own destruction, because a separate existence

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would

would be a part of its essence. It therefore appears evident that the ideas of an independent Irish Parliament and of an Union of British and Irish Legislatures are incompatible, or in other words that the idea of dependency necessarily precedes in the mind the idea of that Union. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

Thus then the ideas in the foregoing series follow each other in consecutive deduction: the relation between the countries from its very nature producing dependence in the weaker, and that dependence ending ultimately in the absolute and perpetual merger of its Legislature. For just as in law, when a greater estate and a less coincide and meet in the same person, without any intermediate estate, the less is immediately annihilated; or in legal phrase, is said to be merged, that is, sunk or drowned, in the greater; so by the coincidence of British and Irish Legislatures in the person of the British minister, the Irish Legislature being the less will be immediately annihilated, or merged, that is, sunk or drowned, in the British. The term for years must have a termination by merger in the inheritance, and shall never exist any more.

Away then with such idle topics as the incompetency of Parliament, and original compacts, and the terms of the Union, and East India trade, and West India trade, and Channel trade, Rum and Tobacco and Sugar, and Woollens, and Linens, and Customs and Drawbacks, and Navigation laws, and British capital, and Dublin ruined, and Cork and Waterford not enriched, and
articles

articles infringed, and where is your security; and look to Scotland, and her malt tax,* and can one hundred representatives be better than three, and free trade, and simple repeal and renunciation, and absentees, and taxes, and streets grown over with grass, &c. &c. &c. Every consideration of the kind has just as much relation to the subject of an Union as the metaphysics of hierarchical creeds have to the eternal interests of mankind. To the philosophic mind, though not equally unintelligible, they are equally unimportant. Will any man undertake to demonstrate that the English never invaded Ireland—'tis well—he speaks to the purpose. But as a negative is generally difficult to be proved, and in the present case peculiarly so, I do not insist that whoever denies my conclusion, should prove my first proposition, with respect to the fact of invasion under all its circumstances, false. No, I am not so unreasonable. But, admitting the fact of invasion connected with the relative situation of England and Ireland, I do boldly challenge the most unintelligible metaphysician, the most uncharitable theologian, the most corrupt statesman, even Mr. Pitt himself, to shew that the nature of the connexion between the countries, with all its various modifications and consequences, has not inevitably followed from that one primary cause, and that a more intimate Union, or fusion, or amalgama of their Legislatures must not finally take place from the same efficient cause.

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Mr.

* Crambe repetita, latin for malt tax.

Occidit miseros crambe repetita magistros.

Mr. Pitt has one half of the philosopher in his composition. He wants the heart, but he has the head. And as in logical inference the head alone is concerned, I need not appeal to that, which he does not possess. Brains, not feelings, are necessary in the present discussion. Mr. Pitt's understanding is as clear and comprehensive, as his feelings are obtuse, and while the press is teeming with pamphlets, the offspring of self-interest, or of ignorance, or of vanity, or of that most inveterate of all diseases, the *cacoethes scribendi*, Mr. Pitt with all the keenness of philosophic sagacity sees the inevitability of this amalgama of Legislatures; and the only doubt, that can suggest itself to his, or any philosophic head, upon the subject is, whether the precise moment has arrived when the fusion will most easily take place. And this naturally leads me to an enquiry of secondary and indeed of very subordinate importance, with respect to the time, when that Union, which has been demonstrated to be inevitable, is actually to happen. Now in this enquiry strict demonstration cannot be had, probable inference can alone be expected. It is by observing this distinction between the objects of mental research, that true philosophy avoids all that perplexity, which characterises the false. Mr. Locke has written a voluminous treatise, the professed design of which is to ascertain the bounds between opinion and knowledge, and never was human intellect more usefully employed. Mr. Locke was a real philosopher, so am I, and therefore

