

AN
A R G U M E N T
FOR
I N D E P E N D E N C E,
IN
O P P O S I T I O N
TO AN
U N I O N.
ADDRESSED
TO ALL HIS COUNTRYMEN.

BY AN IRISH CATHOLIC.

Now I ask you, what it is that has given you every thing? Is it not time?
And as time has given you every thing, reflect that time may also take
every thing away from you; but time is not necessary—negotiation alone
is sufficient to undo you.

When have you demanded, that you have not succeeded? and when have
you negotiated, that you have not been deceived?—FLOOD.

—D U B L I N:—

PRINTED BY J. STOCKDALE, 62, ABBEY-STREET,
NEAR CARLISLE BRIDGE.

1799.

Houses of the Oireachtas

AN
A R G U M E N T
FOR
I N D E P E N D E N C E,
IN
O P P O S I T I O N
TO AN
U N I O N, &c.

THERE is now no affectation of denying, that the projected Union between Ireland and Great Britain, will be submitted in the next session to the consideration of Parliament; nor does any person who considers the constitution of that assembly, in the least doubt, what will be the decision of the question. But while it is not yet treason to discuss the subject, an Irishman may indulge the melancholy satisfaction of sympathizing with his countrymen upon the impending calamity.

It is at least pardonable to be mistrustful of an event, avowedly brought forward to effect such a momentous and permanent change; and natural to look back to the effects of that Legislative subjection, so like an Union, which already subsisted between these islands until 1782; the removal of which distressful condition,

on, constitutes the brightest page in Irish history, and as yet, the most distinguished exertion of Irish wisdom and spirit.

While England could legislate for Ireland, and actually exercised this power in all matters of imperial concern, they were nearly as much united, as could be effected by the endeavours of man, to join two countries for which the hand of Nature had traced a separate existence. And what was then the state of Ireland? Low in agriculture and commerce; with but one manufacture, scarcely adequate to provide remittances to absentees; beggary in the streets, and idleness in the workshops; the rents of lands scarcely half their present amount; little room for the production of capital, and as little opportunity for its employment, if acquired. It was a state of intolerable poverty, which, with an effort of desperate energy, and in a fortunate conjuncture, stimulated the nation to wrest from the all-gripping and tenacious monopoly of England, a free trade; a state of humiliation, as well as wretchedness, which the Volunteers in their day, were ready to run the risk of war and separation, to remove.

But whence do we date the dawning prosperity of our country, unless from the lessening of that very connection, which we hear is to be increased; and giving, as much as is consistent with our present relation with Great Britain, the management of Irish affairs, exclusively to the Irish Legislature?

Much as we have to complain of the Irish Parliament, corrupt as it is represented to be in a late publication of authority, and viciously as it is composed, by sitting within the vortex of Irish feelings and resolves, it has occasionally been carried along by the virtue of the people, and made to give a legal utterance and form to their will,

will. This casual advantage renders jealous the enemies of our growing prosperity ; and what has long been desired, the moment of our cruel dissensions is seized upon, to accomplish the transportation of the whole Irish Legislature, beyond the reach of any extraneous accidental impulse of Patriotism, to merge and lose itself in that of Britain.

The nature of our former subjection to the Parliament of England, with all its manifold evils, was safer and better than this incorporating Union. Better, because with a common Legislature to superintend the general concerns, we had then, what no Union will leave us, an interior assembly immediately connected with this country, to watch over its domestic affairs. Even during the supremacy of its rival, it still possessed inherent powers, which might be exercised in favour of the country ; which were in fact sometimes exerted for its good, and at all times put it in the power of the Irish people themselves, to remove without convulsion or war, any evil they did not think proper to submit to. It was, more than any foreign Parliament can be, under the eyes of the Irish public, more within the sphere of its opinions, and more likely to be impelled by its movements. During its glorious struggles at the close of the American war, how considerably have we not seen its patriotism roused and invigorated, by the unanimity of the people at large, and the noble ardour of the Volunteers ! These causes would have operated more feebly, or not at all, upon a compound Parliament residing in Britain ; and if we consider the opposition a free trade received from that quarter, and the enthusiasm with which it was fought for here, who is there that must not confess it would, with such a Parliament, have been either not obtained, or obtained only by the sword ? Let me suppose any other question, which shall again marshal the passions and interests of both nations,

nations, if carried in the Legislature of the Empire, as it has been quaintly denominated, the English will be apt to see no better use of their army, than to in-force and support their dominion. If therefore the Irish should be again firm and peremptory, as they were on the question of free trade, they must compute the chances of the field, when their sneaking petitions shall have failed; or if not, sink back into silence and submission. They will consequently, under an Union, be less safely circumstanced than they are without one.

The Irish members associated to the British Parliament, in the improbable supposition, that none could be bought over to a dereliction of Irish interests, can by no means be an equivalent for a domestic Parliament with a distinct will and co-ordinate powers; more capable on that account to give protection against future injuries, and to redress existing ones, in the same way as was done in 82 by the Irish Parliament, which, impelled by public opinion, acted as no Parliament residing abroad can be ever necessitated to act.

In point of protection to Ireland, I consider the admission of Irish members into the British Senate, as of no avail. They will be a very small minority in that assembly, and wherever the interests of the two nations clash, cases in which the Irish members will be peculiarly called upon to act as an Irish body, they will be most of all without weight or influence; they will naturally be opposed by the prejudices, passions, and interests of the English majority, actuated against them by all these powerful motives. Their admission will be used as a cloak to hide the shame and infamy of their country's subjugation, but it will be utterly incapable to secure good, or prevent the enactment of bad laws. In both these respects we shall be at the mercy of England.

The

The pretence of equal advantages is held out; but it is more than will ever be realized, because it would be contrary to the interests of Britain; and more than should be looked for from a treaty where one of the contracting parties has a great superiority of power, and a weighty controuling influence over the other. It will be a bargain, to which there will be but one party; which, as it cannot be listened to, without a beginning dereliction of Irish interests, so it cannot be concluded without their utter abandonment. It can never be advisable for a rising country, to link itself to one that has reached its acmé; the former requires nothing for the completion of its prosperity, but to be left to itself; the latter may, and does in the instance of England, require an associate to ease her of the overwhelming burthens brought on by her wars and her extravagance, to give security to her debts, and to divide her taxes. Has England ever done us a voluntary or gratuitous favour? and if not, which shall we attribute this measure of an Union, to a regard for us, or for herself? If she has not dared to propose, though she has betrayed the desire of proposing this measure, during the existence of national harmony, and consequent vigour, but brings it now forward, when civil strife and fatal animosities have set those in hostile opposition, who should be united for their common freedom; when she expects that one despicable set of monopolists, increasing in rancour in proportion to their crimes, will give up Ireland, rather than share it in equal liberty with their countrymen; and when she expects, falsely I hope expects, that the mass of Irish population, will consent to the ruin, in order to be revenged of its adversaries; does she not, by such conduct, disclose her own judgment of the scheme, and pursue the policy of all ambitious and unprincipled powers, who take advantage of the dissensions of their neighbours, to promote their own selfish ends of aggrandizement?

If

If even now, in a less dependent condition than we should be in after an Union, the complaisance of our representatives for the will and interests of Britain, be too fatally a cause of complaint, how will such a state be improved by their removal to another country, when at a greater distance from the importunity, if not the controul, of their constituents; less influenced by a sense of public shame, if not awed by public opinion; and more open to the corruption of a selfish adverse party? This will be easily felt by those who take the trouble to consider, whether with an Union-Parliament, Ireland could have accomplished her past achievements; and if such a body was not likely to serve her then, in her arduous contest, is there not precisely the same reason to conclude, it cannot in any subsequent difference? Who shall presumptuously assert, that causes of differences will not again arise? who will venture to affirm that power will not be abused, and that monopoly will remain inactive? But though nothing were infringed, will every thing be done? Will the Union-Parliament encourage the working of our collieries, the cutting of canals, the exploration and working of our mines of earths and minerals, the building of ships and docks? will it raise rivals to Whitehaven, Birmingham, Stafford, Manchester, and Liverpool? Will it encourage education and arts? That is, will it endeavour to make Ireland independent of Great Britain, by giving her more means in addition to those she possesses, of existing as a separate state? Let past experience give the answer.

Such would be the consequences, though the Irish deputies to the British Parliament, were every man of them faithful to his trust; but it is more natural to imagine, they will connect themselves by residence with England, and be gained over to her cause, by the allurements of emolument and power. When they

they surrender the interests of those who deputed them, if an apology be wanting, they may easily alledge, as an excuse for yielding, that they were too few to resist. But they will feel no apology necessary: the members returned to the United-Parliament, will be only a few self-chosen proprietors of land, and creatures of the Crown, who will appoint its own dependents through the patronage of the revenue; when a settlement with a few great Lords, and a few hirelings, will dispose of the whole people of Ireland without ceremony. Such representatives will be just of sufficient consequence, to obtain advantages for themselves, by serving the Minister; but conscious that upon any Irish question, their opposition would be fruitless, they will not kick against the pricks, but quietly make their fortunes.

