

THE  
MELANCHOLY CONSEQUENCES  
OF A  
U N I O N  
D I S P L A Y E D.  
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,  
ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED  
TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE  
LORD CHANCELLOR  
OF  
I R E L A N D.

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BY MARCUS CURTIUS.

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INDIGNI FRATERNUM RUMPERE FÆDUS.

HORAT. EPISTOL. IN PELIUM.

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L O N D O N:  
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1799.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

FROM an unforeseen Accident, which befel the Manuscript, the Publication of these Letters has been necessarily retarded. This will account for the apparent Inaccuracy, which states, that Catholic Emancipation had not, this Year, been proposed in Parliament. The main Argument is not affected, and therefore, it has been suffered to remain, as it originally was written.



# DEDICATION.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS  
ENNISKILLEN AND KINGSBOROUGH.

MY LORDS,

*THE Contents of the following Pages will, trust, assign a sufficient Reason for my presuming to dedicate them to your united Protection. Written from the most disinterested Motive, the Preservation of my Country's Honour, it is natural for me to select those honourable Patrons, whose Patriotic Principles, and determined Loyalty mark their Characters in Public life, as their amiable, social Virtues distinguish them in Private.*

*Though it may appear singular, my Lords, that the Name of that exalted Person to whom the Letters are separately addressed, is not included in their Dedication; I must take the Liberty to observe, that as they were originally designed to meet his Lordship's Eye, in a daily Paper, in the Moment of his Consultation with the British Cabinet, a casualty having prevented their Appearance in Time; the Purpose for which they were written consequently failed in effect. The publishing them therefore, in their present Form, becomes no longer a Private, but a Public concern.*

*Besides,*



*Besides, my Lords, I considered, that if his Lordship disagrees with me in Principle, the Dedication of such a Work, might appear rather as an Insult than a Compliment ; but if his Lordship's Principles coincide with mine, he never can be offended, at being addressed in concert with Noblemen of such distinguished Characters.*

*My Lords, your King respects you ; your Country adores you—nor can “ the Insolence of Office,” ever affect the Patriot, the Virtuous, the Loyal, and the Brave !*

*May the Spirit that has united you in the mutual Support of all that is sacred to Humanity, in despite of “ the proud Man's contumely,” cement your Breasts in an everlasting Union, to the permanent Honour of your God, your Country, and your King !*  
*I am,*

*Mr LORDS,*

*(With all due deference and respect,)*

*The humble Admirer of your Virtues,*

*And very obedient humble Servant,*

MARCUS CURTIUS.



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## TO THE PUBLIC.

THE following Letters were written, as may be seen by referring to the annexed dates, on the first alarm of a projected Union between Great Britain and Ireland; and were designed for publication in one of the London Papers, the Author's connexions making his temporary residence in England unavoidable, sed "Cœlum non animum mutat," but the Editor, to whom the manuscript was entrusted, waiting for a confirmation of what was then considered only as an idle report, prevented the Author's design from taking place within a convenient time; and he now offers it collectively for the public perusal.

Having dedicated a few days to a necessary revival, he finds in the interim that a report prevails, that the scheme for a Union is not likely to be brought forward in the course of the *present Sessions*.—But that does not deter the Author from publishing his sentiments; *as the attempt, however over ruled by the critical situation of the moment, is too favourite a project ever entirely to be excluded from the contemplation of the Cabinet*; and the more opportunity the Public have to consider the measure in its true light, the more likely they will be to



to judge with candour of the benefits or disadvantages which may ensue from its adoption.—Time will also produce this happy effect, that the public mind will not be biassed or swayed by intemperate or indecent acts of opposition.

The representatives of the people may thus be calmly assured of the consequences that must naturally attend their defection from the principles of the Constitution. In a case like this they must be sensible, that unless their votes are sanctioned by the united voice of the electors, they cannot possibly part with the most minute atom of that awful trust which has been solely invested in them *for the good of the Commonwealth*; but without the shadow of a permission, to delegate their authority to any man, or set of men, on the face of the earth. The moment they infringe on a particle of that trust, they are tacitly supposed *to consent to the ruin of the Constitution*; in consequence they violate their parliamentary oath, are guilty of treason against their country; *ipso facto* abdicate their seats, and are no longer Members of the Irish Parliament! *This is an incontrovertible fact, interwoven with the very nature of the Constitution.*

As to instructions offered in general in respect to modifications of the law, or the various business of Parliament, they never can be supposed to mean more than *advice*; nor can there, in common justice, be any offence taken; if such advice, however respected, is not implicitly adhered to, it is the great part of the duty of representatives “pro

“ bono



“*bono consulari.*” It is for that sole purpose that they are selected from the great body of the people; but if they are not allowed to exercise their own judgment, use their own discretion, or have their ears open to conviction, they become the most useless, contemptible characters in existence; and the ayes and noes might as well be conveyed to the Speaker through the medium of the county post.

If it is fact that the British Cabinet have, for the present, dropped the execution of their design, they have acted most wisely, *and again deserve the public confidence*; and the Author will have to congratulate the friends of Ireland on the adoption of such a prudent conduct; but if it should prove otherwise, let his countrymen be steady to their rights, but scrupulously loyal; firm in preserving their independence, but decent and peaceable in the means they may find necessary to pursue to obviate the unhappy consequences. Let them add to moderation, prudence—to stability, virtue—being assured that the contrary conduct must bring indelible disgrace on the most upright cause. The life of the meanest individual, lost in a political difference, is sufficient to mar the fairest prospect, and bring down the curse of the Almighty on the land.

They have a sad proof before them of the consequences arising from an intemperate zeal in public affairs; they have seen that it has been in the power of *one reptile*, whom they nourished with tenderness, and for whose support they emptied their exchequer; by his violent measures, to sacrifice their  
wives,



wives, their children, their friends, their all that was dear in the eyes of humanity, to the accursed demon of a restless and wicked ambition!—and they have seen a hundred thousand men, actuated by the same horrid cause, transformed, even from the semblance of human nature, *into monstrous prodigies from Hell*, led on by this infernal Prince of Darkness. Oh! is there “no curse, no thunder, in Heaven’s store, “to blast that man who owes his greatness to his “country’s ruin?”\*

\* Never were Cicero’s words more applicable than to this man’s character when he exclaims — “O fortunatam Republicam, si quidem hanc sentinam hujus urbis ejecerit? una mehercule Catilina exhausto, relevata mihi, et recreata Republica videtur.”

Orat. Cic. in Catilinam.



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THE  
MELANCHOLY CONSEQUENCES

OF A  
UNION,  
Éc. Éc.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

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LETTER I.

October 18th, 1798.

MY LORD,

YOUR arrival in this country at the present period having given room to various conjectures, and the baneful project of uniting Ireland with Great Britain being assigned as the original and chief motive for your appearance in the British Cabinet; permit an individual, whose temporary

B residence,



residence, and family alliance in this country, have not extinguished the smallest spark of that amor Patriæ which, from his earliest remembrance, glowed in every vein, to address you on this awfully important subject. Conjecture, it is true, may be, on this occasion, as it frequently is, very erroneous, but the alarm has been general—the public mind is preparing for the event—the intelligence is communicated through the channel of every newspaper—"the trumpet is blown over the land—the warning has been given to the people"—and it is full time for every watchman immediately to repair to his post, to face even the approach of danger, to oppose the invasion of his most sacred rights, as he values his own peace and independence, or the liberty and honour of millions yet unborn!

There is no man, my Lord, who can entertain a higher opinion of your Lordship's integrity and abilities, than the writer of this address—a native of the same country—a member of the same University—attached to Royalty and Government by the same principles—and a zealous admirer of your unparalleled magnanimity, your great powers and information, and your steady, invariable adherence to the most unbiaſſed Justice: But, he is at the same time convinced, that the insinuating arts of an intriguing Court, and the sophistry of men nurtured from their infancy in the wily craft of governing, may ensnare even wisdom herself, and transfer honesty "from its true shape and likeness" to  
 assume



assume a counterpart with a wondrous celerity. I do not mean to insinuate that the finessè of Courts naturally leads to corruption.—God forbid, that I should make a charge of such a nature against any respectable body of men!—there are this moment, I most seriously believe, men of the FIRST INTEGRITY in the Cabinet, as I am certain there are of the FIRST ABILITIES. It is but lately that we have seen the venerable Camden, that bulwark of true Liberty, closing his honourable day in the service of the present Administration—a man who never would have joined in counsel with the most potent Government that ever directed the British helm, were he not convinced of its general integrity—and we still enjoy, in the person of his amiable successor, all his magnanimity and virtue—and any man that maturely weighs the difficulties that the Premier Minister has to combat with, should rather admire his extensive abilities, than endeavour to depreciate his merits—but, my Lord, the most upright designs may turn out the most dangerous in effect; as it is evidently a bold undertaking for an individual, however extensive his talents, to oppose his own powers against the united influence of a compact Administration in this country, every man, in the least interested in the present momentous project, has therefore reason to apprehend for your Lordship's political safety, with the same dread that a pilot would entertain for his vessel, when approaching the gulph of that vortex



vortex which mariners describe in the Norwegian seas ; though, I most seriously believe, that if there is a man in his Majesty's dominions capable of withstanding the seducing arts of a British Minister, it is your Lordship.—Perhaps, as the world goes, such cunning and address are not only very excusable, but are absolutely necessary ; and the intrigues of Government (however singular the assertion) may be the direct source of peace and happiness to the community at large—for I believe there is no impartial man, of the least reflection, that will seriously assert, but that he conceives it possible, for two or three individuals, solely depending on their own uprightness and integrity, to govern with absolute frankness and candour the jarring interest of millions of people, who even in the common concerns of life are perpetually at variance with each other, every man priding himself on his own superior address, and, in respect to the Government of their country, all contending who shall be the most expert at perplexing or defrauding it.—Excuse, my Lord, this little digression—but as I write for no party, I am not ashamed to speak the truth, even if it should militate against my own cause.—Besides, I am anxious to prove to your Lordship, and the public, that neither my heart, or my pen, are guided by any principle of ungenerous opposition, or disaffection to Government.—No, my Lord, I will put my hand to that heart, and say, that there is not a man in his Majesty's dominions, who entertains a stricter respect  
for,



for, and a stronger attachment to, his religion, his country, and his King, than the humble individual whom the complexion of the times thus forces from his obscurity to address you.—It is that very affection for the Constitution, AS IT IS, that makes him dread any encroachment, induces him to defend the principles which support it, and to contribute his mite to prevent its ruin by a misguided policy.—After the above solemn assurance, let me see the man, who will be bold enough to challenge me with disloyalty, and I will in return, challenge him to prove, like the wife of Brutus, whose blood runs the purest in our veins, *in any cause not militant against the laws of my God, or where my King or Country may require the sacrifice!*

It will be impossible for me, my Lord, after this long (perhaps too tedious) exordium, to enter at present into the merits of the cause which induced me to address you.—Those I must defer until I next take the liberty of resuming my pen. I will then, as impartially as possible, consider the Union of the two countries in every separate point of view—shew its dangerous tendency in true colours, and faithfully write what I know to be the opinion of thousands, acting in this respect, only as the candid echo of public opinion.—In the mean time, my Lord, I cannot avoid remarking, that the planning such a measure at SUCH A TIME, favours strongly of the Quixotical spirit that influences Buonaparte and his atheistical set of demons to new colonize the deserts of Egypt, and Heaven grant that the bold design may not experience



rience a similar defeat!—What, my Lord, are burning sands and wandering Arabs when compared to the probable evils that ministry may have to surmount on this enterprize?—I very much fear, that they must first lay desolate a populous country, inhabited by SOULS OF FIRE, who, with hearts cased in steel, will cement in one impenetrable mass to oppose the measure, and leave nothing but a savage wild to conquer.—Oh, my Lord, let plain unvarnished Truth tell her own tale; and may her candour compensate for her seeming freedom of expression! It is better to probe the wound, than, from a fatal delicacy, permit it to ulcerate!—I take the liberty, my Lord, of subscribing in the name of a man, whose patriotism, at the instant expence of his life, once closed the gap that threatened to destroy his country.