fore I do not attempt to give demonstration where in the nature of things probability alone is to be had, I know the length of my tether, and have found the horizon, which sets the bounds between the enlightened and dark parts of things. Nor is there any contradiction in being able to prove that an event must happen, and yet being ignorant of the time when it is to happen. We may have sufficient data to demonstrate the one, and yet be altogether ignorant, or have only probable evidence of the other. Thus, it can be easily demonstrated from the nature of the Deity and of man, that the wicked shall be punished in another world, and the good rewarded, and yet we may be absolutely ignorant of the time when that final distribution of justice is to take place. Again, it may be demonstrated, from the structure of the human body, that unless some miraculous interposition snatches him from his fate, man must one day die, but the precise moment when, finite intelligence cannot ascertain, though in this case it may form probable conjectures of the period of dissolution. Just in the same manner from the structure of the Irish body politic, unless some interposition, superior to the ordinary train of events, arrests the course of nature, the political death of Ireland is demonstratively certain, while the precise moment of her dissolution is the subject of probable calculation alone. *The *skill-*

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* I have said the *skillful* physician, therefore let the faculty beware of denying the position, which I have laid down,

ful physician knows that the springs of life must one day be worn down, because he has physiological data, on which this knowledge is founded, but as ten thousand causes, not essentially involved in the nature of the human frame, but purely accidental, may accelerate or retard this event, and indeed as the primary causes of death, though essentially involved in the nature of that frame, have no discoverable quality, which must limit their operation to any fixed period, the physician can only conjecture, with various degrees of probability, the hour of separation between the perishable clod, and the immortal spirit, by which it is moved and animated. The analogy is complete. There are certain political data, from which the philosopher can demonstrate the fall of empires and the dissolution of societies, but as these data do not in themselves contain any principle, which limits their operation to any certain time, and as the subordinate and accidental causes, which may accelerate or retard, can-
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down, since the denial will not prove the position false, but only expose their own ignorance of nature. I do affirm that it can be clearly demonstrated from the vital organization of the human body, that it must one day be decomposed, that the assimilating organs must gradually lose their tone, and the reabsorbents carry off more from the different parts, than what they receive in the way of nutrition, that the irritable fibre must become rigid, the membranes and cartilages ossify, the bones grow too hard, the smaller vessels collapse and disappear, the parts no longer be obedient to the action of stimulants, death must ensue, and the system return to moulder with the dust.

not be known, or their quantum of energy cannot be demonstrated, the exact time, when any political change is to take place, can only be conjectured. In the human body there are certain fatal symptoms, by which the physician can declare that death is not far distant; and in states, when the period of dissolution draws nigh, there are also symptoms of mortality, which the philosopher marks, and from which he forms not knowledge, but opinion. And some such symptoms do at present appear in Ireland, which seem to mark her for an early grave. Though death is inevitable, it is not therefore palatable. The annihilation of the Irish Legislature by an incorporate Union with that of Great Britain is as inevitable as death, and may be just as unpalatable. The only question therefore with a British minister can be whether at any given time it may be convenient to strike the fatal blow, and the only thing, that now occupies the thoughts of Mr. Pitt, is the solution of the problem, whether at this time Ireland would probably expire with much or little struggle, with the feeble groan of universal debility, or the convulsive agonies of partial strength. And many reasons must occur to the minister, which seem to make it highly probable that no more favourable moment than the present could be chosen for the deed of death. To enumerate them would be only to detail a black catalogue of horrors, which, while philosophy deplores, she also perceives to have been inevitable.