It is idle to pretend, that such members will be a safeguard to the honour and interests of the country which they shall affect to represent; or that the Union will be a state of equal benefits. Delusive hope, or perfidious artifice! A Union which cannot place the contracting parties in equal power, is a real subjugation of one of them, by whatever name it may be disguised. In order that an Union should not detract from the honour or safety of Ireland, she should not only preserve the entire proportion of her present Legislature, but as many more should be added to that number, as would make the Irish a match for the British members. And even then the single circumstance of a removal from their own to a distant country, which was at once the seat of power, and the center of corruption, would decide the advantage against the country that sent them. But if such an adjustment be so inconvenient as to be hopeless, and that the contrary of it be unjust; needs there stronger proof of the unfitness of this heterogeneous coalition, or of the folly of expecting that it can be settled upon equal and honourable

nourable grounds? It is obvious that the principle of equality cannot be maintained, without a measure of justice not to be looked for, nor violated, without a measure of injustice not to be endured. It is therefore evident, that the United Parliament must be ever British in its operation, and that the observance of the articles of Union, whatever they may be, must depend, not upon any sufficiency in the Irish members to maintain them, but upon the generosity and good faith of the British Senate. Whether or not, English good faith is to appear in a new character, my argument is, that we can have no presumption so strong for its being observed, as we have that it will be broken; because, for its being infringed, we have the most powerful incentives which actuate nations, their interests; and for its being kept inviolate, only an inducement of honour, not always cogent upon individuals, and with regard to nations almost null. Thus, the only thing that could excuse in an Irish Senator the presumption of an act, to which he is strictly incompetent; the supposed advantageousness of the terms, will be out of his power to perpetuate; and however it may seem strange, it is nevertheless true, that this venality or folly can find no subterfuge in the pretended goodness of the bargain he makes for Ireland; for in the same proportion that it is favourable, the probability increases of its not being adhered to. I have been thus particular, beyond what would seem necessary in so plain a case, because I have seen it laboured, in a recent publication ascribed to a person in a confidential office,* but teeming with many other gratuitous, and several false assertions, as well as this one, that the new Union would not be to Ireland a state of inferiority, or detriment. The writer of that pamphlet wished to conceal this humiliating consequence; but if the event take place, Irishmen will have to digest many other humiliations, and

* Arguments for and against an Union.

and what will perhaps appear to many of them, a greater evil.

Every independent state has, in virtue of that condition, an inherent power of preserving and promoting its own happiness, which nothing but open conquest can destroy. Notwithstanding her connection with Great Britain, Ireland possesses this power in proportion to her independence; and small as that is, it is the only source, and preservative, of whatever prosperity she enjoys. Though inferior on the scale of absolute power—since she can be no longer bound by any but her own acts, she in some measure possesses what amounts in its effects to a negative upon every act of imperial jurisdiction, that can apply to herself. The power it also gives her of commercially retaliating upon Britain, and withholding from her many necessary supplies, is some security against the injustice which she would otherwise more abundantly suffer. In a matter of such moment, no nation has ever had so unerring a rule of conduct. It is the experience of the greatest distress, while under the Legislative subjection, now about to be revived in the shape of an Union; and of the most rapid prosperity, since the assertion of that independence, which she is now called upon to surrender.

Our apprehensions, however, from England, may be removed by the conditions of the compact, all of which will be previously known, because the articles will state them. But on the other hand will not the power that can effect the measure, be also able to regulate the terms? It is England seeks for this Union, not Ireland; England forces this Union, not Ireland; and England will take care to benefit by a measure, which she alone pushes forward in the crisis of our folly. Our prospect therefore in the first instance, is no other than the loss of every fostering, every de-

C

fensive

ensive power, which a nation should possess; and that England, as the stronger party in this competition, will, whenever she chuses, violate the compact which she alone will have formed. The fairness of the conditions can be the only plausible ground for acceding to them on our part; but the advantage of them to her, is the only sufficient reason for supposing they will be observed. She will, in consequence of her great majority of native members, and her facility of corrupting all, possess of necessity a power to make Parliamentary alterations, to which the future United Parliament will be full as competent as the present Borough one.

Is there however any probability that England will ever think it advantageous or politic, to infringe the articles of Union? This question will naturally occur, and be pressed perhaps, by those who affect to rely upon British honour. Whether or no, it must be admitted to be a less valid security for promoting the welfare of a distinct nation, than it ought to find in its own Parliament; and that the latter is not justifiable in abandoning national interests and honour upon so precarious a reliance. But the fact is, temptations will arise along with the power of violating the reciprocity of the compact. The same inducements will remain of self-interest, and monopoly and avarice, which led to the annihilation of the woollen manufacture, and the virtual prevention of many others to which our situation was adapted. Will not those English members of Parliament who applaud the system of torture and massacre, of house-burning, rapine and rape, so indiscriminately and so extensively practised under the late Administration, will they not also approve of coercing Irish pockets, for the benefit of the empire? The two countries having nearly the same climate and soil, producing the same raw materials, and this being better fitted for trade, will be considered

sidered a natural rival to Britain in manufactures and commerce. English jealousy, which has never slept, will then have whom it may devour; and if the Minister shall think it serviceable to his views, Ireland will be sacrificed anew, to British faction or aggrandizement.

Let me therefore urge, with the confidence of experience, that a return to the same, and still more a sinking into a worse state of dependence, must be attended with the like, or even greater beggary and disgrace. For as the continual wretchedness consequent upon our subjection to England, sprung from the self-interest and domineering spirit of man, and depends therefore upon a cause as constant as his passions, no articles that shall be now settled, can by possibility have the guarantee of an equal antagonist force for their preservation, whenever with power greater than the former, inducements shall recur for their violation.

Already do the partizans of this measure insidiously lay it down as a principle, that the new Union will differ in this from the old, that England shall not in future make laws exclusively to bind Ireland. The terms of the Union may import as much, and the preamble of the act which shall annihilate the name, and honour, and independence of our country; which shall take from us our own, and cannot give us any other; for the broad and separating ocean proclaims we never shall be one; this shameful deed, which by destroying our identity as a nation, must destroy all nationality of sentiment and action; which will chill and contract all those proud and generous feelings that make patriotism no less a duty than a passion; and subtract all nutriment and soil from these disinterested charities, that expanding from kindred and self to repose upon our country, convert the best instincts of

the heart into the surest handmaids of a people's happiness and glory. This traitorous deed, which will attempt to convey away our antient name, and our auspicious destinies, will nevertheless declare, that it is highly expedient for the prosperity of Ireland, and the political ascendancy of a fraction of her population, that an Union of power, a reciprocation of benefits, and an equality of rights, should subsist between her and England for ever and for ever. What then? If such in fact, and not in semblance, were the compact to-day, we can have no certainty that it will out-live to-morrow; for we *can* have no adequate power to enforce or preserve it. The nation, that by giving up its defensive power, places itself at the discretion of another, may fare like those men who come in upon protections, and are shot with them in their pockets.

In such a transaction, the question will eternally recur, can we have any security for the observance of the articles, equal to the power we surrender of acting for our own good? If in a few years the people of Great Britain should find the Union inconsistent with their welfare, is it not reasonable to assume, that their own representatives, will stop at no alteration to remove the evil? It will not, I may venture to say, be deemed a sufficient objection, that in doing this, they would interfere with the interests of the people of Ireland. Moreover, to justify any infraction, it is only necessary to alledge, that as England sought for the Union, to strengthen and benefit the empire, the best mode of adhering strictly to the spirit of the agreement, will be by bringing it back to a fulfilment of the original design. But in this new discussion, it will be no longer an independent nation treating with another, upon a footing of equal rights, and, what is of more consequence, of equal jurisdiction: it may be Sicily supplicating Rome, and appealing to the generosity of the Senate, against the atrocities of a Proconsul.

This

This argument of insecurity goes to the root of the question, and with any honest Irishman, would be sufficient at once to supersede all treaty. But the deceptions industriously propagated by the corrupt abettors of English dominion, are so various, as to require some further notice, though in every instance they will be found hollow and delusive.

It will be attempted to establish a distinction between articles fundamental and not fundamental; and that the former shall be such, as not even the United Parliament shall presume to meddle with; but that they must be always held sacred and immutable. Such however can be nothing else but abstract or insignificant points; as the admission of the equal rights of both nations, and the stipulation for sending a given number of members to the common Parliament. But whether they be one or one hundred, I have already shewn to be of equal inutility to Irish interests; and it will be adding mockery to injury, to acknowledge our independent rights, in the moment of their surrender. The very proposal of any immutable conditions, proves the well grounded jealousy which the one nation feels she ought to entertain; which the other may for the moment submit to, conscious that at the first hostile shock of adverse interests, there will be but one uncontrollable party, and a thousand pretexts in its train. Who that has witnessed the encroachments made upon the sacred and fundamental principles of the Constitution, can be the dupe of such fallacious pretences? Was not Magna Charta sacred and fundamental; were not the Bill of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, the Trial by Jury, sacred and fundamental? Is there any thing fundamental against absolute power, or sacred from its ruffian grasp, that it shall determine to destroy?