Your LORDSHIP'S

Obedient humble Servant,

MARCUS CURTIUS.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

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L E T T E R II.

October 19th, 1798.

MY LORD,

A UNION of the two kingdoms has been, for many years, at different periods, the familiar topic of conversation with politicians, and among individuals in private life, who scarce understand what such a junction means. We are therefore so familiarized with the subject, that when revived by some sudden rumour, we consider it as only the old legend renewed to diversify the chit-chat of the day; and, therefore, we contemplate its progress as matter of little moment to society; we lose sight of the enormity of the project, or calmly content ourselves with shrewdly concluding, that no Minister would ever be bold enough to adopt, in reality, a measure so pregnant with every evil; indeed, such would naturally be the conclusive inference of every rational man—but in too much safety there is danger. This method of habituating the public mind to a familiarity with any bold or danger-

ous



rous design, before there is any real intention of putting it in execution, is not unfrequently a deep laid scheme of political finesse, by which it is expected, that the public jealousy will subside, and, in consequence, less opposition will be made whenever Ministers find out a convenient season, or have the hardihood to adopt the projected measure; but in this instance, I fear the British cabinet will find themselves extremely mistaken—they have bold spirits to work on—they have to encounter men, whom experience, dreadful experience, must inform them, that they will not passively submit to be deluded out of even the shadow of liberty! Men, who have proved in the most calamitous instances, that even where their views are base and villanous, they hold their lives in little stead when placed in competition with any favourite pursuit; but in what they might conscientiously imagine, to be a just and honourable cause, at what value then would they esteem their lives? *Not, my Lord, at a single pin's point.*

That Ministers should, at such a moment as the present, ferment the public mind, by proposing so unpopular a measure, appears to me to be the first awful sign *that the wisdom of the Most High has deserted our councils*—Millions of loyal persons contemplate in silent horror the visionary project—faithful confidence has already yielded to gloomy distrust and jealousy, and, if this infamous policy is ever perfected (which, I trust,  
never



never will be the case, while we have an honest man left in the senate) *the projected Union will be a separation of the two kingdoms for ever!!!*—I may be told that this is a palpable Hibernicism.—It is, and will eventually prove such—God forbid the attempt should ever be made—and that this seeming paradox may never become a truism!

In addressing you, my Lord, through the channel of a public paper, it will be impossible for me to state, with faithful correctness, all the trifling minutiae, that compose the arguments, between the anxious desire of usurpation on the one hand, and the dread of base dependence on the other; nor will the short time that is likely to intervene prior to the threatened discussion of this question in the senate, permit me to arrange the pros and cons in a true methodical order, or clothe them in such a dress as may render them calculated for the nice distinction, and delicate judgment of a British critick. But, my Lord, method I will not regard so much as truth—it alone shall guide my pen, however devoid of ornament and grace. I fear in more instances than one *my letters may be too harsh for an English ear.*

It must be obvious, my Lord, to every discerning man, who has considered the state of Ireland, that the chief cause of the constant disturbances, which have perpetually harassed and disgraced our native kingdom since the Revolution, originates from the weight of power, instead of being properly balanced, turning decidedly in



favour of the lower class of people—A few instances of feudal oppression by no means can operate against this general conclusion—the frequent emigration of natives possessed of landed property, and the sequestration of whole territories from the original proprietors, consigned to inflate the pride and consequence of British subjects, unite in depriving whole districts in Ireland, of that decent and commanding influence, which the difference of rank very properly determines in every well regulated community—the agent who collects the rent for the lordly owner of the soil, and the dependent clergy, whose necessities or duty enforce their residence in the solitary vicarage, are in many parts of Ireland the only persons, who have even nominal property or consequence sufficient to restrain the unpolished brutality of the lower class of people. I could specify one spot in particular, where near forty thousand per annum, are collected from two adjoining estates for English landlords, who consider the country so little worthy their regard, as never even to have paid it a temporary visit—of course, not one really independent gentleman resides in the whole district. Here, my Lord, is ample space for sedition and rebellion to engender in—here is a fastness for treason to be nurtured in security—here and in a similar situation it stalks at large—the strokes on the anvil in forming the horrid instruments for massacre, are here unheard, and of course unregarded—the traitorous assembly



sembly of hardened ruffians here hold their midnight orgies, and disseminate their vices round the neighbouring borders. In such situations whole armies have been organized, accoutred, armed, disciplined even in the midst of day, FOR YEARS together; while the very government of the country were ignorant of their manœuvres, nor were acquainted with the horrid conspiracy, until treason approached the very palace gates, and a hundred thousand men to support the infamous cause, had been regularly trained to arms in the very heart of the kingdom!!

How then, my Lord, does the British cabinet design to remedy this melancholy evil? Why, by a curious physical process, they propose a cure by irritating the whole system, rendering the patient delirious, and taking away the very stamina of his constitution; they propose to confer peace and happiness to that distracted country, by removing the only means by which licentiousness and anarchy can be suppressed; by seducing men of property from the country and its interests; by draining the land of its last guinea; by burthening its loyal yeomanry with oppressive taxes; by removing the honest pride and independence of the virtuous, the loyal, and the brave; thus spreading desolation, like a pestilence, and leaving ignorance and barbarity to take possession of the land!

My



My Lord, it has been recorded as a singular instance of absurdity in a famous Irish printer, who was complaining of the immense sums of money that were annually drained from his country, and was asked where their resources lay by which they were enabled to answer such exorbitant demands? Was it from their mines? No; they had no mines. Was it from their trade? No; they had no trade. Where then did the money come from? "Why, Sir," he replied—"where? but from the very blood and bowels of the people."\*—But bold as the figure appears, it was nevertheless true; and the present plan of a Union would, as I propose to prove, leave them neither blood nor bowels to macerate.

The only inducement that can possibly remain to Gentlemen of large fortunes to reside in Ireland, is its being the gay residence of a Court, and the seat of Government. Torn as it is by intestine broils, and disgraced by the most shameful scenes of barbarity, it STILL HOLDS A NAME AMONG THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH—the man of fortune nominated as a guardian of the rights and privileges of freemen, feels his own consequence by the important charge entrusted to his care; prides himself on the reflection that no power on earth can force the contribution of one single shilling from his country, without obtaining his previous consent; he sees his country independent

\* Anecdote of Dr. Johnson and George Faulkner.



dependent of any Legislature, but that of which he forms a component part. Thus elated with his own conscious independence and consequence, he bears up against anarchy with intrepidity; sensible, that the moment it prevails, his rank, his property, his liberty, nay, his very existence, must all dissolve in the general mass of dilapidation.

But, my Lord, it is not only the individuals who form the present legislative body, who are influenced from their situation to reside in their native country, but families newly rising into consequence from their increase of property, or old candidates for contested seats in Parliament, whose hopes of aggrandizement are not finally checked by a temporary disappointment, but whose interest in the neighbourhood induces them to hope, that they may be, one day, more successful in their canvasses for county honours: These, I say, endeavour, by every conciliating deportment, to win the affection of the freeholders. Thus, even opposite factions unite in the public good, and the jarring interests of great families, induce them separately to cultivate the esteem of their neighbours; and, to effect this grand desideratum, they are sensible that the more they reside on their paternal estates, the more they distribute to the relief of the indigent, the more they spend in hospitality, the more likely they must be to gain the esteem of a grateful people. But, my Lord, take away those family hopes of ambition, or narrow their views within a more contracted compass, and



and it would be madness to suppose, that any man in possession of his senses, would remain by choice in a country WHERE HE HAD NOTHING TO HOPE, AND EVERY THING TO FEAR—in a country fast sinking into its original barbarity—stained with daily murders, and midnight assassinations—where every meal he eats, he has reason to dread is his last; or when he kisses his wife or child, or embraces a relative or friend, he does it, with a seeming presentiment, that he is never again likely to take another farewell.

No, my Lord, Government, whatever their present professions may be, will then (our liberties gone) nominate our Representatives; that is, as many as they may in their great wisdom please to appoint, as they have uniformly done in Scotland since the Union, where a contested election is scarcely ever heard of. Those Representatives must, of course, reside in London, to be the dupes of a British Minister. Their connections must also follow, to be danced about as the Manager of the Show chooses to play the wire; whilst their once-powerful neighbour, having lost all his ambitious views, and now wholly dwindled to a straw, will naturally follow where his person and property can be the best secured; where he is no longer afraid of the midnight ruffian ravishing his wife, his sister, or his child, and then gorging in their blood; but where, forgetting his country, in the enjoyment of his personal security, he will drown  
both



both his ambition, and his cares, in an Irishman's  
Lethe—the flowing bowl, or the sparkling bottle.  
But this subject I shall further consider in another  
Letter, and remain,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Obedient, humble Servant,

MARCUS CURTIUS.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

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L E T T E R    III.

October 20th, 1798.

MY LORD,

HAVING, in my last Letter, hinted at the evil that must naturally result to Ireland from the removal of its independent Gentlemen, sufficient in itself to give a death-blow to the prosperity and independence of the kingdom at large, let me next consider a few local, contingent calamities, which must necessarily ensue from such an emigration. The City of Dublin, that seat of gaiety and mirth, the residence of Government, the resort of the opulent, the centre of amusement, would be left, like the ancient Babylon, "a desolation, a bye-word among the nations:" Her beautiful and splendid public buildings, the epitome of Irish Munificence, would be left to moulder in the dust; her hospitals, and other public charities, the blessings of the land, would wither, like the tender exotic before the northern blast; her churches would decay, with the hallowed cause that supported them; the ancient pile, dedicated

to



to her venerable Saint and Patron, which, for a number of ages, has stood the pride of her religion; the foundation sapt, would soon bow its sacred head, and rest among the tombs of its ancient patriarchs; all rational recreation and places of public entertainment would be silent as the grave; the found\* of the coach or chariot would be unknown in her streets, which, rendered a dreary void, would only be distinguished from the desert by the found of lamentations; her numerous manufacturers, pining with misery and want, would then in vain solicit charity from the forlorn house-keeper, who would have nothing left in his power to bestow; famine and disease would stalk with ghastly horror through her paths, where the only distinct sound that could be heard amidst such complicated wretchedness, would be united execrations on that man, or set of men, who could thus premeditatedly sport with the lives, liberties, and property of an oppressed people!!!

Do I, my Lord, dwell on this melancholy scene merely to indulge a descriptive fancy? is the picture solely the production of an heated imagination? No, my Lord; you know the colouring is correct. You are sensible that no

D

pencil

\* When I was last at Glasgow, there were but *three* Gentlemen's carriages in the whole town; and not more than ten in the great city of Edinburgh—one of the blessed effects of their boasted Union—which I shall take the liberty to enlarge upon in another place.



pencil can delineate, no pen decypher, the miseries that the projected Union would necessarily pour down on this noble seat of empire and Government.

Take away the encouragement that rank, wealth, fashion, and the necessary splendor of a Court, give to the industrious manufacturer, AND YOU TAKE AWAY THE STAFF OF HIS LIFE. What, at this melancholy period of distressful record, preserves that numerous class of people from starving, but the constant encouragement held out by all ranks, and even resorted to by Government as an act of policy, to those poor creatures, to enable them to keep their looms at work, that they may thus administer to the claims of exhausted nature? but rob that Government of its resources, seduce the wealthy and the great to another clime, and what becomes of the starving manufacturer, or the worn-out artizan, even admitting that the SHADOW OF A VICEROY was permitted to insult them with a mockery of state? a SHADOW will go but a little way to fill a poor man's belly, or satisfy the melancholy cravings of a wife and family!