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They are necessary links in the chain of cause and effect. They are the unavoidable consequences of commercial jealousy and unfeeling pride, supported by superior strength, preying on the weakness of a rival. The history of man has not yet presented an instance where such causes have not produced similar effects, where the wantonness of power, strong enough to tyrannise, but not sufficiently great to be above suspicion or fear, has not trampled on the rights of humanity with the most vexatious and afflictive imperiousness. The history of man never can produce an instance of two nations similarly situated and similarly related, where the weaker shall not suffer similar calamities. From the days of Henry the second Ireland has exhibited scenes of blood and desolation, and religious fury, and debilitating disunion, which were the natural consequences of a few of the events of that king's reign. And England must have been, what no commercial and warlike nation, with the same degree of relative strength, ever will be, just and merciful, or the connexion must have been to Ireland, precisely what it has been. I have heard much of a plan for uniting Irishmen of all religious persuasions in the bonds of brotherly affection. I have sympathised in the benevolent wish of harmonizing a discordant people, but I have pitied the visionary hope of success. I have been astonished that men of quick insight into things, and deep knowledge of human nature, could ever seriously entertain so extravagant a scheme, and I
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could only ascribe the delusion to that romantic turn of mind, which men of great intellectual powers, but of sanguine tempers, and ardent fancies, frequently display. Archimedes boasted that if he had another earth he could remove this, which we inhabit, Archimedes spoke like a sober mathematician, he only required a certain given power to raise a given weight: It was a mere question of calculation. But, the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland being given, I defy the ablest state arithmetician to calculate the power, which would be necessary to unite Irishmen of all religious persuasions in pursuit of their common good: Certainly no finite power can ever accomplish it. Things having once received a certain constitution and certain laws of action, that constitution and those laws continuing the same, their operation can be altered only by some force essentially affecting the operative powers themselves; and therefore, the causes which have hitherto produced religious disunion in Ireland remaining in their full force and vigour, the disunion itself must be as permanent, as the causes.

In the solution of the problem, which alone, as I have said, will engage the attention of the Minister on the present occasion, namely the expediency of the present time for blending the two Legislatures into one, or more properly speaking, for merging, sinking, or drowning the Irish term for years

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in the British fee-simple, he may doubtless derive much assistance from the temper and tone of mind with which the proposition seems to be received. With this view the subject appears to have been started by the Minister for public discussion, that is, for discussion by that very small portion of the people, which can dare to utter any free opinion upon any political question. And the opinion of one body of men, in particular, of this description, seems to have been studiously courted, or provoked. Of the very few, whose public voice can at this time of general dismay be uttered with safety to themselves, the gentlemen of the Bar are apparently the most respectable. And, from the spirit which they have shewn in opposition to the proposed Union, Mr. Pitt may, without much shrewdness, conjecture what he has to dread from the temper of that part of the nation, which can dare to speak. It would seem indeed as if he designed to make the Bar the great touchstone of that temper, by endeavouring to add the active principle of resentment to those of self-interest and patriotism, and thus discovering the utmost strength of the opposition, which he has to apprehend. He has therefore told them that their disapprobation of the Union was taken into his calculation, that he foresaw, and despised it, that it would be venal, and therefore could not be formidable. Perhaps a greater insult never was offered to the feelings of men than has been offered to their's, in a publication

tion notoriously written under the auspices of the Minister. Not to feel and resent the indignity, would indeed sanctify the insolence, from which it flowed. The Minister seems to have considered them as fallen from that proud eminence, on which Nature had placed them, into the disgraceful obscurity of vulgar corruption. He seems to have considered them as self-emasculated beings, that the form of men remained, but that their strength was gone. These surely could not have been his real sentiments of the Irish Bar. He only wished to add the exacerbation of personal insult to the force of patriot feeling, in order to measure, on the largest scale, the resistance of Irish loyalty to the measure of an Union. What conclusion Mr. Pitt may draw from the tone of the Irish Bar, I will not venture to pronounce; but from the complexion of the opinion, which they have published on the subject, I certainly deduce a proposition directly the contrary of what their opinion enunciates, namely, that this is the very juncture not only to propose, but to carry, the measure of a Legislative Union of this kingdom with Great Britain. With one part of their opinion, however, I agree. This Union will be an innovation, that is, it will be the introduction of something new—innovation, from *in* and *novus*—And, if it introduces Sir B—— R—— into the British House of Commons, it will undoubtedly introduce a novelty, which the British House of Commons will very much wonder