This immutability of certain articles, whether or not observed, unless it related to things of no importance,

tance, would be alike injurious. It would take away a power, which every Legislature ought to possess, of altering the system of laws according to the improvements which time or circumstances would suggest. In order then to prevent what in the event of an Union, would be our Legislature, from doing us injury or injustice, we must deprive it of a power essential to good government. Without unalterable articles of incorporation, we shall be governed like a conquered people; and with them, we shall be ill governed. If even they were fair and equal in the outset, the altered proportions of importance, in things and circumstances, incident to the succession of time in all human affairs, but most rapidly in commercial arrangements, would in the case of immutable terms, soon overturn the equality. Consequently the very security, and the only security, of whatever benefits an Union may be supposed to communicate, cannot be established but to our detriment.

I have argued the case of fundamental, immutable articles, not that I think they ever would be observed; but to shew the utter impossibility of an Union being favourable to us in any case. Upon any considerable emergency, these pretended immutable conditions would be soon set aside, and thereby the whole foundation and security of the treaty undermined. The preservation of the heritable jurisdictions of Scotland, was one of the fundamental articles of the Scotch Union; nevertheless they were abrogated, and the proprietors of those jurisdictions *compelled* to receive a compensation in money, under colour that their property only was meant to be secured in the act of Union. In that instance an adherence to the compact would have been unwise; but where it was otherwise, the compact was equally violated, and there was no redress. This shews the folly of expecting that parchment will be a guarantee against power, and proves
that

that the English Parliament will always be the judge, and may sometimes be a party. It is idle to dissimble with our fears, or with our pride—such must be the consequences of an Union. We may not be injured as a nation, by any thing but superior force of arms, and of that I have no dread, while we have a distinct will; but the moment we permit ourselves to be bound by the act of another, we fall without a struggle, to lie at that other's mercy.

What is then our prospect from an Union, but that unless the Parliament of England may pass acts relative to Ireland alone, it is impossible but she must be for ever after an Union bereft of all legislative concurrence in aid of any local improvement; but that if to leave room for particular applications of legislative wisdom, an opportunity will be given for England to make laws exclusively to bind Ireland, we shall be thrown back to that situation, which we already experienced to be fraught with ruin, and from which it is the greatest boast of Irish patriotism to have delivered us.

That, however, which cannot in an absolute strictness be secured, it will yet be said, fraud shall not frustrate; and that the guarantee of English good faith will supply the place of a distinct Legislature. The proposed Union resolves itself then into a *treaty*, which will profess, like all other treaties, that there shall be lasting peace and friendship between the high contracting parties, but in which, differently from all other treaties, one of the parties, which would naturally defend its own compact, will be annihilated by the very act.

Let not the domestic animosities of the moment blind us to the conduct already observed by England, towards a large portion of the people of this country. The articles of Limerick were as solemn a treaty as
the

the present can be ; and the consideration given at that day, by the Irish, was an invaluable price for the benefits those articles should have secured ; but the Catholics relied upon good faith, and in the end they were deceived.

In like manner the articles of the Scotch Union were violated in a case favourable to England. The Scotch members, highly to their honour, resisted the infringement as far as their numbers would enable them, but they were the fewer party, and not permitted to ward off the evil, nor had they power to dissolve the treaty.

It were advisable for the Irish Parliament to pause upon these two examples, before it enters upon a negotiation with England, by which it is to be annihilated as a contracting party ; and honestly to remember that in these two (the only ones in which the parties on one side, made a surrender of their effective powers,) the treaties were infringed.

When the English Parliament endeavoured in the disguise of commercial propositions, to defraud Ireland of the power of regulating her external trade ; she gave us a proof that she never had, and an assurance that she never would, abandon her designs upon this country. I will leave it to any impartial man, if instead of an Irish Parliament receiving its impulse from Irish feelings of honour and interest, we had at that time a certain number of representatives merged in the Parliament of Great Britain, whether our free trade and our national independence, would have been—I will not say maintained, but whether they would not have been sacrificed. English power would have carried the question, though English influence were neuter ; but both would have probably combined for our dishonour and our undoing. If that avarici-
ous

ous and domineering British Parliament, which had just witnessed the enthusiasm, and the patriotic devotion of the Volunteers, dared, while the triumph was yet recent, and the energy yet alive, to strike with equal presumption and perfidy at the laurels of 82, shall we be safer, when we are more at its mercy? What, Irishmen! does this Parliament and its directing Cabinet desire by an Union, but the usurpation of that freedom, little as it is, and of those advantages attendant upon it, which they once yielded to the threatened exercise of your valour, and once before, endeavoured to filch from your credulity?

For us to form an estimate of the in future conduct, there can be no better rule than their past infidelity; and the more justly, as in all acts of this nature, the nation has been an accomplice with its government. In its relations with other states, the instances of Punic faith are numberless; though in these, annexed to the odium of the violation, there was danger of chastisement; but I shall notice only one: Certain forts bordering the lakes and the Indian territory, should have been evacuated after the last general peace, and ceded to America; but as they were valuable stations for monopolizing the fur trade, they were held in possession under various pretexts, and at one time at the hazard of hostilities. As soon as views of greater interest, shewed that it would be better to conciliate, than longer to defy the Americans; when the latter, by favouring the French, could so materially hurt the English, and so easily vindicate themselves; then, and not till then, was the treaty of 83 complied with in all its parts; England manifesting in this double proceeding, how little she regards the mere obligations of justice; how entirely she is swayed by the allurements of gain.

“ Go back to the Parliament of England. I ask again what were the difficulties in the way of your

eleven propositions, what but the jealousy of the British manufacturers on the subject of trade? And will you make them your Parliament, and that too for ever?" —(Grattan's speech on the Commercial Propositions.)

How differently did the pulse of Irish patriotism beat, when these just and applauded sentiments were promulgated in Parliament, and sanctioned by Ireland, from what it must do now, if the nation be capable to desert, the no less wise and dignified policy they recommend. Will you make the British manufacturers your Parliament, and that too for ever? is in itself a volume of argument against the only good which can ever delusively be held out to this country by an Union. The trivial progress of Ireland in trade and manufactures, is not denied to have been owing to the jealous controul of the English Parliament, while it was enabled to make laws to bind her; and can any absurdity be so great, as to look for a remedy to the evil, in the increase of its cause? If indeed any benefits could be gained to us by the measure, it is a strange way to give in purchase the power of preserving them. It is such a blunder as my countrymen are certainly not capable of committing from incapacity; and if it shall be done in Parliament, it will be from other motives, than a conviction of its utility—to Ireland.

The Channel trade is the only one which an English Parliament has in its power to open to independent Ireland; and if that is to be the only gain, high as the importance of it may be estimated, is there no mode of acquiring it, but by the surrender of our free agency, and of our national character? Common sense and common honesty will answer, that with so much in our power to grant, or to withhold from England, equitable conditions may be obtained
from

from her upon this or any other subject without an Union; and with this immense advantage, that our independence remaining, the contract for them may be enforced. They may be acquired like the free trade, and the renunciation. We are told by one of the greatest men this country ever produced, and one of the most faithful to her interests, "That when
 " with regard to the former, we received from Eng-
 " land a dilatory answer, we shortened our money
 " grants to the Crown—we shortened them to the
 " subject. And the Irish public creditors, to their
 " immortal honour, embarked so fully with the rights
 " of the nation, as cheerfully to accept of a fix
 " months security. This rapid succession of sober
 " and consistent efforts, struck like lightning on the
 " Ministry and Parliament of England, all obstacles
 " gave way, &c."—Par. Deb. vol. 1. p. 412. Can
 he be an honest man, who with this experience of the
 past, will propose to surrender our political existence,
 in order to obtain what may be so well had without the
 sacrifice?

But it will be said, the Parliament is not now animated by the same spirit it was formerly, and will act no more in conformity with the wishes of the people, as it did upon other occasions. This is an admirable reason for reforming the Parliament; but none at all for the people's becoming accomplices of its faults, by an approbation of its infidelity. It is not so much with the Parliament I argue, for the sort of reasons I have to offer, would be of little weight in that immaculate assembly; and it is besides, in all probability, already prepared upon the subject; but as I am convinced the British Minister is for this once, more solicitous about the opinion of the people, than of their representatives, it is therefore the more necessary for the people to come to a right understanding of the case, and to prove to the world,

D 2

that

that however justly those who bought their seats, may claim a power to sell the use of them, the public at large is guiltless of the Union. One observation upon the logic of the advocates of the measure suggests itself here. They assert that the Irish Legislature not being independent, we lose nothing in parting with it; and that if it were independent, it would be dangerous to the Empire. The consequence of which reasoning is to justify those persons, whether right or wrong, who think reform necessary, or the connection injurious; and it seems no argument can be brought in favour of the Union, that does not go to impeach the Parliament; or against the Union, that will not extenuate the conduct, we have been accustomed to reprobate in some of our unhappy brethren.