WHAT TRADE, my Lord, (that Jack-a-lantern with which Ireland is to be seduced to her ruin), will be ever able to recompense that devoted city, for the exercising such a cruel policy, admitting its benefit to the rest of the kingdom, which I shall, in another place, shew the absurdity of imagining? will trade re-gorge the fortunes of her noblemen, and gentlemen of rank? will trade



trade open the heart of an English adventurer, and induce him to cloath the naked, and feed the thousands he will find wanting all the necessaries of life?—Is trade of such a delicate, refined nature, as to expand the human breast?—No, my Lord, it is too well known to shut every avenue to the heart, and to confine every idea within one centre, that of self-interest.

But admitting that trade was most liberal in its nature, elegant in its manners, fanciful in its dress, habits and pursuits, generous in its principles, refined in its appetites, how could the City of Dublin flourish from all those non-entities?—every mercantile man knows, that the port of Dublin would be the very last in the kingdom that would be chosen as the great emporium of trade.—Every individual in the least acquainted with that city must know that the whole of her trade consists in her imports; those imports consisting chiefly in the luxuries of life, such articles are sure to find a ready consumption, and a certain mart, as long as men of rank and property reside in it; but the moment there becomes a scarcity of purchasers, of course there will be a proportionable deficit in the market;—the merchant must look out for some more flourishing harbour to receive his ventures; the port of Dublin would present in consequence, nothing but a dreary bank of sand, and its quays become a place for fishermen “to dry their nets in.”

Every mariner is well aware that this must be the inevitable fate of that once-flourishing city.



Its harbour is dangerous to an extreme, even with every precaution to render it secure; and is one of the most inconvenient situations for foreign trade of any port in Ireland.—What inducement then could any merchant possibly have, when the home consumption was destroyed, to fix on a dangerous, and in respect to situation, a most inconvenient harbour, to carry on an extended trade in? It is obvious, to the meanest capacity, that such a visionary barter for her Liberty and Independence is ridiculous, even in speculation.

In addition, my Lord, to the misery that must be entailed on the city of Dublin by this intended Union, another most calamitous evil would immediately give a finishing stroke to its prosperity. Its noble University must then inevitably decay; that great source of its present wealth, would, with its independence, lose all its consequence and moulder into nothing, or at least sink into obscurity.—Who would be left, my Lord, to fill those classes that at present disseminate piety and learning through the land? An indigent few might there solicit gratuitous learning, in hopes of eking out a scanty livelihood by the attainment of some miserable church cure, in some distant parish, uncheered by society, and pillaged by savage barbarity; and this would only remain to offer a poor reward for studious application, as long as the dreadful atheism of the day, will leave a morsel of bread for the preacher of Christianity.

All the great and liberal characters, even that rank from which your Lordship has derived your  
present



present exalted situation, which reflected honour on the foundation, and derived lustre from her degrees, will then disappear; and in another kingdom seek a polish for those abilities which must no longer ornament their own. As the lives and connexions of our great men, would be wholly engaged in England, those connexions must be strengthened and new ones formed, by the rising generation.—English seminaries of course must be resorted to; and even those who were not immediately, at the framing the Union, connected with Government, would endeavour to place their children in the road to preferment; and the most certain means of succeeding in this respect, would certainly be the associating them from their early days, with those ennobled characters who were likely to act a conspicuous part in a future political arrangement.

That the learned and truly amiable personages, which compose the head of this noble University, have been long shamefully neglected by the persons appointed by his Majesty, to watch over the interests of his subjects, in the Government of Ireland, has been a matter of great notoriety and scandal, and reflects no little discredit on the conduct of our Viceroys.\*—But alas! place us entirely under the

\* The appointing the present most extraordinary amiable character, the most unexceptionable, perhaps, that ever lived at any period of time, or ever ornamented any country, to be head of the University, in direct opposition to all Court interest; and the late nomination of two of its most respectable



the dominion of Great Britain, and who then are to fill the church dignities, or indeed any preferment worth the acceptance?—Not the learned and worthy members of our University, but hireling pedants, the casual appendages of some dignified placeman, or not unlikely, most reverend missionaries from a Scotch Kirk.

Here, my Lord, let me pause for a moment,—and stop my pen, lest my honest indignation may urge it to write the dictates of my heart, and my feelings get the better of my prudence.—August, and sacred residence of literature and piety, within whose hallowed walls reside all that can render a kingdom flourishing and happy; true religion—practical piety—unrivalled learning—and honest independence—may the hand that presses hard upon a stone of thy foundation, wither like that of the impious King, as he stretched it out to violate the Prophet of the Lord!—may his family be dispersed like the scattered leaves of Autumn!  
*“and may he live to see his children beg their bread”!!!*

I remain, my LORD,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S,

Humble Servant,

MARCUS CURTIUS.

members to the highest Church dignities, the last of whom in particular, had nothing to recommend him but his amiable qualities, and brilliant talents, form a most pleasing contrast to the above observation.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

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L E T T E R IV.

October 21st, 1798.

MY LORD,

HAVING in my last particularized the distresses that the City of Dublin would necessarily exhibit in consequence of a Union, permit me now to take a view of the interior of Ireland; and consider the effect such a measure would have on the landed property of the kingdom in general.—My Lord, it is recorded in history, that the first time the Romans ever had recourse to art or stratagem, to deprive their neighbours of their property, liberty and lives; the advice forwarded to, and adopted by the infamous youth who has in consequence branded his name with everlasting disgrace even to the latest posterity; was, the cutting off by false pretexts the heads of all the leading characters and men of property, whose counsels might otherwise save the city which had opened her gates to receive the young scorpion to her bosom.—The melancholy event proved that the treacherous scheme was too certain of answering the projected purpose.—Need I here remark, my Lord,



Lord, that the monster who planned this barbarous policy, and who was the first to stain the Roman name with the vile epithet of treachery; was also in his own person the last that was ever permitted to wield the regal sceptre, and fell from the throne he had so basely disgraced to become a vagabond on the face of the earth.

I do not indeed charge our ministers with a design to carry on a similar expedient to its full extent.—I do not conceive that decapitation forms any of their plan for removing our nobles and men of abilities.—No, I do not fear that a hair of their heads will be hurt; but Government will take special care that those said heads shall never again exert their talents in defence, or service of their country; and of what moment is it to the kingdom, whether they form a *caput mortuum* in fact or in essence?—Nay, I confess the former would be the more eligible of the two for the community at large, for it would eventually stop one channel at least for the destroying the profits of the poor man's labours; and they would by this means avoid the old disagreeable charge of *fruges consumere nati*, being ever attached to their characters.

I must, my Lord, in the course of these Letters, take the liberty of noticing circumstances, and describing particulars; which it would be an insult to your Lordship's discernment and patriotism, to suppose you unacquainted with; but I am induced to do so from the expectation that  
others



others may take the trouble of perusing those papers, who, from their residence in this country, are deprived of the means of information; or natives of Ireland, who have not given their attention to a due consideration of the subject.

In considering the situation of the landed property in that kingdom, we find it in the most essential points totally different from the interior of Great Britain.—Ireland, considering it at large, may be very properly divided into three classes,—that of the landlord, the landholder, and the cottager—a very small number intervene between those classes, but who bear so thin a proportion, in respect to the general distribution, that they scarce deserve a specific character.—The first class of this division, the landlord, consists of the nobility and chiefs of the House of Commons, forming the present legislative body; but a great part of it is divided among gentlemen of fortune, natives of Great Britain, whose ancestors, the greedy dependents of English Sovereigns, in their several attempts to conquer the country, were rewarded by their chieftains, with immense tracts of the most valuable lands in the whole kingdom, the forfeited estates of such brave natives, as chose to arm themselves against the invader; of this description of landlords the number prevails to a painful computation.

There are, it is true, other landlords possessed of small hereditary tenements, who do not immediately come under either of the above descriptions.

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But,



But, alas! to the misfortune of that unhappy country, how few of these exist, to preserve the independence, and ensure the prosperity of Ireland?—Scattered, like a few solitary land-marks over the extended plain, they only exist to form a sad memento for the passing native to ruminate over, and “striking his pensive breast,” to say *hic fuit Ilium*.

This description of people have almost lost all consequential interest in the country.—It is not there as in England, where private individuals in possession of many thousands per ann. of old hereditary tenure, although forming neither one part or other of the legislative body, are of sufficient weight to preserve the balance of power from falling into the hands of an arbitrary Government, or sinking into the possession of a lawless mob—the true boasted independence of Great Britain!

But far otherwise the situation of Ireland. The united power of this distinction of men have scarce influence to make the political scale to vibrate. The moment a gentleman there is possessed of any real landed property of any consequence, he acquires by popularity, or purchases by money, a seat in the House of Commons: but if, in his neighbourhood, another wealthy character appears, who threatens to have sufficient influence to create some doubt in the Minister’s breast, of the re-election of the fitting Member, the present Representative is immediately secured to Government by removing him to the Upper House; by which

manœuvre



manceuvre his competitor comes into the enjoyment of his ambitious views without further opposition, until his independence, in the course of precedence, is also curtailed by a similar expedient. That this game has of LATE YEARS been played off to a most shameful degree, I believe no person, my Lord, in the least informed in the politics of the country, will attempt to deny. Nay, so cautious have Ministers been of late, of permitting any person of increasing influence from siding against them, that men, whose ORIGINAL RANK in life, and HEREDITARY POSSESSIONS, would scarcely amount to the qualifying an English Squire to be of the *quorum*, or even to take out a sporting certificate in this kingdom, are instantly hoisted into the House of Lords, “ and “ bear all their blushing honours thick upon “ them.”

To this method of proceeding are we indebted to the disgraceful majorities that are sometimes secured in that once most-respectable House.— To this, my Lord, may be attributed the present hope of triumphing over Irish independence.— Men, who can scarce tell their grandfathers’ name or calling, without a blush, who have risen from the very dust of the earth by their own cunning or address, are not likely to entertain any real regard for the interest of their country. Children of chance, the wide world is their country; their own aggrandizement the gratification of every feeling. How otherwise, my Lord, is it possible to suppose that  
Ministers



Ministers could entertain a shadow of hope in the pursuit of their present design? Would any man in his senses, let another come and rob him of all his ancient privileges, and “despoil his goods,” as long as he had it in his power to defend them? The supposition is absurd. The reverse principle is an aphorism handed down to us even by our Most Divine Legislator!

The landholder of Ireland is a character very little known in Great Britain. This class forms one of the most respectable bodies of men in the kingdom. Most of them are gentlemen, from descent, from principle, and education; but possessing little or no hereditary property, rent large farms, which they frequently hold by long tenure, either under English landlords, the Absentee, or others, the overgrown proprietors of the soil, in which I include the disposition of church lands. Those landholders are frequently the younger branches of even ennobled families, or are the immediate descendants from the ancient Milesian, the original proprietor, whose estates being sequestrated, they take large tracts of land, in lease, not unfrequently at moderate rents; that, by letting it out in small patches, at an advanced price, by ploughing up a few acres for their own necessary consumption, by feeding immense flocks of sheep, or grazing large herds of black cattle, they may be enabled to acquire a decent livelihood, afford to give a handsome education to their children, retain a respectable degree of independence,



dependence, and even preserve that generous hospitality which has ever characterized the country. Many of those gentlemen absolutely farm the estate that once belonged to their own ancestors, but long since forfeited in consequence of the unlucky policy of their fore-fathers.\*

The cottager is the day labourer, who holds his cabin by no other tenure, than the will of the landholder. By the sweat of his brow he works out of the generous soil that produce which enables him to pay an advanced rent; I must confess sometimes a rack one: but, upon the whole, I cannot help remarking that, if they paid a little more attention to cleanliness, and were less addicted to the use of spirituous liquors, their situations would be far from being as deplorable as their insidious leaders please to represent it. In many cases they have the advantage of the English cottager, or day-labourer. There is scarce an individual among them that has not a cow, a horse, pigs, and poultry, with the addition of plenty of potatoes. And let any man travel, particularly through the southern districts of England, and shew me a SINGLE DAY-LABOURER that enjoys the same advantages. In Ireland, a large bowl of warm potatoes, and a bottle of milk, is the poor man's dinner. In  
most

\* It is in this rank that we are to trace the pure blood of the ancient princes and the old noblesse of the kingdom, and not from the very lowest class of labourers and artizans, as Dean Swift very incorrectly states.



most parts of England, the labourer never tastes a drop of milk; and, towards London, his meal consists of a large slice of dry bread, and a draught of water, or a gill of four small beer: place those different species of viands before an Irishman, and try which he would choose for his dinner! But this, my Lord, is a digression. I shall, please God, take another opportunity to enlarge on this subject at a more convenient season.

