

TRACTS  
ON THE  
SUBJECT  
OF AN  
UNION,  
BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND,  
VOLUME THE FIFTH,

CONTAINING

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1800.



ACTS

ON THE

W. B. J. E. C. T.

OF AN

INION,

BETWEEN THE B. B. J. E. C. T. AND THE

VOLUME FIFTH

CONTAINING

THE HISTORY OF THE B. B. J. E. C. T. FROM THE  
FIFTH VOLUME OF THE ACTS TO THE  
PRESENT TIME. BY THE  
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THE B. B. J. E. C. T.

OF AN

INION, VOL. V.

1800



A

SECOND LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

WILLIAM PITT.

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*DUBLIN.*

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Printed by GEORGE FOLINGSBY, No. 59, Dame-  
street.

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1799.

Houses of the Oireachtas



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A

## SECOND LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE WILLIAM PITT.

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SIR,

**I**N the estimation of public opinion, which none but the weak man fears, and none but the blockhead braves, I may appear presumptuous in again addressing myself to a Premier, whom many have been accustomed to consider as the prime of men. From an unit of the people, who, to use your language, are themselves, the mere "Elements of Jacobinism," it may be thought, that something is required more refined than common sense, more captivating than conscious integrity, to entitle me to the attention of the Right Honorable William Pitt.

B

Would



Would to God that I could see more political pride, and more personal humility! that I could see all the scattered portions of individual arrogance, looking on itself as every thing, and its country as nothing, converted and consolidated into such a "national pride," dreaded by, and justly dreadful to the Minister; a haughty Hibernicism, in whose high contemplation, a million of individuals were a mere multiplication of cyphers, without the COUNTRY was in its proper place, to give them notation and value. It is, indeed, a proud feeling of this kind, an instinctive sentiment of country, such a love of Ireland as I often see exemplified, in the warm and affectionate embrace of my lowly, ignorant, oppressed countrymen; such as I often hear with strange delight, in the wild, and almost savage melancholy of national music: it is this lovely love of native land, which exalts and ennobles the peasant, and irradiates his hut as with the visit of an angel: it is this supreme interest, without which, all men, in my mind, are valueless, that, in defiance of natural disposition, incites me, unconnected as I am, by personal, or professional obligation, by hope or fear, to public person or political party, and conscious  
only



only of a sameness and pure consistency of character, to address myself, freely, and on the floor of equality, to a man, who, although as great as Great Britain, has already proved to the world that he has no memory, and has now as clearly manifested to the same world, that he has no foresight.

A Minister whom even sycophancy itself, can no longer assert to be unhacknied in the ways of men; that such a heaven-born, but certainly earth-bred Minister, should have attempted to put an extinguisher on a constitution, with as little ceremony as he would upon a candle, without further immediate preparation than sending over two or three of *his* Great Men, (for Buckingham is a big man, and Hertford a tall one,) and calling over two or three of *our* Great Men, to consult them on a subject, on which he had himself previously determined, must be ascribed to a shameful want of talent in the man, or as shameful a want of information in the Minister, or in both man and Minister, must be owing to that overweening sense of self-importance, mixed with a cool contempt of all other countries, particularly of this one, which, in the



individual I address, and in the nation to which he belongs, has become a vice or a calamity—I care not which it is called—that has its beginning in ignorance and will always terminate, where it now does, in ignominy. Your first attempt to invade this country has therefore ended in defeat and confusion, and in this respect, you may rank with Hoche and with Humbert.

I have seen the high-praised practitioner of other professions, after a long course of successful deception, suddenly explode into a block-head; and there is no profession provided with more and surer means to captivate and cajole, than that of Minister; with hundreds of hands callous in his praise; with hundreds of parrot tongues, taught only to cry, Hear him; with hundreds of heads working, night and day, for *his* exhibition. Lord North, a man of some humour, and much good humour, was able, in the course of ten years, sleeping and waking, to gain the reputation of a great Minister; and Mr. Pitt, with a fluency that can run on the castors of four or eight epithets, in astonishing sound and celerity; with a contracted *Anglicism* that had been the utmost



most range of the father's philosophy, and is, in little Great Britain, the base of the son's popularity; with (and crowned with) a stiff state morality, and formal intercourse with heaven, that recommends him to his earthly maker; Mr. Pitt, with these and similar qualities, has been able to swim on the fluctuations of public opinion, but still I think not so much by the strength of his arms, as by the buoyancy of bladders.