to behold. In this simple and harmless sense I do admit that the Union will be an innovation, it will just be an innovation in the same sense, that any thing may be said to be an innovation, which happens for the first time. But if the gentlemen of the Bar mean to convey an idea by the term innovation, that the Union will be something contrary to first principles, something inconsistent with the past connexion between the countries, I then differ with them in this part of their opinion more widely than in the other. For I do assert, and I think I have clearly demonstrated, that the Union of Legislatures will follow from the very nature of that connexion, as necessarily as any effect ever happened from an adequate cause. Indeed, unless the present and past connexion of the countries is considered with relation to, and as directly tending to produce this great effect, it must appear the strangest anomaly that ever was exhibited in the political system, a kind of Zoophyte in politics, a middle being of an amphibious character, * a disjunctive
adversative

* The philological reader will easily recognise some of the language in this description. And why have I adopted it? precisely for the same reason that it was originally used: because I am attempting to explain what I do not understand. What! not understand that connexion about which you have written so much? The connexion about which I have written I do perfectly understand. I have considered it as it has existed in fact, and not in definition. Viewing it thus, I clearly perceive what it has been, and what it is, and I foresee what it will end in. But when I strive to consider
this

adversative conjunction, disjoining with an opposition concomitant the interests of the two countries, while it is supposed to conjoin the countries themselves, presenting to the mind no fixed palpable idea, which it can grasp and explain, but an homonymous something between connexion and no connexion, having at once the attributes of connexion and no connexion,—a kind of mysterious, ineffable, metaphysical abstraction, loosely floating in the brain, without either delighting the fancy, or satisfying the understanding, having all the indistinctness, without the imagery of poetical vision.

But as soon as this connexion is considered with respect to its final and necessary termination, it no longer appears an undefinable obscure term, invented to conceal ignorance of nature in the mystery of language, but conveys a clear and determinate idea to the mind, and whereas before all was chaos and confusion, we then instantly discover order, and harmony, and beauty. We are no longer distracted with the jargon of parts separated
and

this connexion as represented by others, I then freely confess I do not understand it. When I hear of *imperial independent* Ireland, and her *independent* Parliament, and in the same breath of English influence and English councils directing and controuling that *independent* Ireland, and that *independent* Parliament *ad libitum*, and that the connexion between the countries consists in this very coincidence of independence and of influence, I am altogether at a loss to comprehend such contradiction and mystery, and cannot help considering it as the jargon of self-interest or of ignorance.

and yet conjoined, but are pleased with the contemplation of one continuous whole.

Ut per læve severos

Effundat junctura ungues.

Indeed on due consideration it will appear, that the Gentlemen of the Bar themselves did not understand the term innovation in a sense different from the obvious and primary one of the introduction of something new; for they do not declare that a Legislative Union of this kingdom and Great Britain would violate any known fixed principles, but on the contrary, they seem virtually to admit that it would not, while they merely deprecate it as a novelty, which they would not wish to see introduced in their own generation. The resolution published by the Bar, when viewed in this light, discovers some philosophic sagacity, it seems to imply a conviction, that an Union is an event, which must some time happen, but which may be accelerated or retarded by secondary causes. And no doubt the Resolution was intended as a retarding cause. In my opinion it will operate as an accelerating cause. But this by the by.

But while I have thus demonstrated the inevitable termination of British and Irish Connexion, in an incorporating Union of Legislatures, and offered some conjectures with respect to the time of that incorporation, I beg I may not be understood as attempting to insinuate that such an event will be beneficial to Ireland. I have only been explaining, as a Philosopher, the dependency of effects on their causes,