Having thus fairly stated the situation of the landed property in Ireland, allowing for that variation which must ever prevail in all general descriptions, (the true character of the British farmer being scarcely known in that kingdom), it will require very few words to prove the misery that, like wildfire, would run through every province, in case that a Union really took place with Great Britain. I have already proved that a great share of its best lands are in the hands of English landlords—fill up the list then of native Absentees, by seducing the whole first class in one body to desert their country, and what then, in the name of God, is to become of the residue that is left?\*

The expences attending a London campaign would be soon most sensibly felt by those men whose attendance in England would be either compulsory or voluntary; men whose incomes in Ireland now enable

\* See Postscript to these Letters, in respect to the Cabinet proposing to obviate these evils, by leaving us a nominal Parliament.



enable them to live like little Princes, but which in England would scarce pay for board and lodging in the purlieus of Old Palace Yard.

By transplanting them to a British soil, you cannot alter their nature; and “prudence in affairs” was never an Irishman’s motto—his hereditary pride would not let him submit to contract his expences; his feelings would urge him to support all the paraphernalia of rank, and retain an equal display of magnificence with his British compeer, though possessed of double his income; large supplies must consequently be required to answer the enormous surcharges attendant on his new situation—money must be obtained—but money is not to be found in the dirty streets of London for the picking up, unless he chuses to tie up a leg, and take a broom to sweep the crossing at some filthy angle, or passage. Here, indeed, perhaps, a grateful Minister might find him ample employment, and a convenient situation!! if his pride will not submit to this expedient, even though he may be told “his betters have done so before him,” he must have recourse to his hereditary acres, or to make use of George Faulkner’s very emphatic expression—it must be drawn “from the very blood and bowels of the people.”

His acres, however, are, in all probability, at present under lease; no fine can be levied, nor rent raised, within the necessary time; his wants become urgent; a Jew broker is applied to—“but Irish security be very precarious, de monies must bring



bring a large premium." A small trifle may, at last, perhaps, be obtained, at the modest interest of fifty or sixty per cent.—a mortgage necessarily follows; even the interest, in all probability, is paid at the expence of honour and integrity; if he happens to be a senator, by a paltry pension, or a sinecure commission in the Customs. Still, however, the estate groans under the discreditable burthen; a life or two belonging to some large freehold at last falls in; the old landholder is again desirous to become a lessee, but times now are altered; the rent must be raised to the last shilling that the land is capable of producing; besides an additional *douceur* is required for present exigency. What can the tenant do? to dig he cannot, to beg he is ashamed. With a heavy heart, he complies with the exorbitant demand, rather than part with a tenement which had long been in possession of his family.

To enable him, under this heavy pressure, to preserve the rank he once held in society, and to prevent the horrors of an ejection, he is forced to press hard upon the poor cottager, until the very means of his income are exhausted, and the poor creature is scarce able to crawl to his work, for want of the usual supports of life. Poverty brings on disease—disease, of course, deprives him of the most distant hope of supporting his existence by manual labour; all possibility of paying his rent is done away, but Lady-Day approaches; the landlord's agent presses, with an unusual degree of eagerness, for



for the rent, to enable him to make timely remittances, and save the fading credit of his employer. The landholder, hard pressed, applies to the cottager; he either finds him pining on his straw, beneath the bare walls, stripped by the winter's blast of the few potatoe-stalks which once formed its miserable roof, extended in the agonies of exhausted nature, or he finds the tenement left, without other inhabitant, than perhaps a starved cat prowling out her misery 'midst the ruins of famine; while not even a pot, or a stool, is left to answer his demands. Thus situated, what is to be done? excuse or procrastinations will not answer the clamorous agent, or support the extraordinary pomp of a London equipage. He is either violently thrown into prison, where he may have ample leisure to reflect on his country's ruin, and sadly to regret his misfortune in being born a gentleman; or, like a vagabond, he must emigrate to some other clime, where his sword must be unwillingly employed in crowning with laurels, even the natural enemies of his country.

My Lord, you may now modify this picture by making exceptions, pointing out variations, or dwelling on some particulars of this description, that would prevent the portrait from bearing a faithful resemblance; but however you may attempt to brighten the colouring, or soften the bolder shades, still the great outlines and features will remain prominent, to present a sad character of oppression and misfortune. No pencil can soften

F

down



down the indelible delineation of impressive truth. Every guinea must be extracted from the land, and speculation will form but a poor Exchequer to resort to for a supply.

But, my Lord, I may be told that I build all my reasoning on false data; that in all probability, the British Cabinet will nominate only a few of our present representatives to attend their pleasure at Westminster;—or that if it was to be fact, as I have stated in my last, that the other nobility and independent gentlemen would of course follow, where there is the most attraction; yet even here means might be adopted to prevent this emigration. Absentees might be laid under certain restrictions, by which means it will be rendered a matter of self-interest to reside in their native country; that such an expedient might now be adopted, to the great prosperity of the country, I entertain not the smallest doubt, *but it must be adopted by an Irish Parliament.* Let me tell Great Britain, that an Irishman will not submit to have any restrictions fixed on his PERSONAL LIBERTY, by the most powerful Government on earth; if the good of his country demands the sacrifice, it will be cheerfully submitted to, provided he is convinced BY HIS OWN REPRESENTATIVES, that it will tend to the general benefit.

But suppose the spirit of the country was so completely broken, that the inhabitants would tamely submit even to this arbitrary imposition; what in such a proviso is to become of the fruits of  
this



this visionary Union? What, my Lord, are not the Irish by an Union with Great Britain to enjoy mutual privileges—or is Ireland only to be drawn into the snare, to inflate the colossal pride of this great Empire?

My Lord, perhaps the word UNION bears a very equivocal explanation—or that the same word differs widely in its meaning, when separately applied to the two kingdoms! If the word UNION in England means an arbitrary use of powerful oppression—and the same word in Ireland, signifies a tame submission to overbearing despotism; I very much fear, that what with English bulls and Irish blunders, we shall never be able to comprehend one another!

But as the word generally stands as at present understood in the common accepted sense freed from political jargon, it seems to me to signify a junction of interests formed on mutual good faith, and reciprocal ties; it is evident if you make the kingdom of Ireland equally free with that of Great Britain, the subjects of the one country must partake in common of the privileges and immunities of the other. If Great Britain deviates in the least from this principle of equality, it is only openly declaring to the world, that the whole motive and design of the Cabinet is solely its own self-interest and aggrandisement, with the grasp of rapacious usurpation, plundering our properties and liberty; then in return, weighing out its gratuities, in a balance, nice as the feather suspended by a cobweb.

We



We remember, my Lord, in the old fable the curious method which the Lion took to divide the carcass. This imperious monster is the crest that crowns the British arms; but I trust that Ireland will never prove the Ass, that is first to be rendered convenient in hunting down the game; and then is to be left to ruminate over the bones, or be torn to pieces if he dares to remonstrate.

I remain, my LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S

humble Servant,

MARCUS CURTIUS.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

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L E T T E R V.

October 22d.

MY LORD,

THE specious pretext of Great Britain sharing with Ireland, certain privileges and grants, which I shall hereafter prove will turn out a vision, *in nubibus*, and of no possible advantage to the country at large; will of necessity furnish her with a sufficient pretext, for removing from her own shoulders the weight of taxes which at present incommodes her.

The argument of gentlemen in power on this occasion will no doubt be very fair and plausible—  
“We purpose to divide all our advantages with you; it is therefore but reasonable that you share with us our common expences and disbursements.”  
This at first sight appears very fair and justifiable; but let Ireland weigh both sides of the question, *before she is cloathed with such an overplus of generosity, and sinks under the weight of such unbounded claims on her gratitude!*

Admitting



Admitting it possible that she could profit, to an extreme, by those advantages which may be proffered to her, as a recompence for slavery ; how many centuries must elapse, before she could be put on the same footing in respect to foreign connexions, real personal property and wealth with the mercantile class in this kingdom ; (making no objections in respect to the difference of manners and dispositions,) even supposing, that the trade of Great Britain was instantly to come to a dead pause in respect to its improvement and extension, out of politeness to her new sister ; that she might be able to arrive at the same pitch of affluence, and commercial advantages, until the immense gains and resources which this kingdom possesses, in consequence of a monopoly of trade for many centuries back, be equally divided in proportion to the extent of the two kingdoms ; similar imports in the regulation of her exports or imports can never be laid on her commerce, nor can any supposed equivalent contributions be levied on Ireland.

It is an evident fact, that England has in a manner exclusively been the grand emporium of trade (I will go no farther back then) since the reign of Henry VIII. though it has been in a flourishing state since the fourteenth century ; and that she has therefore the start of Ireland for near three hundred years. Supposing therefore that a real and fair dividend was made of all her present commercial privileges, England would still continue



tinue to retain the enormous balance of trade, which her strength, wealth, and extensive connexions have consequently secured for her in all parts of the world for many centuries back. To incumber Ireland therefore with those taxes, imports, Custom-house duties, &c. which English wealth and enormous trade, enable her to pay, would be literally speaking, endeavouring to gather, “figs from thistles;” even the attempt would prove the inefficacy of the project, and plunge the country into endless misery.

I admit, that I may be here again told that my statement may be visionary; that I am not in possession of **FACTS** in respect to the principle of the proposed Union, to warrant my entering into so minute investigations; that it is very probable, that the British Cabinet will weigh those matters and take proper measures accordingly to counteract their bad effects: Nay, that in all probability they will adopt such a system of policy in forming the preliminaries for a Union, that Ireland may be exonerated **IN PART** from an equal participation of taxes **IN TOTO**. To this seemingly fair objection, I have, my Lord, to observe, that it is my intention to weigh with all possible care every part of the subject, and to write with a provident regard to every consequence that may probably or possibly arise from such an Union; and although not immediately in possession of every nice distinction that may occur in the Cabinet arrangement of those matters, to touch on such important



portant heads, as *MUST* in the *contour* or *tout ensemble* form the leading out-lines of the scheme ; and this can be as well effected by *ANTICIPATION*, and be of this additional service ; that it will enable the public to judge of the nature of the several modifications, by a reference to the general heads to which they may be separately annexed.

Besides, my Lord, I am well aware that however Ireland may be amused for the present, by specious promises, she can have no possible security that encroachments will not be made, in future, *when she has the imprudence to tie up her own hands*. For, my Lord, let our present legislative body be reduced to fifty, or sixty vagrant emigrants, or any number that in all probability may bear a just proportion to our present place-men ; and export them from Ireland, properly ticketed and consigned to the care of a British Minister ; how long pray will those transported gentlemen retain their independent principles, supposing them to be possessed of any on their first landing ? Just as long, my Lord, as there may be time allowed for the due arrangement of the several sinecure places in Ireland !—What then becomes of the interest of their native country ? agreeably to Sancho Panca's shrewd observation, it will disappear “ like the recollection of last year's clouds !”

But supposing all those worthies to be black swans, “ *rari aves*,” and true patriots to the backbone, “ *risum teneatis* !” what possible weight can they have in the great political scale, when hurried  
into



into the vortex of a British Senate, whose numbers must necessarily drown the voice of patriotism, and crush “new-fledged virtue” even in her first essay.—Mr. Flood’s treatment in the British House of Commons, where he was placed rather in the situation of a dancing-bear, than the representative of a free people, and absolutely baited out of the power of speech, furnishes Ireland with a specimen of that polite decorum, which would be shewn to his countrymen on a similar attempt.