In the Secretary's Pamphlet it is expressly stated, that the Irish Parliament is supposed to be subject to English influence. When therefore the question of Union is carried before our Parliament, English influence, it must be supposed, will have there to negotiate with itself. "What follows, that if we negotiate now, we must negotiate all on one side, &c. Now a negotiation in which one may give every thing, and gain nothing, may be called a negotiation by some men, but by most men it will be called folly.*

But if it were possible that I should consent to abandon the Parliament as indefensible in every point of honesty or patriotism, I cannot so readily agree to part with the quick-fighted watch of opposition. As long as room is left, which it is by the *institution* of Parliament, for some honest men to discuss before the Irish public the interests of the country, the freedom of speech, and even the partial freedom of the Press attendant upon it, will be some check upon the greatest profligacy joined with the greatest power.

The

* Flood. Par. Deb. Vol. I. p. 410.

The reproofing voice that issues from the smallest minority, forms a valuable censorship in the headquarters of Corruption, and a useful rallying point for the reason of the country. Though a man were ever so often cheated by his steward, it is no reason why he should part with the title-deeds of his estate.

We also know, from the experience of the protecting duty, in the form of a regulation smuggled into an Irish act of Parliament, in favour of our cotton manufacture, now the second in the country, by which alone it is able to contend in its own market, with the importations from Manchester, that an Irish Parliament may occasionally do the country some service, though not always as much as it ought. And if the almost surreptitious manner, in which it was carried through the House, be duly considered, there needs not much ingenuity to discover, that the interests of Ireland are not likely to be better secured, where an adverse influence will not have to operate at second-hand.

Even a commercial treaty, the mode of regulating trade that would naturally occur to independent countries, would, if binding beyond a very short period, be injurious to ours, which produces little besides the materials of manufacture; but how much more, if we shall be for ever in the power of a manufacturing country, whose interest, and consequently whose object will be to keep us a mere nation of consumers? It is natural, that in proportion as we advance in prosperity we should be competitors with England. This is more than she is willing to admit; for, if her avarice did not, her excessive prodigality would require, an almost universal monopoly of the means of growing rich, and her desperate Minister therefore presumes to seize upon Ireland, to make up the deficit of her taxes, and supply new resources to his profligate

gate ambition. Widely extended as may be her trade, a participation in the little that remains with her to grant of it, can be no recompence for what she demands in return, though independence, one of the first earthly blessings, were not to be included in the surrender. An exactly reciprocal trade, the only boon she has to offer, for the immensely important privilege of regulating all our commerce, can only be reciprocally advantageous between countries in nearly an equal degree of improvement, and where the object and the effect would be to furnish the respective parties with more mutual convenience; or else where there are objects superfluous to each, but which may be mutually bartered—as if the Western coast of England were supplied with porter from Dublin, in place of getting it from London; and that Dublin should take coals from Whitehaven, instead of bringing them from the counties of Leitrim and Kilkenny. But with regard to manufactures this principle will not hold good, for that country which possesses them in the highest degree of perfection, with the greatest capital, and may at the same time freely supply the other, will prevent that other from ever establishing them. This shews how fallacious will be one of the pretended benefits of the Union, namely equal trade laws; and it will further appear, from what England will then deem an equitable construction of her Navigation act; that is, that all goods shipped from Britain, should be necessarily shipped in British bottoms; which would scarcely leave Ireland a ship at all, for that country which had most to export, and could limit the market of the other, would necessarily monopolize almost all the shipping, and consequently almost all the freight. It is in this monopolizing and delusive spirit, that England puts forward as a favour granted to this country, the premium she gives to her own merchants upon the export of our linens; by which she endeavours to make them the factors
of

of our only great staple, giving to them the profits of commission and freight, and to her sailors the advantages of employment.

The best way to promote the commerce of Ireland, is not by subjecting her to the trade laws of England, but by retaining in our own hands, and impartially exercising, the power of self-defence and self-improvement. This, if properly used, would quickly bring England to reason and reciprocity. We are the best of her foreign customers for manufactured goods, whereas what we send her, except in the article of linens, are raw materials, or the necessaries of life. If she attempted to make reprisals on our linens, for the natural wish of doing justice to ourselves, we may refuse her woollens, and revive that antient and once flourishing manufacture at home. We may retaliate in the numberless luxuries we receive from her. Even our backwardness in arts, might in such a case be turned to advantage. For as they are manufactured goods we receive, she cannot afford to lose our market; but as what we send out are necessaries, we cannot be at a loss for one. It is more by imitating her example, than submitting to her unequally operating laws, that we shall arrive at the same prosperity. Give us the same freedom which made her great, and the same exemption from foreign controul which enables her to preserve and to advance her greatness; and then that prolific liberty, which can even cloath the desert, will not be found fruitless here. If King William had effected an incorporating Union between England and Holland, and given to Dutch Merchants and Burgo-masters, a majority in the Legislature of the Empire, what would have been at this day the prosperity of England? No, to give Ireland the weight and consequence pertaining to an island so highly gifted by Nature, there needs but integrity in her Parliament, not an Union with Great Britain.

We

We find in Jay's treaty a striking instance of the advantage of national independence, preferably to Union or subjection. By the 13th article of that treaty, "vessels belonging to American citizens, are to be admitted and hospitably received in all the British sea ports in the East Indies, and may freely carry on trade between those territories and the United States, in all articles of which the importation or exportation to or from thence shall not be entirely prohibited; under a restriction not to export, when Great Britain is at war, without the permission of Government, any military stores or rice." Is it necessary to observe, if the British Parliament still legislated for the colonies, that they would not be admitted to the advantages of a direct trade to India? Behold then in the participation communicated to the Americans, of the lucrative trade of the East, the recompense of successful rebellion; and in the extinction of the Irish Parliament, the reward of unmeasured loyalty.

If the Union be once carried, it will be used to the only purpose in which it can be more beneficial to England than the present connection: to enable her to mortgage this country for her debt, and increase her exhausted facility of borrowing, by enlarging the security. This will involve an extension of her taxes; together with another consequence, which will be a great objection, though a smaller loss, and that is the subtraction of them from Irish corruption, to be absorbed by English profusion. Now if Ireland were for the first time to acquire a free trade, instead of actually possessing one, with such a burthen annexed to it, as an assumption of part of the debt and taxes of England, and a growing principle of extending them, which we know from the conduct of the Minister in his own country, would be used not according to her abilities, but to his wants; even in such

such a hypothetical case, the purchase price would be as enormous, as the compact would be base. A portion, when he has nothing to give, which we may not obtain in a safer and a cheaper manner, to place ourselves in the hands of a necessitous and a jealous power, is not Union, but subjugation. It would be such an act of insanity for us to commit voluntarily, that the power which proposes and carries, must deem it a conquest, not a treaty; and accordingly, impose its taxes as a tribute, and rule us as a province.

But it is alledged, *the French will never cease to intrigue in this kingdom, whilst we remain in our present state.* This should not be called our state of independency, but our state of discontent. The same alienation of attachment to their own Governments, which obtained for the French a welcome reception in other countries, is the only cause that gives them a facility of intriguing in this; and how that can be removed by an Union is inexplicable, unless the people shall come to think subjection better than independency, and that although desirous of reform, that is of making Parliament more free, they will consider it an improvement to have none at all.

Because the French Republic has, in a series of unexampled successes, prostrated every foe that she could contend with upon equal terms, and that in consequence of it, England finds her own relative importance reduced, she dooms Ireland as a make-weight to repair her losses. It is also manifest, notwithstanding the boasted resources of British wealth, that the Minister is at the last extremity for supplies to carry on the war, which he is not less unwilling, than he is unable to terminate. This forced him last year to hazard his popularity on the assessed taxes. Those, with all the aid of voluntary contributions,

E

having

having only arisen to two-thirds of his estimate, he is driven this year, to the still more desperate expedient of ten per cent. upon income. When that proves as insufficient as the other, is he to make up the deficiency, by demanding fifteen per cent. where he could not get ten? Oh no! but the tax upon income will be made to apply to Ireland, and our poor country despoiled, for the farcical liberation of Europe. Such will be the precious offspring of the Union.

Can 40,000 men be necessary to enforce a benefit? We have not unfrequently seen them employed to effect a people's ruin, and thank God! sometimes so employed in vain. The extension of debt and taxes, which is to be the reciprocity of the Union, is wisely not left to stand upon its own merits, but requires to be argued by mercenary bayonets. It is absurd to expect, after such an event, that mercantile capital will from any quarter, migrate to this unhappy land. If with a view to escape from taxes at home, it should cross the Irish Channel, it will be repelled back by our own burthens; and I should not be surprized, if the present Minister of Ireland, hereafter made it a merit with his English friends, that he had taken measures to hinder it from finding any asylum or exemption here. It may be said, indeed, that were Ireland a free and unburthened country, sameness of language, similitude of manners and nearness of situation, might entice enterprize and capital, and arrest much of that wealth and industry which is taking refuge beyond the Atlantic. Those who did not chuse to pay for supporting regular government at Constantinople, and liberating Europe from democracy, might settle here, and at last English folly might return some part back, of what was wrung from us by English domination. But this is precisely what the Union must prevent.

prevent. It will leave nothing to the migrating capitalist to save, in point of taxes, and nothing to gain, in point of trade. The latter for this reason, that he will as effectually have the Irish market without removing; for it will be entirely under the regulation of his own Parliament. English skill and capital will accordingly have no inducement to remove to this subjugated province. This was well understood by the English adviser of the Union, when he proposed to indemnify Dublin, by making it the emporium of British manufactures, which English canals, are to convey so cheaply to Liverpool (p. 40. Arguments for and against an Union) and Irish canals, converted into a curse, are to convey so cheaply throughout Ireland, that to the remotest corner of the island, they shall crush the infantine competition of any native fabric.