causes, and shewing that truths founded on certain physical and moral relations must be as immutable as those relations; that, while the relations remain the same, no modification of circumstances, not affecting the essence of the relations, can affect the properties, which flow from that essence. I would turn the literary mind from nugatory disputation about the powers of Parliament, and the legislative, commercial, and financial consequences of the Union, to the only subject of discussion really worthy of employing the philosophic understanding, which delights in the contemplation of abstract truth, and in tracing effects to their primary causes. What though it may be proved, by a laboured induction of particulars, that an Irish independent Legislature can alone know, and feel, and promote the interests of Ireland, and that an Union of British and Irish Legislatures must annihilate whatever remains of the physical and moral strength of Ireland, will that shew that such an event will not take place? or can such a detailed investigation of a part afford any pleasure to the Philosopher, who sees the whole at a glance; who, merely from the knowledge of one or two facts laying the foundation of certain relations, can rapidly deduce a long series of consecutive truths? Can he receive information or delight from a verbose proof of a single proposition, which he intuitively perceives to be necessarily connected with an antecedent link in a compendious demonstration? Must he not rather feel

feel sorrow and humiliation, to see the intellectual powers of man wasted and abused,—to see the divine particle, which should soar to Heaven, fixed to the earth,—

(*Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ,*)

to see time prostituted on disquisitions, of which the events and the interests of time are altogether independent.

But what exposes the extreme ignorance as well as folly of the champions of what is called Irish *independent* Legislature, who think by words to arrest the inevitable destiny of a people founded on real essences and immutable truths, is, that the very topics, on which they insist as reasons against an Union, are among those minor and subordinate causes, which, though they could not essentially affect an event independent of them, have certainly accelerated the time of its accomplishment. Such are the apparent benefits to Ireland, which Irish Legislation seems to have produced. * Free Trade, Simple Repeal, Renunciation, have all hastened the Legislative incorporation of the kingdoms; for, though they did not contribute an iota to the real independence of Ireland, they loudly proclaimed the inconvenience and expence of a distinct Legislature, and its incompatibility

* Upon such an occasion Sancho Panza might say, *muchos van por lana, y buelvan trasquilados*, without incurring the charge of misapplying his proverbs, so often made against him by the Knight of the sorrowful Figure.

patibility with the grand unity and indivisibility of consolidated empire. The dramatic unities of time and place are rather the arbitrary dictates of a dogmatist, than rules founded in the principles of nature; and Shakespeare, who has written in the most wanton violation of these unities, will exercise a magic power over the heart, while it possesses a single chord, which can vibrate to the touch of genuine passion. Not so the unity of Government, this is founded in nature, here all the parts must conspire to form one consistent whole, there must be no *imperium in imperio*, no independent dependency, no unconnecting connection, one common life must pervade every member, one common will must direct every muscle. It is from its direct tendency to produce this happy consummation, that the British Constitution has become the envy and the admiration of the world; the idol to which the sublime genius of a Burke bowed down, and which he worshipped with all the glowing imagery of poetic Gentilism. With what supreme contempt would this great man and grand pensionary have treated the simple panegyrist of Irish independent Parliaments! he would have described him as one shooting in the dark, and therefore liable to perpetual blunders, as one praising and censuring merely by chance, who, though he might possibly to fools appear as a wise man, must certainly among the wise ever pass for a fool, that his intellect comprehended politics as his eye could comprehend a distant prospect,

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pect, he might see perhaps enough to know mountains from mole-hills, but for an accurate discernment of governments, and their character, this it was impossible he should attain.

Some few Irish Parliamentary characters have been denominated Patriots, and if merely to mean well to our country constitutes the idea of a patriot, perhaps they deserved the appellation. But they cannot at once deserve the title of patriots and philosophers. Did they indeed act from the pure motive of doing good, and not from the corrupt principle of sacrificing Truth to Ambition, they may have felt the influence of Philosophy on their hearts, but their intellect could not have been irradiated by its illuminations, or they never would have wasted their time and their talents in asserting idle claims of independence, and in trifling disputation about the respective merits of Renunciation and Simple Repeal.