What possible security then can be given to Ireland that she shall not be involved in the system of English taxation?—none—none indeed is likely to be proffered; it is even openly declared to be the design of Great Britain.—She has played the same game with Scotland, and it is not likely that we shall be particularly exempted. Indeed to suppose that Ireland would be exonerated would be ridiculous; for as I have formerly taken notice, it would be absurd to imagine that a Union could be adopted, and yet both the kingdoms be governed by separate by-laws.\*

The whole truth of the matter is this, that the projected plan of a Union, is only a new method of reverting to the old system of oppression; and

G

Poynings’

\* This system, however absurd, has certainly been adopted in respect to Scotland—and what is the consequence?—old laws that stood during the barbarous ages of feudal tyranny are there preserved in their full force,—to the great oppression of the subject; and in consequence even an Act of Grace is expressly declared not to extend to Scotland—“thus at once shutting the doors of mercy on mankind.”



Poynings' law is now rising from the grave with all its horrors, only acquiring a more horrid form from its morbid state.—Under this law when it ruled the land, in *propria persona*, England, it is true, was authorized to bind Ireland in all cases whatsoever, except in the greatest and most momentous of all arbitrary abuse—the levying taxes and contributions ;—but in its state of resurrection it comes armed also with this new weapon of assault, and our pockets are to be turned inside out, as it suits the convenience of a British Minister or Senate.

The question then is, on whom is this fresh burden to fall?—Affix, my Lord, this last mark of dependence and abject submission on the country, and you then take away the very shadow of an independent gentleman from residing in the kingdom.—Nay, it would be preferable, at one bold venture, to set sail for the South Sea, and purchase new territory under the tutelary patronage of the right worshipful Chief Justice Barrington, than to remain in Ireland the sad epitome of misfortune, groaning under the weight of accumulated oppression.

I again, my Lord, conjure you seriously to reflect, and putting your hand to your heart, say, do you think it consistent with common reason to suppose, that any man, possessing the smallest grain of feeling or independence, who could by any means get even the moiety of his rent remitted to him, would stay in Ireland, under such a new  
pressure



pressure of complicated grievances, a moment longer than would just occupy time sufficient, to settle his affairs on some decent footing?—Must it not be evident, as I have observed in a former Letter, that, upon weighing all circumstances, supposing the countries in other respects to have equal inducements, that he would naturally throw into the opposite scale his own personal security and domestic quiet, and the balance must then instantly preponderate in favour of Great Britain. For although he might there labour under similar restraints and burdens, he would at least have the satisfaction to know, that he should then live under a Government capable of preserving his person and property inviolate; and associate with people, whose character, although not the most interesting or engaging, is certainly more humanized, and incapable of committing those atrocities with which he is most unhappily surrounded in his native country.

It is with great pain, my Lord, that my pen harps once more on this ungrateful theme; but I set out with the resolution to write the truth, whatever pain the relation might cost me; and, Heaven knows, this is a most melancholy subject to insist on!—but, alas! the evil has been most unhappily drawn aside; and the character of the uncivilized native has appeared in such colours, as to be contemplated with horror even by the inhabitants of the most distant regions of the globe.—If they were too abandoned and savage even to be admitted



ted associates for French atheistical assassins,— great God! what a picture must they present for humanity to contemplate!!!!—But in referring to this melancholy consideration, need I dwell on its complicated horrors, further than to remark that until it pleases the Almighty disposer of all events to afford the means of grace, “his saving health,” to purify and turn the hearts of those barbarians, who at present defile the land with blood, *peace is not to be found*; nor can any man dwell beneath his own roof “or sit under his own vine” in security; — for the sake of the few righteous that remain, may his merciful Providence “stop the plague that is begun.”!!!

Your Lordship, it is true, and two or three more in nearly similar predicaments, whose emoluments of office secure your temporary residence, may be excluded from the general emigration; — but you will please to consider that all those united will form at least but a solitary few.—Upon whom then, my Lord, are those contributions to fall? — but upon that class of people whom I have distinguished as landholders.—Those indeed, although most of them men of liberal education and manners, will be from the nature of their precarious possessions, unable to leave their family place of residence, having no other resources than what must be gleaned from the soil and the cottager’s labour.—How melancholy must their situation be at best, when we reflect on the additional rents they will be forced to pay to enable the new legislative



gislative body, and their connexions, to emigrate with due credit to their rank? but make them pay also their quota of English taxes, and to what then must they be reduced?

Their present chief comfort is the social meal accompanied by the chearful glass, with the addition of the enlivening and healthy sports of the field.—Their chief pride, which still pervades every vein, consists in enabling their wives and daughters to visit their neighbour's hospitable mansion in a decent equipage—to attend the church service in their family coach, and to be enabled to cherish a chearful intercourse and agreeable polish of manners, by attending in the same conveyance the public assemblies,—but all those comforts must disappear like the evening twilight, whenever a Union with Great Britain takes place.—The tax on all imported wines, would make the consumption too heavy an article for their little modicums to bear—their chearful table, the resort of unrivalled mirth, must then afford a solitary meal until cheared by the enlivening glass.—Tax his horse, an Irishman's friend; and his dog, the fond associate of his rural sports; burden him also with game-laws, and trammel him with licenses and certificates, before he can presume to range unmolested through his own fields; and all his happiness must instantly vanish. The gay, the lively, the healthy, the spirited youth, would be reduced to the gloomy, suspicious, persecuted poacher!

In



In addition to those personal restrictions, mortify him still further, in a part more vulnerable ; load the decent insignia, which enable the beloved females of his family, to support their respectable appearance in society, with the pressure of an enormous tax, which even in England amounts to a prohibition, and you will then give a *coup de grace* to all his earthly enjoyments.

But let Great Britain beware, how she presumes to hamper this generous class of people—those invaluable respected men, who “ even in the worst of times ” have proved the faithful, loyal subjects of his Majesty, and the steady friends to England—men, who form the great part of that brave Yeomanry in that distracted country—who have suffered persecutions, robberies, fires, massacres—have spilt their blood and lost all they hold dear on earth, to prove their allegiance to their amiable Monarch, and who have by their exertions *hitherto* saved the brightest jewel of his crown! — Men who have long formed the pride of the British army and navy, who, when called upon to repair to arms, have never waited to enquire the particulars of the cause that invited them to the field when summoned by their King ; spirit, loyalty and honour, telling them all they wanted to know, a *soldier's duty*.—Men who even at this moment nobly assist to plant laurels round the head of British commanders, and have gained for the English brow, the ennobled coronet, the glorious destination of triumphant valour.

My



My Lord, that truly brave class of people who form the seminary for native heroism—that amiable, polite, hospitable, generous description of men (on my soul, I believe, the most truly so, that ever distinguished any rank in society) have, as I say, with their blood preserved the British cause. They now call in turn on their sister kingdom, not to desert them in the moment of the greatest need; nor, under the pretext of uniting them by a stronger tie, assist in plundering them of all they hold dear—even the common privileges of human nature.—Already has a most glaring and unmerited insult been offered them, in the person of their officers, and one of their most amiable, ennobled leaders, *one of the most engaging characters, and the steadiest friend to his country that ever graced the House of Lords.*

And by whom has this insult been offered?—but by an individual (for no station, however exalted, shall prevent my pen from tracing out the truth; if I were even to suffer by it, my country demands the sacrifice) who once delivered up his sword at the head of an army to the avowed enemies of his country! who lately at the head of twenty thousand men, after a long and harassing march to his troops, having arrived at the spot of his destination; quietly wheeled back on the same route, without even seeing the face of an enemy, leaving a respectable Bishop and his family with other gentlemen, the loyal subjects of his Majesty, to remain prisoners in the hands of two or three French



French officers, and a barbarous company of assassins; *without even so much as making an effort to relieve them.*—But as the old ballad goes of the  
 “ *Grande Monarque with twenty thousand men,*  
 “ *went up a hill—and then—came down again.*”!!!

Respected shade of a venerable Camden! what indignation must fill thy honest soul, if, from the realms of light, thou art permitted to visit the sons of men, when thou beholdest that ministry, whose cause thou supportedst, and whose brilliant lustre threw even their errors into shade, even till the last glimmer of thy faithful lamp evaporated; take from the brows of thy amiable son the laurel and the olive wreath that bound his temples amidst the applause of an admiring world,—who, at the most momentous period that his country ever knew, opposed his own person against the loud and stormy efforts of a violent anarchy, by his prudent councils, spirited exertions, and the most impartial justice, crushed in the little space of one month, one of the most dreadful conspiracies that ever disgraced a community, backed too by an armed force of one hundred thousand men.—That brave nobleman, whose father once saved the liberties of Great Britain, and who, in his own person, secured to his Majesty's crown the whole kingdom of Ireland, beloved by the citizens, respected by the soldiery, and adored by the immortal Yeomanry, we find, suddenly recalled from his honourable post, without a shadow of cause, amidst the tears of every honest and loyal heart, to give place



to a man, who has insulted the favours of his country, and has permitted a common thief at the head of thirty or forty murderers to pillage in safety the finest district in Ireland even for months together!!

My Lord, the most abject worm will at length turn when trod upon.—The faithful mastiff will patiently bear great injuries from the individual, for whom he has once formed an attachment; but let us be careful not to irritate him, beyond the bounds of prudence and humanity; *but let us, while we applaud his generous fidelity, avoid his just resentment!!!*

I remain,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's humble Servant,

MARCUS CURTIUS.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

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L E T T E R VI.

October 23d, 1798.

MY LORD,

HAVING considered a few of the disadvantages which would result to Ireland in consequence of a Legislative Union with Great Britain, I shall now proceed to balance against those evils, the important acquisitions that it will be now in the power of Ireland to secure by a little abject submission, or, in other words, Ireland is told, my Lord, if she consents to export to England all her independent gentlemen that possess any considerable property; all the loose cash that will be necessary to maintain them, and which she can by any means COLLECT, not SPARE, (for, God knows, in that case our new Legislators would depart most miserably equipped indeed—sans shoe, sans coat, sans culotte, sans every thing, except the naked gifts of nature), if she consents to ruin her University, or reduce it to a starved receptacle for a few miserable priests to shelter in—if she consents to destroy the Capital of the Kingdom, and render it



it the asylum for the wild fox—if she takes away all the means of the industrious manufacturer's subsistence, and sends him and his numerous family to starve in the lanes and alleys of distress—if she consents to the ruin of the landholders and the generous Yeomanry of the kingdom—pluck out the seeds of that honest pride which glows in his breast, and supplies him with the spirit that renders him an honour to his country—tearing him at the same time from his hospitable roof, and robbing the poor cottager even of the last glimmer of hope—if, finally, she consents to stop the further progress of civilization, and reduce the country to its original state of barbarity, already too retrograde in its manners, and patiently submits to the enormous weight of untold taxes—then, and then only, shall she be entitled to a further extension of her trade.

Wonderful condescension! amazing instance of British generosity! for what purpose, my Lord, is such a proffer made her—such a contemptible return for all her dearest privileges? what use does she make of the trade already vested in her hands?

My Lord, I doubt not but you are well acquainted with the true state of her commerce: don't let me be thought the less a patriot, because I expose the little foibles of my country. To prevent a real and most calamitous evil from falling on the country, I shall be obliged to note objections, that perhaps a few mercantile houses  
may



may condemn me for specifying; but I will not be afraid of giving offence to a few interested individuals, lose sight of the important object in which I have engaged, or weakly flatter my country at THE EXPENCE OF HER LASTING PEACE.

What possible benefit, I say, can accrue to Ireland from a further extension of trade? Perhaps, my Lord, it might introduce more foreign luxuries, or create more monopolies amidst a selfish set of English adventurers, who might use our ports as convenient harbours to touch at for the benefit of a contraband trade, or a convenient landing-place for the selecting and assorting suitable consignments for the British market, leaving the residue for Irish consumption.