Whenever trade and manufactures have migrated, it was always from a country of persecution and despotism, to one of greater comparative liberty. They were these two causes that drove to England the woollen and silk manufacturers—the one from the Low Countries, the other from France. But wherever persecution may rage, Ireland offers no retreat to the fugitive sons of freedom. The English trader would not find his liberty increased by coming here, and after an Union his protection would be less. I shall spare myself the pain of dwelling upon the thoughts that rise up along with this part of the subject. The futility of expecting, that a worse condition will be productive of advantages to our country, which were not brought about by a better one, has already been ably exposed by Mr. Barnes, in a work that deserves the warm thanks of every true Irishman.

Such a situation is preposterously compared by the advocate of the Union, to a partnership in trade.

For here the parties have an umpire left, to prevent or punish an infraction of the agreement. If it does not answer their convenience, they may dissolve, or at least not prolong it, beyond the stipulated term. Whereas the Union is more like a marriage, which if it prove ever so destructive or adulterous to Ireland, she has no consistory where to carry her complaint for separation, though the British Neptune, when he has robbed her of her jewel of Independence, may, and will degrade her to drudge among his vassal colonies.

The argument brought in favour of the Union from the example of the increased prosperity of Scotland, since the Union of that country with England, I shall only mention to observe upon it, that when used by a man of sense, it amounts to an admission of the rottenness of his cause, which he is forced to prop by such fallacies. Without adverting to the complete inertness of the Union, towards promoting the prosperity of Scotland, for sixty years, until aided by other causes that did not exclusively belong to the measure; without adverting to the general improvement which time must bring with it every where that human industry is not cramped or counteracted; there are no reasonings more fallacious than those from vague analogy—indeed a perfect similitude is scarcely to be found between those camelion-like questions, which relate to the ever-varying interests of men. Those persons therefore, who argue from things that have gone before in favour of those which are only posterior to them, may as well say that Scotland prospered, because of the last eclipse. The argument of analogy applies with equal facility to the converse of the proposition, and would just as well support separation. We ourselves have prospered in proportion as our subjection to England was lessened; and America, after throwing off her dominion altogether,

gether, is become, in the short space of 16 years, one of the most prosperous countries on the Globe. A candid investigator of truth, who does not dread lest her voice should reject his system, must admit that every where the salient and productive principle of Liberty and Independence, is according to the measure it abounds, the parent of national prosperity and greatness. It was that drew Holland from the waves, turned her marshes into gardens, rendered her cities more numerous than the hamlets of other countries, and alternately made the ocean the monument of her assiduity and her triumphs; it was that cloathed the mountains of Switzerland with habitations and life, made her vallies smile in contented ease; and in both those countries, ornamented the creations of industry, with the wreath of science and the palm of glory. These, O Liberty and Independence! were your prolific blessings—may they ever animate the energies of my country, and grant to her innumerable aptitudes, the untributary rewards of industry and commerce!

Take then this Union, as it affects all the sources of wealth and consequence, it will be found one of the most overbearing and rapacious projects, which power can dictate to a fallen people; take it as it affects constitution and national dignity, it is one of the most insulting and despotic. While the French Republic incorporates her conquests into her Empire, however criminal her ambition in doing so, she only unites countries contiguous to her own territory, as Scotland is to England, and does not refuse to *all* their inhabitants, an entire participation in *all* her advantages in every shape and degree; whereas an Union between Ireland and England would be one between countries that have not a single point of contact, and the smaller of which, is as fully competent to exist independent of the other, nay of the whole world, as Great Britain is to exist independent of France.

France. The French Republic proscribes no description of subjects; but we are told, and it is seriously recommended to Protestants, as a motive for agreeing to the Union, that the perpetual and secure inferiority of the Catholics of Ireland, will be one of its beneficial effects; while to the Catholics themselves is held out a bribe for their clergy, and some vague hopes of undefined, indeterminate privileges to the laity, as if the Catholics were bigots of the sixteenth century, and had not as just and proud a sense, both lay and clerical, of the blessings of civil and political liberty, as their more favoured countrymen. The attention of the public is turned with much anxiety to the conduct they shall observe upon this great question. The sanguinary persecution they have suffered, will, as some fear, and others hope, render them regardless of the fate of a country, in which they may not arrive at the proud distinction of citizens; but their malignant passions may be gratified, by concurring in the degradation of their oppressors. The Catholics of Ireland leave rancour and malignity to their enemies: They who might perhaps long since, in despite of Gaand Juries and Orange-lodges, have obtained the removal of those restrictions, which peculiarly affect themselves, if they had concurred in crying down the sacred principles of Liberty, instead of manfully asserting them; if instead of Catholic franchise, they had not contended for Irish Freedom; will not tarnish their honour or forsake their duty, to gratify the worst and basest of human passions—revenge. They cannot surely be allured to it, by the Castle project of an Union; which impudently tells them, it is presumed they will be content, when they shall be reduced to despair, and emancipation placed totally beyond their hopes or acquisition. That such would be their fate, they have a sufficient assurance, in the pertinacious bigotry of that foreign clergy, who still refuse the just claims of the Protestant

Protestant Dissenters, who spurn with greater fury those of the English Catholics, and who, if a new Gospel were to come from Heaven, would raise against it the burning zeal of a Birmingham mob. But let not the friends of Irish Independence ungratefully forget, that the Catholics of Ireland have always acted with that fidelity to their country, which should naturally characterize the majority of the people. When misguided and false notions of duty, led them at the Revolution to adhere to the abdicated Monarch, who claimed by hereditary right, in preference to him who was invited from a foreign Republic, with his foreign army, to the relief of an oppressed people; and whom (if they considered but their interest) they too might have secured to themselves the benefit of electing; did they not however make the freedom of Ireland, the condition of their allegiance. In the acts of that illustrious Parliament held by King James in Back-lane, we find provisions for asserting and maintaining the Independence of the Irish Legislature, for making trade free, for encouraging manufactures and shipping, and reforming the representation; but not a line to exclude any description of Irishmen, from the blessings of general liberty, from the competition of honourable employment, or the participation of any of the powers, dignities, or immunities of the state.

When in the American war they perceived a beginning change of disposition less hostile to their religion and interests, in some few acts of moderate justice, and yet timid liberality; did they not, with a generous partiality for their slowly relenting countrymen, prefer to accept of slight favours at their hands, sooner than invite the power that hovered upon their coast, that had already given assurance of emancipation to America, which it shortly afterwards fulfilled?

We

We meet the Catholics again, after the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, upon occasion of a threatened Union, stand forward as Irishmen, generously forgetting their own wrongs for the concerns of their country. If Irish feelings be not benumbed to every thing national or heroic, by the anodyne of English gold; the recollection of the Catholic meeting in Francis-street Chapel, on the 9th of April, 95, ought to disabuse their opponents. But whether or no, I trust the Catholics will preserve their character of unsullied patriotism, and never become instruments to degrade their native land. From their deluded countrymen, who themselves were duped and corrupted by English policy, they have suffered much, alas! too much; but by their own act alone can they be dishonoured, and from this misfortune they are yet free. They cannot forget the noble and Catholic sentiment of an able and enlightened member of their body, now unhappily no more, of Dr. Ryan—that *it is better they should do penance for Ireland, than that Ireland should do penance for them.* I was present that day in the crowd, a witness to his polished eloquence, when he spoke these remarkable words—“ If the British Minister should come forward with Union in one hand, and Catholic Emancipation in the other, would you acquiesce in the former, for the sake of the latter? Would you barter the Rights of Ireland, for Catholic Freedom?” A burst of indignation, and a cry of no! no! issued that day from the assembled Catholics of Dublin. He proceeded—“ I know you would not, and I only put the question, in order that you may dismiss it with the stamp of your indignation. It is morally impossible you could harbour such a dishonourable intention. The Catholics are the great majority of the people of Ireland, and it is impossible that the majority of any people can be guilty of an act of treachery, to the land that gave them birth. A

“ PARTY

" PARTY may betray the people, but the people
 " cannot betray themselves; for self-preservation is
 " the first law in the breast of nations, as well as in
 " the breast of individuals; and even if you were to
 " stoop to so disgraceful an act, as to bargain for
 " your own rights, by selling the rights of your
 " countrymen, you would not long survive the ruin,
 " or profit by the disasters you had spread around you.
 " The slavery you caused would be communicated to
 " you back again, and you would soon ascend the
 " same hearse that brought your country to the
 " tomb." He concluded an elegant and impressive
 speech, by this apposite resolution—" That we are
 sincerely and unalterably attached to the RIGHTS,
 LIBERTIES, and INDEPENDENCE of OUR NATIVE COUN-
 TRY; and we pledge ourselves collectively and indi-
 vidualy to resist, even our own emancipation, if pro-
 posed to be conceded upon the ignominious terms of
 an acquiescence, in the fatal measure of AN UNION
 with the sister kingdom."