But among all the causes, which have influenced the event of an Union, not in its essence, but merely in the accidental modification of time, in my mind there is not one, which has contributed so powerfully to its acceleration as the vote of the Irish Legislature on the question of Regency, during his present Majesty's indisposition. Though that vote proceeded not from any romantic principles of Irish independence, but from the rational principles of arithmetic, which coldly calculated the chances for and against the King's recovery, and consulted not

Price

Price on civil liberty, but Price on annuities; though it was not the refined paganism of antient Rome or of modern France in embodying a mixed mode, and hailing Liberty as a goddess, but the obvious and vulgar idolatry of worshipping the rising sun, yet did it demonstrate, more forcibly than any empty assertion of independence by Simple Repeals or Renunciations, the inconvenience and danger of distinct Legislatures. The famous round Robin wore the appearance of a desperate conspiracy, which the tie of self-interest and false honour, substituted for the obligations of virtue, rendered more truly formidable to the British Cabinet, than all the manly eloquence of the argumentative Flood, or all the pointed invective of the epigrammatic Grattan. It experimentally impressed on the mind of Mr. Pitt an argument for hastening the Legislative incorporation of the countries, never to be effaced.

As another cause accelerating this event may justly be reckoned the character of the minister himself. The ruling passion of his soul is ambition, or the desire of power and celebrity, with the most stoical indifference as to the rectitude of the means of their attainment; and the consolidation of two kingdoms by an union of Legislatures, the *one and indivisible*, appears not ill calculated to give eclat to his administration. With philosophic acuteness he sees that this consolidation must inevitably happen, and his first wish will be gratified by the accession of power and of fame, which he must

derive from its completion in his own ministry. It is true, he may be loaded with curses by an enslaved people. But the man, who consumed the temple of Diana, attained the object of his desire, every lover of the arts repeats his name with execration. Did history only register the justice and the humanity of ambition, her records would lie in a nut-shell.

The British minister has also at this time in Ireland the most convenient instruments of a deadly purpose, that a murderous heart could wish—cold-blooded assassins of a nation's rights. There are crimes of an open and daring complexion, which genius and courage rescue from contempt. Some crimes ravage like a tempest, they are sublime in their desolation. But in the character of those men, who live by the debasement of Ireland, by sacrificing her interests and her rights to the malignant jealousy of a rival, who barter for gold Irish liberty, and Irish blood, we see all the baseness of a depraved mind, without any of the grandeur in which even villainy is sometimes cloathed. We abhor and we despise. More convenient panders to ambition nature never formed. More apt and ready instruments for completing the work of provincial servitude time can never furnish. Men so completely contemned by a nation excite no interest in the public mind, and any new instance of treachery will be heard without emotion, because public scorn is already too intense to be increased. These men too know that they are despised, which
must

must heighten their malignity.* It would seem indeed as if the minister had purposely reduced them to a state of hopeless perdition, lest a chance of pardon might lead to repentance. Or perhaps he thought to increase the loathing of the country to such a degree that it would gladly swallow any potion, which might enable it to spew out such abominable foulness. Nay, do we not hear the official advocate for an Union urging the vile-ness of these men, as an argument for the measure? In the corruptor what matchless impudence! In the corrupted what abject depravity!

Various other topics might be urged to shew that the event of a Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland is probably not far distant. Though to the self-interested of the present generation this may be the most important enquiry, to the impartial philanthropist it is an enquiry of very inferior moment. To demonstrate that it is an event, which must follow from certain fixed and immuta-
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* Upon a similar principle eunuchs have been considered by Eastern despotism as the most faithful slaves, cut off by the ignominy of their condition from the rest of society they seemed on that account more strongly engaged to an entire attachment to their master, on whom their whole fortune depended, and by whose means alone it was, that they were of any consideration. ἄδοξοι ὅντις (says Xenophon) οἱ εὐνῆχοι παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις, καὶ διὰ τὸ τοῦ δεσποτῆς ἐπικουρῶν προσ-
δίδονται. These despicable creatures however were generally found equally enemies to prince and people, their sole view being to get possession of the prince's mind, and to hide affairs as much as possible from his knowledge. *Claudentes principem suum, et agentes ante omnia ne quid sciat.*