An abler Minister would scarcely have thought of carrying a great country by a coup de main. *His* sagacity (called prophecy by inferior minds) would not have been cheated by the internal and domestic quarrel, into the delusion that the country was weary of its existence as a Nation, but would rather have suspected that the agitation and conflict of party and personal ambition, indicated a new and strong vital power, which, by one prepollent motive, might be forced into a combination that would have all the effect, if it wanted the essence, of public virtue; and the country, tired of wearing so many masks, *might assume itself*, at length, at once, and for ever. A Minister, that did not support himself merely on  
the



the plank of existing circumstances, would have watched the effect of political discussion, making its way in a strange direction from the *lower* to the *upper* orders, who had long felt uneasy, and struggled against conviction, and are now glad to put in practice some of those truths which, *for some time longer*, they will continue to revile and reprobate in others. He would have anticipated the formidable junction of family, of property, of profession, and of talent; the convenient coalition, and fraternal embrace of statesmen long, and statesmen lately, out of cabinet confidence, now piqued into patriotism, and acting with joint efforts against a whimsically composed Irish Ministry with "*three names*," and such names as Cooke, Clare, and Castlereagh. In short, if deceived into a measure of this nature, by the premature confidence of his Irish managers, by *their* contemptuous estimation of the country coinciding with *his own*, and by the low value his superciliousness, and perhaps his political œconomy, might set upon certain men, such a Minister, thus deceived, and thus defeated, would not have ended with a threat of using every effort, short of the last extremity (*will that stop him if he goes so far?*) in the



the pursuit of this measure, *in order* to keep up the vigilance and re-action of the whole country, to bind and brace the party and personal opposition more firmly with itself, and with the country; thus persevering to *bid*, perhaps at somewhat higher rate, for person and for people, after turning the eyes of all Ireland *on itself*, on its real value, its relative power, and its European consideration.

I must, however, admire the stiff bend which you make to the dignity and independence of the Irish Legislature, while you are preparing the instruments of its destruction. When Don Carlos of Spain was about to suffer death, by the sentence of his father, and indulged a little in the feelings of nature—For shame! cried the executioner as he stript open his neck—For shame, Don Carlos, *it is all for your good!*—But this appearance of respect to the integrity of the house (in both senses of the word) is probably done, with a view of serving your own purpose, on a future more favourable occasion, by the previous recognition of its full and unlimited competency; not *then* to be *shared* with the people, as it is *now* owned to be, at least by the Irish Minister,



nister, for upon your existing principles of the last month, the people have nothing to do in the matter.

I might, perhaps, as one of that people, have said, that there is an inherent trusteeship in each and every estate of Legislature, in the Commons House of Ireland, in the House of Peers of Ireland, and in the King of Ireland; that as the crown is paramount to the King who wears it, the Constitution is, or ought to be, paramount to the Parliament, and above the sphere of that competency which is to preserve, but neither to create or to destroy; that if one parliament be competent to enter into such a compact, the united parliament are equally competent to break, as soon as they please, the conditions of it; and therefore nothing in it is sure and permanent, but the *irrevocability* of our independence. I might have said, that as the House of Commons, or of Peers, separately, are as little competent to surrender the constitution to Mr. Pitt, as King John was, by himself, or even *with* the other estates, to surrender his crown to the Pope; so, when combined with these estates, an omnipotence is the result—Yes, an omnipotence

*moving*



moving within the circle of its rights and its duties, possessed by every petty court, and (I speak from my reverence to authority) by every petty constable. I might have said, that as ancient legislators, in order to secure due submission to their laws, had recourse to the intervention of heaven, to the aid of an oracle, or to a secret intercourse with an Egeria, and as in times more modern, Kings, who were no legislators, assumed the right *divine* as a necessary supplement to government, so it may be convenient for men who are lawyers, but no legislators, to speak to the people from the clouds and darkness of parliamentary omnipotence; but it were, perhaps better, in such inquisitive times, to practice the mimicry of ancient superstition somewhat less, to vulgarize their divinity somewhat more, and to treat our political faith with a little of that truth, that candour, and that tenderness, by which the Author of our religious faith, changed the law, which thundered and lightened exceedingly from Mount Sinai, into the gentle and refreshing dew of pure and *plain* christianity. There is as little policy as piety, in bestowing on human authority the attributes of the Almighty; and the Minister



of expediency, will find, that the competency of which he boasts, will not be able to bridge the Irish channel ; that God said—Let them be islands—and islands they will remain—and that this geographical distinctness, and individuality of nature, will mock the power of Mr. Pitt, and will smile at the omnipotency of Parliament.