Such were the sentiments of the Catholics of this
 great city, in 95, which Dr. Ryan only embodied in
 a resolution, to which was not heard a single sentence
 of dissent. Death has since deprived the nation of
 that valuable life. With affectionate emotion, and
 public, as well as private feelings, I deplore the loss.
 After much intimacy, which never abated my res-
 pect, I must say of him in truth, that his virtues
 were an honour to his kind, his talents an ornament
 to his country, and his honesty so pure, that they
 never would be employed, but to promote its welfare,
 and maintain its rights. At that time (and we would
 do well to advert much upon the present to that
 occasion), it was said by another Catholic of distin-
 guished talents—" However we may differ in doc-
 trinal tenets, as our morality is one, because we
 " are Christians, so shall our politics be one, because

“ we are Irishmen. We have all the same God and
 “ the same Country, and as we agree in the obliga-
 “ tion of promoting the glory of the one, so we will
 “ all co-operate in the task of promoting the inte-
 “ rest of the other.” And a little further, “ Weak
 “ and wicked man (Pitt) does he think the Catholics
 “ of Ireland will purchase their Emancipation at the
 “ price of Irish Liberty? At what time could the
 “ conduct of the Catholics of Ireland justify, or
 “ give rise to a supposition of this contumelious na-
 “ ture? In the war with America, a war that should
 “ be for ever a lesson to Ministerial arrogance and
 “ presumption, when the fleets of France rode tri-
 “ umphant in the English Channel, and hovered
 “ round the Irish coast; when Ireland was left to
 “ Providence, and to herself, how did the Catholics
 “ then act? Did they think of themselves? No, they
 “ thought of their country.” Again—“ Kings,
 “ Parliaments, and Constitutions, have yielded to
 “ the hand of time, and the ravages of power, for
 “ what is there human that can withstand them?
 “ But the rights of the people, on which Kings,
 “ Parliaments and Constitutions rest, shall remain
 “ unhurt amidst the general wreck; immutable as
 “ the God who bestowed them, eternal as the prin-
 “ ciples of justice upon which they are founded.
 “ Would the people of England acknowledge that
 “ the Parliament of England was competent to sur-
 “ render its powers to Ireland? Is there a man in
 “ either kingdom, who would venture to hazard such
 “ an assertion? And is not the people of Ireland as
 “ independent, and as self-existing, as the people of
 “ England? Is not the Parliament of Ireland, with
 “ the King of Ireland at its head, in every point of
 “ Constitutional theory, exactly the same as that of
 “ England? Who then shall dare to assert, that
 “ the Parliament of Ireland can do that, which the
 “ Parliament of England cannot?”

It

It will not detract from the truth of those sentiments, that one of the authors of them is in the grave, and the other is in exile—nor do I wish to panegyrize the living: I only contend, that the Catholics of Dublin adopted them in 95; that the Catholics of Ireland applauded them after; and that I believe they have too much magnanimity, as well as wisdom, not to persevere in them to the end.

Although some of the evils of an Union, do not apply to the Catholics in their present condition, for privileges which they have not, they cannot lose; yet in what they may acquire, or what they have to forfeit, does it apply to them most forcibly. It comes to them under suspicious auspices, for who are to lay down and mete its conditions, but their most implacable and acrimonious enemies in both kingdoms; men who for a moment may condescend to cheat them with hopes, but who do not possess enough of philosophy or temper, ever to forget their own prejudices, or the injuries they have done them. They who but the other day, made the reverence of Catholics for the Virgin, and their harmless acknowledgment of the Pope's spiritual supremacy in their own religion only, a ground for excluding them from some of the most valuable rights of citizens, as dangerous enemies to the state; must, if the opposition they then gave be honest, rather endeavour with the first opportunity, to abridge sooner than extend the power of persons who hold such *formidable doctrines*. If the opposition they gave had other motives than those they alledged, then were they hypocrites, whose assurances or compact are entitled to no reliance. They tell the Catholic, in order to reconcile him to this measure of an Union, that his clergy shall be pensioned, and give him hopes of his pretensions being admitted, in consequence of that event; but they tell the Protestant, in order to reconcile him also, that by it the Catholic

shall be chained down to perpetual inferiority. Although the contradiction did not betray the intended fraud, surely no Catholic in his senses can be the dupe of such juggling; no more than of that simulated concern for his religion, which the same party affects, when it would fain insinuate that it is nothing short of Atheism in a member of the Romish Church, to protest in the strongest terms against giving it a civil establishment. Surely, Catholics, the words yet grate upon your ears, which insolently misnamed your religion, a *thing only fit for fools or knaves*; and can you trust to the mockery of regard for it from any such quarter, or be deceived by the crocodile tears that fall from ascendancy, lay, or churchmen for the Pope, whom they have ever reviled, and your religion, which, down from the malevolent Bishop of Cloyne, to his dull assistant, Dr. Hales, has been the constant theme of their vituperation and ridicule? Had it been said the Catholics wished to subvert the Protestant establishment, not for the sake of an exemption from tithes; not for the sake of removing the many dangers to Religion and Liberty, consequent to all religious establishments; not for the sake of that perfect freedom of conscience, which can only exist where no penalties or exclusions are incurred for heterodoxy, but in order to set up their own in the place of it—what fruitful themes of invective had been thus afforded to the author of the former character, and what a supply of matter to the candid and decorous strains of Dr. Duigenan! How they would have rung the changes upon this so often slandered religion, who are sedulous at the same moment to misrepresent some lamentable acts of retaliation and despair, as the pure and genuine offspring of Catholicism!

Religion is one thing, the civil establishment of it another; and is one of the first abuses, which disfigured

gured by its alliance the beautiful system of Christianity. Religious establishments have been always hurtful to the cause of Religion. To Liberty they are not less so; and when that of Ireland is to be carried off, we see a proposed establishment to the Catholics, issue from the same region, with the other distempers of an Union. But the bait betrays the purpose: The Catholic clergy will not first take bribes, to be afterwards obliged to take commissions of the peace, though they should be tempted to recruit the sable army of *active magistrates*, by the allurements of a demi-establishment of their own. In all Christian Churches, says the profound and sagacious author of the *Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 2. p. 317. Dub. edit. 1793. the benefices of the clergy are a sort of freeholds which they enjoy not during pleasure, but during life, or good behaviour. If they held them by a more precarious tenure, and were liable to be turned out upon every slight disobligation either of the Sovereign or of his Ministers, it would perhaps be impossible for them to *maintain their authority with the people*, who would then consider them as *mercenary dependents upon the Court*, in the sincerity of whose instructions they could no longer have any confidence.

Until the American and French revolutions, all rulers appeared desirous of propping their authority, by rendering as much as possible the clergy dependent upon themselves; for as the civil *establishment* of the church wanted inherent strength, by wanting the support of reason, it is of the nature of all established clergy, when they are so unfitly circumstanced, to make common cause with the state, *whatever it may be*. This has made the *established clergy* uphold with equal zeal the inquisitorial tyranny of Spain and Portugal, the aristocratic despotism of Venice, the more equal republicanism of Holland, and the passive obedience

dience exacted in England before the revolution. It prompted in our own time, one of the mitred fronts to declare in the British Senate, that the people have nothing to do with the laws, but to obey them, and has turned the established clergy of Ireland, into hunters of their wretched countrymen, to enjoy the conflagration of their dwellings, and scent their lacerated footsteps with the keenness of antient Britons. It “ converted the spiritual guide into a court constable, and the pastor of the flock into a leader of detachments, whose fold became the county gaol, and whose flock was his prisoners.”* To this cause is it owing, that under monarchies and republics, under all religions, whether Romish or Reformed, divine right and non-resistance, were the doctrines of the clergy, when they were the doctrines of their patrons. To this is it owing that we scarcely ever hear them inveigh in their eloquent homilies, or pious exhortations, against the political corruptions of government, though they form so essential and large a part of morals, and subvert more extensively the principles of virtue, that can be done by any private depravity; but reserve with courtly prudence their anathemas for the turbulent transgressions of the people, or such vices only, as do not interfere with the administration of those who govern. The abuses belong neither to religion, nor its ministers, considered simply as such; but to the civil establishments, which seduce the frailty of human nature into acts of corrupt complaisance, or unchristian persecution. If left to God and to their flocks, the venerable names of the clergy would perhaps less than those of any other men, be disgraced by an alliance with despotism; for the maxims of the Gospel are those of natural and civil equality, the basis of true liberty; the very same, notwithstanding the calumnies of interested tyrants, which were transplanted into the declaration

* Petition of the Whig Club to the King.

tion of rights, prefixed to the American and French Constitutions. They wrong the information of Catholics, who presume to suppose them ignorant of these truths; and however it may displease the imp of national dissension, and the purveyors of absolute power, they are not desirous of a civil establishment for their clergy; but as they value the liberties of their country; and cherish their religion, they protest against the insidious project of adulterously connecting it with the state.