ble relations, has been my principal design. Whether it is an event to be deplored or rejoiced in by Irish patriotism, or by Irish venality, is a question unworthy of Philosophy, which only seeks to discover and to apply useful truths. And what useful purpose can it serve to tell man, when he should laugh, or when he should mourn? Philosophy only condescends to investigate those eternal verities, which arise from the agreement or disagreement of abstract ideas. The same ideas will eternally have the same habitudes and relations, and, when the philosopher shews that any two ideas concerning some important interest have certain habitudes and relations, he performs a service worthy of science, because useful to man. Can it be demonstrated that vice must necessarily lead to misery? Let men be virtuous, if they would be happy. Can it be demonstrated that every province must surrender all its attributes, physical and moral, to the arbitrary control of the worst passions of the human heart? LET NO COUNTRY SUBMIT TO BE A PROVINCE, WHICH HAS STRENGTH TO BE A NATION. But to tell a tributary people that it is not pleasant to pay the exaction, which follows from its relative existence, without pointing out the mode, by which it may be rescued from extortion, is to wound with insult, not to illuminate with science.*

Probitas

* The Philosopher would tell such a people that the true mode of redress is not by coldly declaring that it is only obliged to pay a certain tribute, and that the exaction is an *innovation*; but by boldly dissolving altogether that CONNEXION between the ruling and the subject state, from which both the tribute, and the exaction flow.

Probitas laudatur et alget.

We hear encomiums on independence, but not one word how independence is to be obtained. Go, tell the wretched negro, writhing beneath the lash of the unfeeling planter, how far preferable it would be to roam through the wilds of his native Africa. Go, and then call yourself his friend.

O Ireland, Ireland, I have not insulted misery by panegyrising happiness. I have endeavoured to reconcile you to your fate, by shewing that it is an essential link in the great chain of human affairs, connecting together cause and effect, that it is necessary to that unity of will, which should direct every part of the British empire, and which it must be the first wish of every British minister to effect. That it may not be the wish of the true Irish heart I can readily conceive. But if it is an evil, the evil that is known to be irremediable may be alleviated by patience. Sweet is the enchantment of hope—but the soul is sickened by hope deferred, and the multiplied pangs of disappointment impair the energies of life. Sweet is the enchantment of hope—but Philosophy only sacrifices at the altar of truth, and cannot cherish the delusions of fancy. And yet Philosophy does not affect to communicate the secret of either not feeling, or of despising calamity, but teaches men to bear with firmness the evils, which cannot be removed. Philosophy would not torture the hopeless slave, by teaching him the ideas and the language of freedom. In the man who is doomed to experience the curse of dependence, the
bold

bold spirit of expressing the feelings of nature without disguise, ought to be subdued, from the consciousness that it cannot be gratified. The emotions of the heart are frequently too ardent for our situation, and it must be the study of our lives to conquer or conceal them.

“It is thou, Liberty, thrice sweet and gracious
 “Goddess, whom all in public or in private wor-
 “ship, whose taste is grateful, and ever will be so,
 “’till Nature herself shall change—no tint of
 “words can spot thy snowy mantle, or chymic
 “power turn thy sceptre into iron—with thee to
 “smile upon him as he eats his crust, the Swain is
 “happier than his Monarch, from whose court thou
 “art exiled.” Sterne wrote to the world, and mankind are composed of freemen and of slaves. But had he only addressed the wretch born to no inheritance but slavery without hope, he had uttered the language not of benevolence but of cruelty. The water which approaches, without touching, the parched lips of Tantalus, is the fabled malignity of Hell.—“In thirty years the western breeze had not
 “once fanned his blood—he had seen no sun, no
 “moon, in all that time—nor had the voice of
 “friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice.” Go, though Champion of Irish *independent* Parliaments—go, and tell him of the refreshing Zephyr, the genial light and heat, the soothing balm of Friendship and of Love!

THE END.