I will go lower. Whether garrisoned by a pale, partitioned as a lordship, degraded as a province, or cajoled as a kingdom, the national mind of Ireland has still remained unconquered and unconquerable. It has adhered with constancy, in the fellowship of misfortune ; bruised, but never broken ; hopeful in humiliation ; holding fast to its faith and clinging to its country. It is now six hundred years, since a cruel coward, an odious fugitive, a tyrant and an adulterer, entered into a conspiracy or a *coalition* with a king and a pope for the conquest of his native country. Since the base treachery of the barbarian, finding a ready support from profane hypocrisy, civil ambition and papal usurpation, the country was given up to the banditti of the royal adventurer, by a pious pope, for the honor of God and the welfare



welfare of the land ; and although the annals of the world, stained as they have been with the tears and blood of mankind, never exhibited such a chronology of slaughter, such perennial plagues of proscription, confiscation, famine, pestilence and the sword, never, I say again, never, in the dreadful uniformity of this calamitous story, never did a country suffer more which remained truer to *itself*, for the hammer of despotism has always rebounded from the anvil of resistance. It will not be *now*, that we will submit this country to the Right Honorable William Pitt, a country that has survived the thunder of the Tudors, and the exterminating sword of Cromwell ; that for so many hundred years, had been separated, alienated, and disowned by England, its natural growth of social improvement blighted, the march of the human mind reverted, and trained up by policy in the education of anarchy and rapine, the theme of English ridicule, or of their “ horror,” when every resistance to oppression, was deemed “ the repeated perfidy of an odious race,”—it is not possible, that in a *little* time, this country should lose its memory, and its understanding so far, as, upon the promise of disinterested love and unalterable attachment



from the Right Honourable William Pitt, to make an uncompensated and uncompensable surrender of itself, and forfeit for ever the hopes and prospects of 1782.

With respect to the understood arrangement of that year, I would only ask this nation, and that nation of yours, was an Union ever in the most distant contemplation of that settlement? Were the spirit, principle, or motive of an adjustment which recognised as perfectly as Grattan and repeal, as Flood and renunciation could recognise our independence; was this meant merely as an inchoate measure for the purpose of mashing the individuality of Ireland in the duplicity of an Union, and in the net of the Retiarius Pitt? O Memory of Flood! was such an annihilating adjustment, the end (as death is the end of life) of your victorious argument? Speak from the dust—for the subject is potent to break even the silence of the grave.—Answer and say, did you renounce British supremacy in the name of your country, in the year 1782, for such a terrible and eternal termination as that proposed in 1799?—I think I hear the fullen sound that indignantly answers, NO.

O Memory



O Memory of Volunteers, truly glorious and immortal, celebrated *now* by those, who did their utmost to chill your hopes, and damp your honest spirits, would this man have dared to make such a proposal, when your arms were glittering in the sun, before you were yet shorn of your strength, and wheedled out of your virtue ; before your conscience, will and understanding were locked up in the *eseritoires* of imbecile, indolent, prejudiced or pusillanimous men ; before your spirit had been diluted by delegation, or evaporated in the interchange of compliment, the adulation of addresses, and the facile fabrication of pretty replies ; before an aristocracy of persevering procrastination, had conquered the good sense, which led the good people, to a good understanding with each other ; before you talked so much in your own praise, and when England, and when France praised you, in awful silence ; would this Minister of England have then, or would he now, if I could appeal from the dead to the living, describe the adjustment of 1782, as dictated “ by a spirit of momentary popularity ” as not final with respect to constitution, as provisional and supplementary, a sacrifice to national pride, and a season of raving patriotism,

but



but in its nature and its intention prospective ; a legislative competence—merely to consolidate ; an independence solely—to unite ; and a life—to die. I thought I saw the flash of arms ; I thought I heard the same march which used in the year 1780 to swell my heart, and raise me in the ranks to a level with my countrymen—No—No—It is the new volunteers with the English name. The lawyers of 1799, the sound but not the sense, the corps but not the spirit. That spirit of 1782, now sleeps in the grave, or upon the bench. And *some* of my volunteer comrades, have been forced, *purely*, by their hysteric horror of the French Revolution, to accept offices under the state, and *many more*, are at this moment, silent sufferers in the living grave of the prison, where I have spent twenty-four hours, (the prisoner counts by hours) and some of these men have spent as many thousands. Dear and gallant souls ! whom, fifteen years ago, I addressed, and whom I now respectfully salute, placed in a situation regarded by God and justice, rest assured, that in this our long battle of life, in this wrestling match between the good and the evil principle, (I will not specify them by any other name) the latter will at length lye  
prof-



prostrate, and Liberty will be the FINAL ADJUSTMENT. He indeed, who only looks through our history, the history of the English in Ireland, the register of errors, follies, and crimes, will begin to think, that servitude and contempt are the necessity of our nature, and the fun of reason will, through such a medium, appear deeply dyed in blood. Look again. The great luminary is in its ascent to meridian altitude, and the morning of our nature and improveability as a nation, has scarcely broken, after the darkness of six centuries. The light has already struck upon the high places, the turrets, the spires and the steeples, but as the day advances, the low places, and the dark and desolate will be illuminated and cheered. The useless beams that played upon the tops of the hills will descend into the valleys, and warm, and fertilize them. Virtue will become vertical, and man at length will find delight in existence—But in the mean time, We must walk in darkness and the shadow of Mr. Pitt.