A formal communication, I understand, has been made by a noble Secretary, to two Catholics of distinction, bespeaking their concurrence in the Union; but informing them they could not for the present be included in its arrangements. It was expected probably, they would as usual acquiesce from humility; but I think they should consider themselves happy, not to be involved in its disgrace. It is certain, much spirit was never manifested by that description of Catholics. With a very few exceptions, however, and some indulgent allowances, which generosity, if not strict justice, should yield to the prejudices of education; they cannot be deemed unfriendly to the liberties of their body, nor so uninformed as not to know them. Those among them who may justly pretend from the advantages of rank or fortune, to sit in the Legislature of their country, and are sensible how much all the considerations which should influence a government, conspire to accelerate in their favour the advances of a too tardy liberality, cannot but perceive, how much they will be frustrated of the benefit of circumstances and their own weight, when they shall have to carry their question by appeal, to the bar of a foreign Parliament. An alteration will be difficultly made in their favour, in the Parliamentary Constitution of England; as there the clerical logic of innovation, could be no longer pleaded against the Dissenters; and the disciples of Priestley and Price are not, it is said, in sufficient odour of aristocracy, to be admissible within

within the sanctuary of the state. When the Parliament and Constitution of Ireland, are translated to a better place, in recompense of their virtues, let the Catholic look round, and he may see the important offices of high and sub-sheriff, left to invite his ambition, and remain to a benign Sovereign, for the display of Princely munificence. That is, if any of the shreds and tattered rags of the privileged orders of the Irish Constitution remain unexported to Duke's Place, the Catholics will be graciously permitted to bow at the Castle, for the favour of wearing them. Catholics! you are certainly not treated with much ceremony for the present, but proposed, cavalierly enough, to be handed over to the English Parliament; where the hypocritical Wilberforce may perhaps bring a clause for your emancipation, into his next bill for abolishing the slave trade. Permit me to request your attention to the following passage of an official pamphlet, as it will give you a pretty broad hint of what is thought in the superior region from whence it issues, the fittest principle whereby to rule you.

“ The Protestants state, that when the Catholics
 “ were restrained by severe laws, the kingdom con-
 “ tinued in tranquillity for a century; but so soon as
 “ national confidence, the result of that tranquillity,
 “ induced them to repeal the restrictions by which
 “ the Catholics were bound, the antient spirit of ri-
 “ valry revived, and the Catholics demanded such a
 “ change of the Constitution, as would gradually
 “ transfer to them all the power of the state.”

The conclusion is obvious—that exclusion is the most judicious policy to be observed towards the Catholics; and this oracle comes from an Englishman, in the intimacy at least of the English Cabinet. This gentleman is not so unacquainted with human nature or events, as not to know that the spirit of rivalry revived, not because the restrictions were removed, but
 that

that a spirit of liberty grew up, and prostrated some of the restrictions before it. Because of the American and French revolutions, and of the embarrassments of the British government coincident with those events, and the seasonable exertions of the Catholics themselves.

These causes are too manifest to escape the penetration of the author of the pamphlet, but the more obvious they are, the plainer also is the design of making the principle of exclusion the measure of future policy towards the Irish Catholics. Not that there will be much to withhold, but in hopes that little may still keep up the fatal spirit of disunion and animosity.

While the silly objection of the Pope's spiritual supremacy is made an impediment to Catholic emancipation, nothing can be more evident than that its force will be as great in the British Parliament, whither Catholic hopes and claims would be transferred, as it is here; for until his Grace of Canterbury shall charitably condescend to give his Holiness a lodging at Lambeth, the spiritual supremacy will be as much a foreign jurisdiction in England, as it is in Ireland; and the splenetic ravings of Mr. Ogle, or the ribaldry of Dr. Duigenan, be just as good arguments in St. Stephen's Chapel, as they were in College-green.

In consequence of an Union, the argument of numbers, the author of the pamphlet says, would be turned against the Catholics, and of course an argument of right subtracted from their pretensions. This, if it were true, would not, I presume, advance their claims. Besides, whatever credit this writer possesses, goes to assure the Protestants, and he cannot conceal the secret from the Catholics, "that they (the Protestants) may rest assured, the British Parliament

G

" will

“ will not imprudently admit Catholic pretensions, as
 “ the *test laws* could not be *partially* repealed.”

Whatever reliance therefore a Catholic Peer and a Right Rev. Prelate, are desired to place in the *future* dispositions of the British Senate, they will, after an Union, have no means to induce or to determine its liberality. In their failure they might be consoled, by recollecting that the object of pursuit had sunk in value; for an admission into the British Parliament, if attainable, would to almost all of them be a barren privilege. This makes the Union peculiarly injurious to the Catholics, both as it tends to perpetuate their disabilities, and, in the improbable case that these were removed, as they themselves would totally sink in a competition with the persons who must pass into the imperial Legislature; whereas in an Irish one, their importance would be great, and daily becoming more so. But all from which Parliaments derive consequence—the free suffrages of the people—that which makes franchises of value, whether elective or representative, the authority they confer—that which gives prosperity to nations, and dignity to man, Liberty and Independence will be snatched alike, by this fatal measure, from the great mass of Irishmen of every persuasion. If the Catholics, however, whose approbation of it is partly canvassed through their resentments, should let themselves be deceived by that, and vague professions, or nugatory promises; they will in some measure countenance the contumely so often manifested for their feelings and capacity, when they are by the same party alternately injured and cajoled. They ought not to be ignorant, that it is contrary to the nature of monopoly, to be just or generous, and that in their case it never was so; but that as they are indebted to their increased importance, for the acquisitions they have made, so when the operation of this importance is diminished
 by

by an Union, for they must largely partake of the general degradation, they will be removed in the proportionate degree from all political dignity and power—objects naturally of estimation, if not always of pursuit, to every elevated mind. Part of this importance consists in the mutual amity and good understanding established between them and the Dissenters; a thing equally honourable to religion and to patriotism, and conducive to the liberties of both, while a native Legislature exists within the realm; but when a few individuals far beyond the influence of popular suffrage, are the self-appointed, pretended representatives of Ireland, there can be no more emancipation, and no more reform—at least by what is commonly called constitutional means.

Nothing can at the same time more strongly evince the corruptions of Parliament, and how much those persons were in the right, who contended for reform; than that a measure should pass, by which the faithless agents of the people of Ireland, should rob it of all effectual controul over its own concerns, in order to give that controul to the people of another country. It can be no longer doubtful that they must have been capable of selling their political services, who can be induced to part with their political existence. The smallness of the relation between the Parliament and the People, is the fertile and paramount grievance so justly complained of by the friends of Liberty, and an augmentation of the mischief, by which it will be totally in the power of a set of Englishmen to make laws to bind Ireland, must be held a decisive proof of the existence of the corruption, in the consummation of its exercise. A virtuous Parliament requires not to be annihilated; and an honest one, would be incapable of selling the birth-right of its constituents. With the knowledge of its dispositions, which government must possess, it insinuates, by presuming to bring forward a measure so odious, that there is

G 2

nothing

nothing with which it may not affront the honour of that assembly, and that it may not expect from its venality: thus justifying the reformer, by what it presumes upon the Parliament. The world has agreed in allowing, that the Roman Senate was sunk into the most abject state of corruption, when there was nothing so base that the Emperors dare not propose to it, and nothing they proposed, that it did not confirm.

It is also worthy of remark, that every argument in favour of an Union, is one against the existing connection; and yet it is for maintaining the inconvenience of this state, that so many of the people have been proscribed and butchered; but which may be avowed by those alone who would modify it, not in favour of Ireland, but of Great Britain. Nevertheless Union and Separation are correlative terms, and in fair argument the consideration of one, cannot be separated from that of the other. So that to discuss both sides of this question, is to consider whether a provincial subjection to England, or a total independence, would be most conducive to the happiness of Ireland. The example of the Seven United Provinces, and of America, suggested in the Secretary's pamphlet, with what they suffered, and what they dared, and how they prospered, equally obtrude themselves upon the judgment, while it deliberates upon this subject; but these, and many other arguments applicable to it, cannot, in the present state of the Irish Press, be freely urged. Like the absent statues of Brutus and Cassius, at the obsequies of Junia, they must, however, impress the mind the more forcibly, for being unavoidably kept out of sight. *Viginti clarissimarum familiarum imagines antelatae sunt, Manlii, Quinctii, aliaque ejusdem nobilitatis nomina: Sed præfulgebant Cassius atque Brutus, eo ipso quod effigies eorum non visebantur.* (Annal. lib. III. sub finem.)