My Lord, I shall now write the plain and honest truth, in spite of all native partiality, and this is the fact: "YOU MUST FIRST GIVE IRELAND THE TRUE SPIRIT OF TRADE, BEFORE YOU EXTEND IT." Don't let the country be bewildered with projects and mercantile calculations, before she can make a progress in the several branches which she is at present engaged in—the temper, manners, pursuits, nay, the open free spirit, and generous disposition of the natives, preclude those selfish, interested views, which form the necessary character of the trading world. An Irishman, if he saw his brother or his friend in distress, would share his last guinea with either, though his next ship was obliged the next moment to clear the harbour in ballast. It is owing to those circumstances,  
and



and others, which it would be impossible for me distinctly to enumerate, which prevent the kingdom from reaping a suitable advantage, even from her late extension of trade. A few fat Quakers, a people that, like the Jews, are wholly insulated, in Cork and Waterford, have perhaps become more sleek and more sly, by engaging in new branches of commerce. But, my Lord, we find no TRUE MILESIAK engaged in those interested pursuits—a Pim, a Penn, or a Penrose, are nominal distinctions unknown to the original owners of the soil.

No, my Lord; if I am to apply to the touchstone of candour I will say, that the natives of Ireland are too proud of hereditary descent, too lively in their manners, too open in their dispositions, too unsuspecting in their nature, and perhaps too fond of social amusements and pleasure, ever seriously to enter into the plans of an extended commerce.

I have declared that I will not spare their foibles to save them from calamity. In Ireland, a man, who from some lucky hit, or uncommon prudence, obtains twenty or thirty thousand pounds in trade, considers himself a monied man—his fortune is made—he cannot, even by the habits which he has been engaged in, forget his nature—nor is it possible to graft a Dutch, selfish scion on an Irish stock!—when he gets thus a sufficiency to pay his way, and to ensure his children's comfort and independence, he considers his warehouse as an old dungeon in which he has been miserably immured—perhaps, like Sterne's Old Soldier, he takes down  
his



his sword, and WITH A TEAR RUBS OFF ITS RUST—he sets up an handsome equipage, and either instantly adopts, or rather reassumes, the character of a gentleman at large.

Not so in England; there it is quite the reverse. A merchant, in possession of a similar sum of money, only considers it as a decent capital, a snug thing to trade on. Instead of laying up his treasure in a napkin, he extends his views, enlarges his commercial correspondence, and contracts all his habits of soul and body in acquiring what he deems to be—“the one thing needful.”—When by unwearied diligence, and deep speculation, he becomes master of a plum, he then, for the first time, begins to breathe a little, casts about for some new source of wealth; buys East India Stock, becomes a Director; treats his good wife to a Sunday jaunt to Twickenham, or a Summer’s elegant excursion to Tunbridge; but still his counting-houses are open—his warehouses are rendered more capacious—his clerks still writing away their fingers’ ends—his hogsheds and puncheons keep rolling through Thames-street—and if he does open his heart to treat you with a turtle, it is because the creature comes a present from his supercargo, and the freightage costs him nothing.

Contrast those characters, my Lord, and judge how unlikely they are ever to engage in the same bottom, or be mutually concerned in the same interest. I have shewn my countrymen “their true semblance,” and although they may frown at me



me for a moment “for letting the cat out of the “bag,” yet in the next, they will, with an honest smile, acknowledge the description to be a real one—and perhaps, while pushing round the bottle, comfort themselves with the reflection—that the AMIABLE prevails in the one disposition, rather than in the other, although the NEEDFUL may not be quite so predominant.

But granting, my Lord, that it was possible wholly to change the native character, which is utterly impracticable, as long as the kingdom preserves the same climate, and keeps its station in the same favoured spot of the Atlantic; to what part of the world is her trade to be extended from which Ireland is at present excluded—no port in Europe is shut against us—America opens all her harbours to the Irish flag—she already carries on as extended a commerce with the West Indies as her connections and capital will allow, although perhaps she does not cut so conspicuous a figure in the SLAVE TRADE, as her more prosperous neighbours.

The East Indies is the only country from which Ireland is literally excluded; and how much nearer would she be towards an attainment of a dividend share in Eastern plunder by a Union with Great Britain, than before?—What trade has Scotland with the East Indies?—What trade has Wales?—What trade has any of the great maritime and commercial towns of England with the East, excepting the City of London?—That all the trade of India centres in that one spot, is a fact needs no insisting



insisting on—the monopoly is immediately under the sanction of Parliament, and therefore its rights are **INDISPUTABLE**.—It is I think evident, my Lord, that out of an uncommon stretch of politeness, and civility, the company who thus exclusively enjoy this commerce, will not part with their Charter; and it is equally evident that Great Britain will never force her to do so, for the convenience of Ireland, to the ruin of her own trade—or what could she see in Ireland so seducing, as to grant her a share of that trade which she denies to her own subjects at large—the supposition is absurd.

If mercantile houses in Ireland, or elsewhere, wish to participate in the profits arising from the East India trade, and enjoy capitals sufficient to enable them to engage in such a venture; they are as perfectly free to do so, without violating the sacred authority of a Charter, confirmed to the Company by public faith, as the native inhabitant of Great Britain—they are at this moment precisely on the same footing in that respect with their British fellow subjects. India Stock is as freely disposed of on Change to the Irish, as the English merchant; and whilst men of the first properties in Europe, trust their stock to the direction of an honourable few, who are elected to take care of the mutual interests of the Company, why should not the Irish speculator have the same confidence?

But, my Lord, admitting a chimera; admitting it possible to set the East India Company asleep,  
 “ and from a peg their precious Charter steal, and  
 “ put



“ put it in our pockets,” what possible advantage could Ireland reap from such an acquisition? how is Great Britain at large benefited by this trade?—My Lord, it is a well-known fact, that exclusive of the individuals to whom this trade is secured by Charter, the kingdom in general is most materially injured by it—effeminate luxuries, flimsy manufactures, to the ruin of her own industrious poor, are imported indeed in abundance—for what? to injure our healths, undermine our constitutions, effeminate our manners, distress the fair trader, and for all those most valuable acquisitions, the country is drained of all her circulating coin, and for a few East India gewgaws her solid wealth is, without the smallest shadow of a return, wrested from her hands. Extend this precious trade to Ireland, and there would not be as much silver (the only barter for Indian luxuries) left in the whole kingdom, as would, after the first season, purchase the cargo of one single ship from the coasts of Indostan. If Holland, with all the various monopolies that she possessed in the East, to the exclusion of all the world beside, with the advantage of all her industry and wealth, was literally a bankrupt in respect to her India trade, what could Ireland gain by a nominal participation of such a commerce?

It is evident, my Lord, that she cannot expect a recompence from this quarter for the loss of her independence. But there are certain articles of export on which there still remain some few restrictions,



tions, which would be done away in case of a Union taking place: the mines of Ireland might be worked to advantage, particularly tin, and what an influx of wealth would consequently take place! But she has no such mines to work. Very good; but she may, if she can find any. Then she may plant tobacco; and, in case of a defection in the West Indies, or a bad season in Virginia, she may supply the exigency. Good again; but the moisture of the climate prevents the possibility of ever properly saving it, as has been proved by numberless experiments. Well then; she may export gold and silver in bullion, and by that means CONSIDERABLY IMPROVE THE WEALTH OF THE COUNTRY. Most comfortable prospect indeed! What? induce the broker to take away the last guinea from the land! But the Irish are rich rogues; the gold it seems rolls in the very sand of your rivers: a few grains, it is true, were thus kindly distributed among the poor by a kind rivulet in compassion to their wants, but the tutelary deity of the stream finding that her very bowels were to be torn up for concealed treasure, has even stopped the source of that little pittance, and not a grain now glitters in her barren sands. In short, Ireland wants no encouragement to part with her gold or silver, either in bullion or in sterling coin; there are plenty of methods devised already to free her of all unnecessary overplus in this article of commerce!

Well; but some sugar-plum must be held out to please the child; some lullaby must be tuned to  
hush



hush its cries, and rock it to sleep. Well, then, what will she say to the woollen manufacture?—Ireland will be encouraged to carry on this most lucrative trade in all its various branches; on this important occasion, England may thus address our countrymen. “We are now going to prove to you the liberality of our sentiments (for the first time), by even sharing with you our staple commodity—the very bulwark of English commerce, and the very pride of her manufacturer; but (touchstone) at the same time we are well aware that you are ignorant of the manufacture, or if you possessed the art, you have not capitals sufficient to carry it on, or at least to presume to look for a foreign market for your goods; while our immense wealth would soon enable us, although at a temporary loss, to undersell you at every market, and thus nip your attempt in the bud. But as for sheep: those you may feed, ad infinitum.” (Mem. Ireland is under great obligations on this score, because her sheep-walks are not so extended already as to depopulate whole baronies) “your flocks shall bleat over every plain—every man shall be cloathed in his own fleece. Nay more; he may furnish the inhabitants of the torrid zone with frize of all denominations; that is, if you can coax the ignorant blockheads to wear it—you have nothing to do but to convince them, on principles of natural philosophy, that thick cloathing keeps out heat, as well as cold.” Charming prospect for the country! blessed open  
for



for the revival of the golden age! oh for the pen of Cervantes, or the persuasive tongue of a Don Quixote, to describe the rural luxuries of such festive days, where Altifidoras might again trip it lightly over the velvet moss!

But let us, my Lord, descend a little from such visionary delusions, and behold the boasted vista would terminate in a dreary wild. The poor cottager, and the industrious farmer, wandering from their desert home—their humble cot and little garden fresh levelled to the ground, to make room for a more extended sheep-walk—whole provinces depopulated, to supply a greater quantity of wool, that the English merchant may be enabled to obtain the raw material from the overstocked market at a more trifling expence—the shepherd might play on his pipe—but it would be the dismal ditty of misery, respondent from the echo of the barren hills—the famous speculation might render Ireland a second Arcadia—but such a one as a Sydney could ill indulge a poetic vein in describing—and such a one as few gentle swains would choose to tend their flocks in!!

I remain,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's humble Servant,

MARCUS CURTIUS.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

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L E T T E R VII.

October 24th.

MY LORD,

IT has been the common usage, to oppose to all arguments adduced against a Union between Great Britain and Ireland, the present flourishing state, and the encreasing wealth of Scotland; and the great difference that is manifest between her present state and that of a century or two ago.—If therefore, the advocates of a Union say, she has prospered in such a ratio by her connexion, is it not an evident proof, that Ireland, from a similar function, must reap similar benefits?

But, my Lord, I both deny the original fact, and all the consequent inferences—*Scotland has not been improved by it*; in many respects she has been most materially injured by it. I grant that Scotland has been partially improved by the polishing advance of time; Great Britain owes her improvement to the same process—a century back she was as proportionably deficient in the true knowledge of arts, manufacture, and agriculture as Scotland; and will any one be so silly to say, that her present flourishing



flourishing state has been the consequence of a Scotch Union? Nay, it is evident a consequential native might, with some appearance of specious argument advance such an absurd doctrine in the following harangue: “Dona ye ken how brawly the ceety of Lundoon looks, since she ha’ formd an Union with Scotland! In troth and in muckle gude feith, she is not the same ceety—see what howzes they are aracting year after year aw with Scotch filler—cast your eyn upon the road that leads fra’ Bucheenham-hoose to Chelsea, and speer, did you a’re behoold, sick an oltereetion, sick a muckle heep of bra’ bealdings, all upon the eem-proving plon of auld Riekee.\* Gar ye look at St. George’s feelds, aw notheeng but beelding, beelding; in gude troth, ye ken, the Eenglish can na’ ha’ a fireet to gang their Gaiteen, withoot seending to Scotland, for the veery stanes to pave it weeth! nor they can na’ ha a cobbage, but they mun applee to auld Scotland for a gardener! marry and in feith if they wont a Chanceelor to direect the affairs of the whole neetion, they mun have a bonny Scotch cheeld to feel the station, or aw would gang to rack and ruin; and what would they ha’ doon but for bra Admeeral Duncan to clapperclaw their eenmies, they’d have all gang to pot. Hah! they mun ha been in a muckle bad pleeght afore they geen’d our weel to pleeght our troth weeth them; they ha’ been a feer threv-  
ing

\* Edinburgh so called by the Natives.



ing nection ever since they got the feengering our filler!!" How an Englishman would smile at such a gasconade; and yet the truth is, that since the Union Great Britain has drained every guinea from Scotland, and has enlarged her own commerce, manufactures, &c. in a triple proportion to what Scotland has. That the manners of a few individuals have been more civilized; a few of their towns improved, and that their buildings in general are erected on a more convenient plan, is not to be doubted; but, my Lord, I assert, that similar improvements would have taken place, in the common progress of time, and upon a much larger scale; if she had for the last century, been permitted to hold the rank that she once held in Europe.