Sir—when I compare the contents of your speech, (which in my poor opinion, betrays much more of personal pique than the ability  
of



of a great statesman, (as if the national question, had been wholly incorporated with the inconstance of Mr. Foster) when I compare the contents of this speech with the context of your actions; with the military establishment voted for this country; with the gradual conversion of militia into regulars; with the approaching change of the yeomanry into the same strictness of discipline and extent of duty; with the intended alternation of English and Irish militia, accomplished in the first instance by means I have not time to dwell on; with the late voluntary offer of three militia regiments to be soon seconded by similar offers from the yeomanry; with the martial bills lately introduced into parliament; and with many other circumstances to be remarked in silence, I feel no conviction more palpable, than what I formerly mentioned, of the military *destination* of this country, and although an Union might have accomplished this final arrangement of yours, with more form, and perhaps with more efficacy, I warn Ireland, that this continues to be the plan *paramount* to that of Union, and that although defeated in a measure really only preparative to this purpose, the exertions of the Minister to attain it, will  
not



not suffer the least relaxation, though his route will perhaps be a little more circuitous.

As a patriot who loves peace above all things but Liberty, I deprecate this new calamity about to fall on my country, to become the seat of war between the internecine principles that are devastating Europe, and to be erected into a platform for royal and republican prize-fighters. I pray to almighty God, that he would inspire my head and my heart with some means, with some *ante-Pittism*, that might have even the probability of tranquilizing this country by the peace of Freedom, of reconciling the personal interest of the Monarch with the will of the people; of supporting monarchy, and at the same time, maintaining the independence and autonomy of my native land; of repelling both Ministerial invasion and French invasion, and closely uniting the strength and resources of these islands—not by a consolidation—but by a division of the executive power. Might not the very same thing be repeated now, which was done 600 years ago? What one King did by his sole power, might not another King be enabled to do, by (in this case) the useful omnipotence of parliament?

D

What



What Henry the 2d did to John the first, might not George the 3d be enabled to do to any of his children, (excepting the Prince of Wales) and if the crowns, instead of being made inseparable, were for ever disjoined, might not monarchy support itself *better* by the separation, and the two nations become more *united* by their consequent independence?

The division and civil war of this country, has been dated from the day, that the rights transferred to John as Lord of Ireland, reverted with the title, to the crown of England, and perhaps we might hail the return of the public peace, from the hour that, by the authority of parliament, confirming the free grace of a father, the individuality of the double crown was made distinct; an Irish Sovereign brought home to the people, domesticated by constant residence among the people, identified with the people, their interests, their passions, even their prejudices; circumscribed, in his councils and concerns, to the single welfare of the western isle; related to the crown of England only by the link of nature and the ties of kindred, not "*rex sub eo, et paratus ad servitium suum,*" but competent in himself, and confident



confident against the world in arms; related to the country of England, *closer than ever*, as Man to Man, not by bonds of parchment, but by the stronger bond of mutual interests, by the barter of benefit, the interchange of obligation, by the reciprocity of good for good, which forms the usefulness and ornament, the fruit and fragrance of private and of public life; and *if possible*, by the reciprocity of good for evil, that amiable effort of christian religion, and oriental morality.

I know that any proposal to unite royalist and republican may appear ridiculous, and that Lawyers who place their limits of possibility always in precedent, and benumb every attempt at improvement by barely crying—impossible! will shake the heavy head and smile; but I am not the less anxious to find some *point of contact* between the contending *façtions* (for they are no more) and I think that I find it, in the mutual desire of Irish Independence. I agree with you, Sir, the champion of monarchy, that there must be a change, “a new experience,” if not another order of things, but the great problem is to make that change without convulsion; to reconcile the cause of monarchy, with absolute and