The

The calumniated advocates of reform, are no less the friends of their country's liberty, than of its peace; and their adversaries, who are also the promoters of the Union, by sacrificing the one, continually endanger the other; for an Union will leave Irishmen no effectual channel of redress, but force, and reduce us to the necessity of implicit submission, or the last and awful refuge of the oppressed—putting the sword in room of the pen, and insurrection instead of resolutions. A free Parliament, such as the friends of reform have endeavoured to obtain, would be to a nation, what the impartial administration of justice is, with regard to persons; it would prevent the necessity of self-interference, and substitute the reason, in place of the arms of society. But when reform is rendered not simply more difficult, but next to impossible, as must be the case with the only remaining Parliament, when it is deluged with an influx of strangers, connected with little else there besides the Minister, and that the controul of public opinion, which sometimes operates over those whom power cannot reach, will totally cease to affect the pretended Irish representatives, removed by the Union out of the sphere of its influence; what tribunal will there remain in Ireland, before which to carry the grievances of the people?—Indeed the bare proposal, but still more the consummation of an Union, will fully justify those men, who turned their weary footsteps, their baffled hopes, and disgusted honesty, from the threshold of Parliament. It will be seen, they only thought of it a little sooner, as the world must think of it after an Union, that it felt not for the people, and deserved not their confidence, which could seize the distractions of an unhappy hour, to barter away as far as it may do so, their liberties and welfare, the nation's pride, and every blessing which may naturally descend to an independent country.

To

To reduce imperial Ireland to a province ! What is treason, if such can be the nature of patriotism ? Of this their sharpest enemies cannot accuse the United Irishmen, that they would submit their country a province to any people under Heaven. The very head and front of their offending, is a wish to withdraw it, like the United States of America, from the blessings of British connection, to stand a self-existing Republic. I do not intend to scan their conduct. But at a time that every principle of moral and political duty enjoins forgiveness and oblivion of injuries, the classic scholar will not feel his philanthropy diminish, by recollecting how his youthful bosom beat high with enthusiasm, at the sacred enterprizes of Thrasybulus and Dion ; with what generous and heartfelt interest he beheld the first William, in unconquerable perseverance and disinterested patriotism, lay the foundation of the liberties and prosperity of Holland ; and how often he has since exulted in the successful invasion of his illustrious successor, who may justly be called the glorious Deliverer, since he was destined by Providence to liberate a nation from civil and religious tyranny. It cannot but be painful to a good mind, to condemn even with justice, any description of that great family, of which he is but one as an Irishman ; but to forgive and to forget, is not less generous than equitable, when the successful has certainly not been the least guilty party. Unless we are doomed to be eternally blinded to our interests, by our animosities, the use that is attempted to be made of the latter upon the present important question, should reconcile us to one another. With concern have I seen a Catholic Barrister, in a publication where he appears to less advantage than he did formerly in others in a better cause, attempting to lead the Catholics to approve of the Union, through enmity to the Orangemen ; while the latter are prompted to the same disastrous measure, by their hatred

tered of the Catholics. It is certain that no proceeding could better promote the views of those persons who are desirous to strip this country of independence, and hand her over to Mr. Pitt, to bear the taxes and impositions of his government. Violent as we have witnessed this spirit of religious rancour, it is foreign to the country it has so much ravaged—it is fed like the yellow fever, by an extraneous contagion. Let us behold in it, those foes to our independence, who acknowledge that Ireland is growing too strong to be governed, and who fomented our domestic animosities, not this year only, but for ages. The crime is in the first instigation, more than in the vengeance of an unhappy mortal goaded to madness and despair; and to retaliation alone do I charge, upon the best grounds, the acts of desperate outrage that were committed in some of the disturbed districts, as I do the aggression in its cause, to the same power which put in motion the Grand Juries, using the infatuated instruments of its abandoned policy, perhaps for the very purposes of the Union. Why has the life of no Quaker been attacked in the county of Wexford, and why were depredations committed in Connaught, upon the property of Catholics as well as Protestants, but because the moral and humane Quaker did not defile his hands to torture and massacre his fellow-creature; and because in the other case, religion was as little a protection as a provocation. I have heard from such authority as I cannot doubt, that Protestants, who had not signalized themselves by acts of cruelty, were as unmolested in the West as any other men; and that where the people appointed committees, they chose Protestants indiscriminately with Catholics, giving no other preference, but what they thought was due to principle.

The project of an Union was long a matter of earnest solicitude and contemplation; but Ireland was

not thought sufficiently divided, or frantic enough to receive it until now. The Orange barbarities were fomented with a view to ripen this catastrophe; but let me not fill my page with party appellations, and fall into the snare of our enemies. The faction of Borough-mongers, and the whole firm of monopoly, were roused upon the very irritable principle of self-interest, to restrain the liberties of the country, in resisting emancipation and reform. In proportion as good sense and true Irish policy, were making proselytes to both these valuable measures, a more active regimen of dissension, was resorted to by the common enemy, in order that when one party was thoroughly committed with the other, and reconciliation desperate, they might fling away the hopes of independence and prosperity, to seek common vengeance in common ruin. Who does not perceive the same hostile power which fomented our unhappy disputes, seeking to reap the harvest of its profligate intrigues, when it presumes to think that our resentments and folly have so degraded us, as to look for reciprocal satisfaction, in mutual annihilation? But, countrymen! let this infamous attack rally you round the standard of independence. In spite of your dissensions, you are still children of the same parent. The veriest Orangeman among you, need but go to England, and the Irish stranger will be taught, by the contumely with which he is received, that he belongs to another country; and will you then cast away all which gives that country rank, and retain of Ireland nothing but her brogue? O let one wise and generous act of patriotism, bury your nonsensical quarrels in oblivion. Learn from this odious conspiracy against your independence, that if you have been indulged in the monstrous facility of cutting each other's throats, it was in order to resume that dominion over your properties and trade, which was once reluctantly yielded to your *unanimity* and spirit; but above all, let me conjure you, Catholics,

tholics, and you who are advocates of reform, and lovers of liberty, give no countenance to an incorporating Union. If those men, who possess more effectual means of defeating it, shall act with the decision and vigour which become persons in their situation, sign upon the holy altar of national independence, an amnesty for your respective errors, and confirm it by an irrevocable oath, that you shall deem those alone your enemies, who are at war with the liberties of your country. So shall you give to mankind a glorious example of magnanimous wisdom—you will strengthen the bonds of confidence, lay the foundation of greater harmony, and repel dishonour and destruction from your native land.

Thus alone, countrymen ! shall you be able to defeat the insidious project of an incorporating Union, the empirical expedient of a desperate and flagitious Ministry, driven by the progressive increase of their liberticide and sanguinary acts, to a height of difficulties, where they are unable to continue, and from which their guilty and recreant hearts tremble to recede. They have exhausted terror, they have deluged the earth with blood, and they foresee, and shudder at the reflux tide of vengeance and of justice. Alike afraid to go back, or to go over, they grasp at the intermediate device of annihilating the independence of a nation, which they are incompetent to govern, and unwilling to resign into other hands. They basely hope to preserve their rank, in the shadowy semblance of authority with which they take refuge in another country, but whither they shall carry nothing so real as their crimes, and the maledictions of the Irish people. The calamities they provoked, prove their unfitness for their stations. They disputed with the principles of Liberty, until they rooted them deep in the soil, and moistened them with the blood of the people. These are now

H

doubly

doubly dear, as well for their own sakes, as for the friends, and brothers, and parents they have cost us. The enemies of these principles, conscious that in every contest brought to the same issue, there can be no compromise, but that Liberty or Despotism must remain sole possessor of the field, seek to protract the exercise of unconstitutional power, by banishing from this country all claim to a free Parliament, and rendering a reform hereafter impossible in the United Parliament of luxurious and degenerate England. But when the corruption of two bodies unites in one, the odium against their vices must accumulate there also. As for us, a military may be substituted for a civil government, and courts-martial made ordinary, instead of the usual tribunals; the militia of both countries may be exchanged, that both may more readily be coerced by alien bands of unrelenting mercenaries; more taxes raised, and the savings from Irish corruption, appropriated to the English creditor; but all these expedients, so far from restraining the free and adventurous mind, must fill it with stronger, and yet stronger indignation. They never can reconcile to their grievances, men whose hearts glow with the love of their country, and whose firm souls can embrace a magnanimous resolution. We may yet see a bolder spirit arise than that of 82, and the freedom of the Irish Legislature again asserted, and the frame of the Irish Constitution again laid down, but never more upon the contracted site of rotten boroughs, and usurped representation. The Union is, however, in vain objected to by those wretched bigots and senseless politicians, who would hesitate at reform. The enemies of Irish Liberty see the alternative of annihilating or reforming the Parliament, and better it is that they should be coalesced with, than opposed by the slavish advocates of a Constitution of boroughs, of peculation, and of partiality.

partiality. Let such narrow-minded and selfish opponents, resign themselves to the foreign supremacy of Great Britain. They deserve not to consort with freemen; they deserve not that liberty for themselves, which they are unwilling to communicate to all their countrymen, and which they have not sufficient wisdom or magnanimity to place upon a wide and national basis. It is in the generous nature of Irishmen, to pass a noble amnesty for past errors, upon the just principle of warding off an evil from all, that all may enjoy together the independence they defend; and it is only on the presumption of existing divisions, that this blow is aimed at the whole Irish nation, by an extraneous power, that supports no party, but with a view to its own dominion; the machinations of our enemies will, I trust, be turned to their own confusion, and my beloved countrymen at last convinced, that to be cordially united to each other, is the only shield of safety and of freedom.

F I N I S.