In the name of all that's wonderful, are no people on the face of the earth to enjoy any prosperity unless they are attached like a codicil to the will of Great Britain? Will any man presume to say, that there is a guinea more in Scotland this day than there was in the days of James V.?  
 \* My Lord, whoever is acquainted with Scotland, knows the direct reverse to be the truth. There may

\* Guthrie, who is evidently a partial historian, and enlarges most absurdly on the immense trade and flourishing state of Scotland, yet acknowledges, that at the time of the Union or the calling in the money to be new coined, it appeared there was a million of current specie then in the kingdom, and when he wrote about twenty years ago, there were not two hundred thousand pounds in circulation in all North Britain!!!



may appear a greater circulation of IMAGINARY PROPERTY; from the quantity of paper currency, and the increased price of the necessaries of life, the people may fondly imagine, that wealth pours in on them apace; and if you convince them to accept of Indian cowries in barter for their gold, there will appear to be a still greater and freer circulation of cash; but such a miserable deficiency prevails in respect to the possession of real specie, that the writer, my Lord, of these letters, was once obliged to leave his name at one of the first Banks in the Kingdom, before he could get a trifling bill discounted; as the head of the firm was at dinner, and the cashiers had NOT SUFFICIENT GOLD to answer the demand. It is obvious to any person that travels through the kingdom, that money is not to be obtained;—nay, that a solid gold guinea is rather a matter of curiosity; that if you offer one in payment, you are frequently obliged to wait for an hour before the shopman can BORROW a pair of scales from some distant neighbour; and many of the lower class of people will scarce take it, if offered in payment, and look on the person who proffers it with an eye of suspicion! and need I remark what would be the dreadful situation of that country, if any invidious persons spread an alarm in respect to the real value of those pieces of paper! *the whole kingdom of Scotland must inevitably become a Bankrupt!*—This painful assertion needs no amplification, while we  
can



can exemplify, the dreadful calamity, which attended the failure of the Ayre bank, which reduced many respectable families to an absolute state of starving, and desolated almost the whole face of the country, although the bank stock was the united concern of even noblemen of the first landed property, and merchants of the most extensive trade in the kingdom; and all the consequence of one of those sudden alarms, which it is always in the power of any interested villain to spread. On so slight a thread does the whole credit in Scotland depend, that it is in the power this moment of half-a dozen London bankers, if they chose, to combine to bring ruin on the whole of that kingdom!

It is admitted, that there is money in the hands of Scotch natives: but where? in the city of London;—and where will it remain, but in the city of London and its environs? The road to that grand emporium of wealth, presenting to the anxious adventurer a most charming prospect; every part of the way furnishing him with every possible convenience; but there immediately arises some invisible barrier, after he has once attained the end of his journey, that for ever prevents him from finding the same road back!

In regard to the great circulation of paper currency, it may be objected, that the same system has of late prevailed in England; this, however, being but a temporary expedient can never ultimately affect the finances of the kingdom. Money still remains in abundance, although selfishly  
K
hoarded



hoarded up in the coffers of interested individuals, or employed in discounting, and other modes of traffic; and the sending out those paper notes in lieu of cash is only another method of borrowing gold free from interest, and thus is literally become a matter of speculation; but in Scotland money is not to be had, even in case of an emergency, and therefore paper is substituted to supply the deficiency.

I will admit, my Lord, that time, and some peculiar circumstances, not in the least connected with any supposed advantages ensuing from an Union, has improved Edinburgh, Glasgow, and a few other trading towns in North Britain. Any increase of commerce or manufacture, however partial, will necessarily induce men, for the greater convenience of intercourse, and the readier dispatch of business, to resort to those places best frequented; every town or city in the universe owes its increase to similar causes; and singular as it may appear, yet the assertion is fact, that this very improvement of the mercantile towns has been, and is the bane of the kingdom at large; as it draws all the little resources of wealth out of the interior. From thence at first a modicum is drawn to support a young person in his first entrance into a mercantile house; as he becomes conversant in the mysteries of trade, a capital is necessary, however small, to secure him future credit; he then extends his views, and the moment he acquires a sufficiency, removes himself and his concerns



concerns to London, and his country loses every guinea that his friends have originally scraped together to set him up with. This mode of procedure is almost uniformly adopted, and is the great reason, why the interior of Scotland presents such a barren prospect to the eye of the traveller.

Edinburgh, it must be allowed, my Lord, to have been lately highly improved, but if she improves under all her present disadvantages, what would have been her situation, had her court and parliament preserved their wonted rank and grandeur! Edinburgh owes her prosperous appearance chiefly to her College. This is an evident fact; for, allowing the calculation of her own countrymen to be correct, "that the whole circulating cash of the kingdom does not amount to two hundred thousand pounds;" it is admitted, that the expenditure of her Students amounts on an average, to fifty thousand per annum, which brings into Edinburgh one-fourth of all the circulating specie; this of course accounts for her improvement. No person will be bold enough to say, that the prosperous state of her College, which owes its celebrity to a partial branch of education, the study of physic, is to be attributed to her Union with England. What has physical theory and surgical practice to say to an improved state of commerce or manufacture? Particular literary pursuits and studies often attach themselves to particular situations; and we might as well assert, that the University of Leyden has extended her reputation in the



the medical world in consequence of a Scotch Union !

Edinburgh becomes the seat of medical studies, in particular branches, in preference to London, because the professors there apply their minds more to instruction than practice ; as from the latter they would starve, from the former they gain a very handsome competence from the great influx of strangers, who annually attend their truly-learned and respectable lectures ; but in London the practice and theory are quite reversely situated, and form consequent reverse principles ; that her University will be a saving help to Edinburgh, there can be no doubt, as long as the medical gentlemen are there obliged from want to sharpen their ingenuity, and advance in the improvement of speculative and philosophical enquiries for want of other resources to apply to.

What can be a stronger proof, my Lord, of the fatal consequences of their famous Union, than the old trite observation, that a Scotchman once in London never returns to his native country. It is well known, that every monied man instantly resorts to that great emporium, nor is there one merchant in the whole kingdom of Scotland worth thirty thousand pounds—so singular a being is not to be produced. The only residents of considerable property that cannot thus emigrate, are brewers and distillers, the nature of whose business renders a remove impossible ; but look into the change of London, and how many bonny Scots bairns are there



there to be found worth double the sum I have specified.

But, my Lord, let us cast an eye on those parts of Scotland not immediately concerned with trade, which is literally only an inlet to them of foreign luxuries, and an outlet for all their men of spirit, "to seek their fortune where she may prove kinder." Examine with the philosophic or common eye of observation, the situation of the internal parts of the kingdom, where this commercial phantom has not made its appearance, and what an object does it present:—their plains barren, bleak, uncultivated! their villages (for towns they have none) ruinous, squalid, filthy! without an Inn for refreshment for the exhausted traveller, that would be a fit house of entertainment even for an English plowman; and their miserable cottage, the turf-built receptacle of endemical disgusting disease, vermin, and filth!

What is the situation even of some of her towns that are enlarged? commerce might naturally have been supposed to improve: what, for instance, is St. Andrews, once the boasted pride of Scotland? The flourishing seat of letters and learned men—now the lonely residence of the bird of night, depopulated streets and closes—fine Gothic towers, nodding imperceptibly to their ruin, presenting a melancholy picture of her dependent state, where a few half-starved, half informed professors of a ruined University, whose very degrees are become a bye-word, and a term of reproach, saunter around



around the forlorn heaps of fallen grandeur, presenting "room for contemplation, even to madness." The thistle, the chickweed, and the long entwined grass, that conceals the very pavement, in a matted labyrinth of entangled roots, hiding the hungry vermin that drag out a famished existence in their exhausted sink-holes!

Advance into the Highlands, and let the traveller say, my Lord, to what lonely spot can he point his finger, and mark the progress of improvement, Has the Union civilized the native, or increased his enjoyments?—Alas, quite the reverse! He is now a solitary being, deprived even of the pride, (though ill directed,) that once made him of consequence to his clan—the head of it, with a few exceptions, has disappeared, and in "worlds to him unknown," is spending the produce of his shorn flock; while the hospitable roof, that once resounded with the bag-pipe, and cheered his heart with brown ale, is only now a shelter for the screech-owl and the bat. The very forest that once screened him from the northern blasts, or afforded him the healthy and profitable diversion of the chase, now lie prostrate, to support the brilliancy of a court-star, that never even glimmers through the wild; or to pay for the extravagant, and fulsome embraces of a London prostitute!

Wales, my Lord, presents another sad picture of the consequences arising from a Union with her powerful neighbour, and from her poor state  
of



of commerce and trade even contrasted with Scotland, tells this sad and painful truth, that "the longer a country is united with England, the farther she is from rational improvement."—If I am denied this statement, let any man point out to me one great mercantile town, or one great merchant residing, in the whole principality of Wales.

So, my Lord, (to a feeling mind) a painful species of ridicule, is even attached to the very name of a Welsh merchant, and a woollen wig, a flannel night-cap, or an under-petticoat, are the only ideas that fancy attaches to the character.

Yet, my Lord, within a few yards of her boundaries, nay adjoining her very borders, some of the richest mercantile towns in Europe proudly rise their domineering heads; as if on purpose to insult this most ancient kingdom, the asylum for native Britons, whose manners, hospitality, and noble descent, leave little for her *degenerate* sister to boast of, except that wealth which she should in honour divide, and that power which her brave sons generously unite in extending.

What a mortifying reflexion must it be to that ancient people when they see their fine harbours neglected, and their ports forsaken, when they can view from their shores the Bristol channel crowded with merchandize, and the selfish town of Liverpool, lately a filthy puddle, *et statis malefida carenis*, rising in all the consequence, and assuming all the pride of upstart wealth, while  
scarce



scarce a sloop enters the famous harbour of Milford-haven or Swansea, except a few colliers; although presenting the finest roads for shipping in Great Britain.

It is very evident, my Lord, that English affiliation can but little benefit the people at large; when both in Wales, and in Scotland, you may ride twenty miles without finding a single individual capable of understanding one word of English. Although Wales has been, to her cost, united to England for more than five hundred years, you scarce enter a church where the service is not performed in the Welsh language; now, so far is this from being the case in Ireland, that has not been honoured by such a close fraternal hug, that there is not a church throughout her four provinces that the service is not performed in the English tongue, nor could you travel three miles in the wildest part of the country, without meeting persons capable of directing you on your road, or giving you such information as you might require.

It is certainly obvious to the meanest observer, that there can be no very great intercourse or reciprocity of interest between neighbours who do not even understand each others language.—The first acknowledged signs of one country being firmly incorporated into another, and being united by mutual interest is the first learning the language, and then adopting the customs of their new allies and friends.—But if those kingdoms remain united till the general dissolution, this desideratum can  
never



never be affected, for it is evident that they can have no inducement to change their language, or their old habits, with people to whom they are under not the smallest obligation, but who only make use of their connexion with them for their own self-interested designs.

So little indeed do those old Britons desire to learn the language or form any great intimacy with their consequential neighbour, that, if they happen to be acquainted by accident with a few words, they seem ashamed of corrupting their tongue by such a new-fangled lingo, and absolutely will not give an answer in English, when it is in their power; and if the great road from Dublin to London did not immediately run through Denbighshire or Shropshire, they would never be anxious to see an English face, nor care whether there was such a being in existence.

I remain, my LORD,

Your Lordship's,

Obedient humble Servant,

MARCUS CURTIUS.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

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L E T T E R VIII.

October 25th, 1798.

MY LORD,

IF Great Britain still insists that a nominal extent of trade will be a sufficient barter even for Irish liberty and independence; may not the promoters of this policy be fairly asked, If the advantages and benefits resulting from a Union are so obvious, why will she give herself so much trouble to force on Ireland such an amazing extent of prosperity and happiness; for which she has not the smallest relish, and is even so incorrigibly stupid as to oppose her own interest, with the most determined obstinacy? This is like a consultation of quacks, on the case of some unfortunate patient, who is forced, against his own conviction and feelings, to acknowledge symptoms that have never affected him, on purpose to have an illiterate prescription imposed on him, and to be compelled to swallow their nauseous specifics.

If the people of Ireland are convinced, that the offers held out to them are really for their advantage, no ministerial influence need be employed,



*to force* their compliance with the measure.— But, my Lord, if such measures are not likely eventually to turn out for their real interest, and benefit, *or if they cannot be induced to think so*, which is tantamount to the same thing, is it not evident that the projected Union, is a scheme for strengthening the political power of Great Britain, at the expence of Irish independence?

But if, my Lord, gentlemen in power deny that the interests of Great Britain are the ultimate view of their system;—and if they conscientiously believe what I most conscientiously think they do not, that an unlimited trade will most materially benefit Ireland, and at the same time have no effect on the commerce of England;—why not at once generously unite us as one family, and let us chearfully partake of her privileges, without reducing us to a state of villenage, and robbing the country of that shadow of dependence which alone gives her any consequence in the eyes of Europe?—True friendship and brotherly love never can form a faithful cement on opposite principles,—mutual interests, reciprocal benefits, and perfect independence, are the sole ingredients which form the basis of a faithful Union.—If Great Britain attempts to form one on any other scale, the design favours too strong of the selfish English character, but is too weak ever to impose on Ireland.

In fine: If, my Lord, the aggrandizement of Great Britain is the real design of the cabinet, and the  
lures



lures thrown out to Ireland only an opiate to lull her to a senseless state of tame acquiescence;—or if the proffered advantages would really be beneficial to that kingdom and of no possible detriment to England; and are only withheld from her from a sordid selfish disposition; in either cases the conclusion will be, “that the conduct of Great Britain towards Ireland, is illiberal, self-interested, overbearing, and arbitrary!”—If she has benefits in store, let her generously open her heart and bestow them, without exacting a paltry submission in return, which would immediately do away even the appearance of a favour conferred. In the one case she would have a large demand on our gratitude; in the other, she could expect nothing, *at best*, but silent disgust and contempt.

The present projected Union appears to me just in a similar light as that of a cunning old cat, addressing a company of little mice, who lay snug in their holes, out of the power of her merciless paw.—Little gentlemen—hem—I am sorry, upon my life and honour, to see you in such a miserable taking.—How can you be so mean-spirited as to skulk in such an unseemly fashion in that obscure corner?—hie upon you, enlarge your notions—come out and see the world—there are nice doings going forward here—trust yourselves to my care and guidance—here is a closet hard by stored with most excellent sweet-meats—goody goodies of all kinds, tarts, custards, marmalade, and India preserves, all nicely dished up on porcelaine.  
Come,



Come, my little dears, step out—here is nothing to molest you now—no bow-wows in the way—all safe and silent.—Very kind, (methinks I hear an old funny mouse exclaim, just popping out her nose to see how the land lay) very good of you, most venerable pufs, we are all undone by your generosity—but pray be so good, before I proceed, not to blink and wink your eyes with such solemnity, for, upon the faith of an honest mouse, your grimaces make one laugh, and being naturally polite, such uncourtly behaviour puts me out of the way.—As I was saying, most potent Sir, whose important whiskers denote you to be the immediate descendent of Grimalkin the Great, who first took possession of their lordships from the strength of his claws and teeth;—if you have such good things in store for us in that same precious closet, we are much obliged to you for your proffered kindness, and will be very happy to dip our noses in that same marmalade; but in the mean time humbly entreat your highness, out of regard to your precious health, to take an airing in the adjoining shrubbery, lest our little dames might be too much affected by your awful appearance, and either miscarry or produce some ill-made abortion, to the disgrace of our little community; for, as to staying here on purpose to watch for us, we could not think of exposing your Majesty's gracious person to so slavish an office; and as for directing us on the road, believe me, most potent Sir, we have got as keen scent after a delicate morsel, as  
any



any of our neighbours, sharpened too by a little spice of hunger, so if we cannot find our own provision, we even deserve to go without.—In short, most sagacious pufs, we relish the dainties when we can get at them in our own way—nay our very chops are watering to get at them; but as for all that fufs and pageantry you are pleased to talk about, and proposing to guard us, and all that, why it's quite another guess matter; we cannot say we relish much the proposal, which, begging your pardon, carries with it too much absurdity for one of your years and discretion to have advanced.—Besides, most gracious Sir, I remember an old saying, that I found in the leaf of a book, that one of our youngsters was the other morning making his breakfast on, and which I saved by accident from his claws, (you will pardon me I hope for speaking in a lingo, that I do not suppose you understand much about) it was as follows—*timeo Danaos etiam Dona ferentes*.

With this sage mouse's sagacious application, I beg leave, my Lord, to end my remarks; remaining,

Your LORDSHIP'S

obedient Servant,

MARCUS CURTIUS.

P. S. Since writing the preceding Letters, a new policy seems to have been projected by Government in framing the materials for the Union, and



and it is now given out, that their design is, not to remove *in toto* the Parliament of Ireland; a step which had caused so general an alarm, but they intend veiling over their measures, by proposing that a partial emigration should take place, according to the exigency of public affairs; and committees be appointed to attend in the British House, selected from the general body of the Irish Legislature, to consult upon all causes of general importance to the two kingdoms, while the remainder of the body may still reside at home to consult for their own internal benefit.

All this appears a very plausible scheme, and would seem at first, to do away many of the objections and consequent inferences, which have been adduced in these letters—but the author must warn his country against this specious delusion—for what purpose is all this affected moderation?—Does the British cabinet vainly imagine that Ireland can thus be deceived into even A PARTIAL surrender of her independence?—But let us mark the probable consequence.

Let a certain number of members be nominated, at the discretion of the British minister, (which must ever be the case) to attend from time to time the summons of a British Legislature; although all the consequences that have been described as likely to affect the kingdom at large, IN CASE OF A GENERAL remove of our Parliament, may not be immediately and as perceptibly felt, in so sudden a degree as instantly to produce the threatened effects;



effects ;—yet all the attendant evils, though slower in their operation, would ultimately follow the measure, however palliated by a cunning policy, to render its arbitrary influence less disgusting—nay such a system would be attended with more certain calamity, as its instant effect on the interests of the country would not then have sufficient weight, to rouse us to a due sense of our danger.

When members of the Irish Parliament found themselves DAILY liable to be called upon to leave their native country, they would endeavour, by degrees, to familiarize themselves with their new situation, and would necessarily be anxious to make their temporary residence in England as convenient as possible ;—and men of rank, accustomed to live in splendor in their own families, would not be content to droll out their existence in paltry London lodgings. — Houses in town, and, of course, villas in the environs as suited for relaxation, would necessarily be engaged—the hopes of passing a Winter in London would soon induce the females of the family to accompany the mission, and little persuasion would be requisite with the minister to nominate the same person, with perhaps some little variation for decency's sake, to attend every ensuing sessions, as the urgency of public business might require ; thus all the calamities that have been specified in the course of the preceding letters, would make due progress though by imperceptible degrees, their attachment to Great Britain would daily be strengthened by  
intercourse,



course, by intermarriages, by various connexions, social and political; and all the consequent evils attending their emigration would eventually take place as has been already sufficiently specified—nor could Ireland have any pretext even for a remonstrance; as they could only be considered as discharging their duty. Time will not permit a minute examination of the process, in its several gradations, which would thus completely undermine the interests of Ireland, by this partial remove of the legislative body.

But let us consider the measure in other points of view, and turn the compass which way we please the needle will still *point to public ruin*—While the Irish Parliament is allowed to take care of her internal concerns (wonderful condescension) or in other words, may from uncommon indulgence, be permitted to examine scavengers accounts, receive petitions for a redress of grievances from the House of Industry, see that pigs and all other such nuisances were duly removed from wandering through the streets—be careful that thieves and pickpockets should have no employment without proper certificates, nor murderers cut any peaceable man's throat without *a due protection first had and obtained*; while discharging all these several important avocations, the English minister during the promulgating of such wholesome regulations, might lay what plans he pleased for the future slavery of the country, and be certain by a very obvious method of ensuring success.



For example, suppose he has some momentous project in view, big perhaps with national calamity, but he is afraid of a majority preventing the execution of his design, an expedient is ready made to remove this stumbling-block,—he starts some question of seemingly general consequence in the British senate; sends express for a committee of both houses to attend the important disquisition;—the Irish Secretary understands his cue—takes care that the ballot should fall on those persons most likely to prove obnoxious; and instantly dispatches them to St. Stephen's; in the mean time, he carries his own measures through the Irish Parliament with due dispatch—all safe—the patriotic transports then receive a ministerial permit to return in peace to their deluded country!

Here, however, it must be remarked, that in the absence of the said members, let the Union be formed on what model they please; no act passing in Ireland until their return, CAN BE CALLED AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT—for it is evident, many counties and boroughs, would not at such a period have their representatives sitting in the legislative body, to be guardians of that trust delegated to their care, and therefore their electors could not be enforced BY THE NATURE OF THE CONSTITUTION to obey laws, that they had no voice in framing.

On the other hand, if the Irish house, to avoid this solecism, were not permitted to proceed in any public business till their members returned  
back



back to their duty, this would be in effect losing even the LAST SHADOW of a Parliament—as it would be very easy for the minister, to start fresh matter of GENERAL CONCERN every succeeding session, and to delay its final discussion on various pretexts, until the advance of the season would necessarily put an end to the sessions.

Thus, Friends and Countrymen! (FELLOW CITIZENS I will not call you, as I abominate the very sound of a distinction used by the greatest ruffians upon earth) you may be assured this insinuating measure is only a more plausible method of depriving you by inches of all your dearest privileges.—As to the fine pretext of sending over for part of your legislature to advise with on public concerns, what a farce! how long have they directed their councils without your assistance, and I must acknowledge in general much to their own credit, the everlasting honour of their country, and the astonishment of an admiring world.—Is it to be supposed that the cabinet of St. James's are all of a sudden turned to such a set of dolt-head automatons, that they are obliged to apply to Ireland, to send over a few furbishers for their Wits, and brighten their understandings!

If they REALLY, at any time are in want of your advice, they know very well that all this could be effected, without interfering with your independence or imposing on your senses.—Let them have an act passed at their own side of the Channel, to permit a select body from the Irish legislature



legislature to sit in their house, and assist in their debates in *cases of urgent necessity*; and I believe the compliment would be received as such, by the gentlemen composing the Parliament of Ireland, and would be returned in kind,—in such a case they would be happy to comply with the wishes of their friends, on such a *civil request* being properly made to them, and that *they knew*, that there was an absolute necessity for their appearance in the British Parliament;—but as to the being forced out of their houses, and cajoled from their country and their duty, at all seasons, on all pretences, and in all weathers, be made to pack up their alls, and fly to London, swim or sink, at the nod of a minister—that is quite out of the question!

The minister that expects such a degree of subservience, will find that an Irishman, though from nature he inherits a politeness, that will carry him through any danger or trouble when civilly invited, especially in his country's cause, yet he still retains a spirit, sufficient to reject with disdain any invitation that in the least favours of an *arbitrary command*.

THE END.