eternal independence of Ireland; to unite the nations, by separating the governments, with mutual satisfaction; to make a family compact and a political federation stand in place of such an union as would distract the country with something worse than its old distemperature, and really weaken the common strength, by totally extinguishing affection. I do believe that there is a large mass (I think it better to call it by this name) attached to monarchy (and chiefly on that account to *you*) by ancient habits, by the natural royalism of property (for the rich are the *royal* of the earth) by the panic of innovation, by the rational dread of revolution, by the spectre of some unknown anarchy, who are, at the same time, still more strongly attached to the independence of this country, and their own interest in that independence. I do believe, on the other hand, that there is a vast population, whose property is their persons, that have been driven into democracy, and forced to take shelter in republicanism from the storm and terror of the times, whose affections have migrated from their country, as the bird abandons the nest polluted by human hands, and who have become Frenchmen, because they were not suffered



ferred to be Irishmen, yet whose country is still the home of their heart, and who in this common love of country, have a POINT of CONTACT still remaining with the former body, and growing broader since the present topic was agitated, which might be improved into a lasting treaty of amity and peace, perhaps, by the simple expedient of a resident independent executive, dependent on the general will, an inherent sovereignty, whose interest might lead it to those essential reforms, that would perfect the happiness of *its own* people, and heal for ever those distractions, said to be fomented *solely* for the misunderstood interest of another people.

I am a Protestant Dissenter, so zealously attached to that essential distinction, the right of private judgment (which a fellow, himself a chronic ailment, a sort of ring-worm in this country, has declared to be a cause of religious difference nearly *obsolete*) that I think I should be able to lay down my life in maintaining that distinction; and yet, I do not scruple to declare, that I can see Popery *no where* but in the Protestant Ascendancy, a term borrowed from the falsehood of astrology, and pregnant with



with the cunning of an art, which imposed on human credulity; nor can I discern the Popery of politics any where, but in the assumed domination of any external power, over the civil concerns of this country. I do not scruple to declare, that I think Henry the 4th of France acted wisely as a King, in the same proportion that James the 2d of England acted with hereditary folly; and, with Fletcher, I say “the most zealous Protestant in the nation, ought to wish that a Papist should succeed to the throne, with such limitations, as would render the nation free and independent, than the most Protestant and best prince without any.” And I add, that I had much rather see the King of Ireland and *in* Ireland, of the same religion with the great mass of his people, than that this country of great Catholic population, but less comparative strength, should be united to the mass and magnitude of Great Britain, without any whatever security for the preservation of the conditions of the compact; or any other guaranteeship, than the good faith of a great power.

I draw my politics neither from the castle nor the prison, neither from Castlereagh nor O’Connor,



nor, and what I say will manifest my *sole* motive, is, to save this my native land from impending devastation, in the collision of two rival nations, regardless of *us*, in the rancour of *their* mutual antipathy; and I appeal from the rage of parties and the leaders of parties, to a PHILOSOPHICAL and prescient patriotism, that fits, like Archimedes, calmly intelligent, and is able by the machinery of some powerful motive to dash hostility in pieces, while it remains invulnerable, in its own sound and solid integrity.

Let me not be understood when I have mentioned *Philosophy*, that I mean a *Plot*. Philosophy, of late, *denounced* by ministers of the state and dignitaries of the church, who suspecting some secret sympathy between the speculations of science and political innovation, have exclaimed with Omar—"Burn all the books—for if they contain only what is in our Law, they are useless, and dangerous if they contain any thing else." These men perhaps have heard that knowledge of all kinds is *associated*, and that a spirit of adventurous research once excited in the great chain of nature, seldom fails to be transmitted through the whole, and to brighten the smallest link, in its course, like the flame of electricity.



electricity. They therefore dread Philosophy and all her works. The power that draws down the lightning from heaven, in silence and security, might *for them*, have been nothing more at this day, than the attraction of straws and feathers by the friction of amber; and the virtue that arms a needle, so as to guide us round the globe, and make us hit the smallest island in the vast Pacific, might, *for them*, have still slept in the coarse and unpromising ore from whence Philosophy educed it.

Impressed as he is with the fear of this Philosophy, which could alone elevate his mind, from an adherence to certain inveterate maxims, to the fabrication of some adequate plan, that even in its bold disorder, would be the better qualified to meet the perilous and unexampled exigencies of the times; ungifted as he is with any such heroism of thought, as can descry afar off, the possibility of things, I can have little or no hope, from a man and a Minister, who has vilified the very parliament he crouches to compliment; who has affronted the Catholic body in the very act of alluring them; and who has introduced a sort of civil war into the state, in order to insure  
peace



peace to the community. But let me tell this Minister, that *some* experiment beyond the common line, is imperiously called for, to resist, with any effect, the new tactic of French policy. Our old tactic of penal law, systematic corruption, contentions of party and personal ambition, division into casts, and monopolism of ascendancies, will be of little avail, against such solid and homogeneous power. Compulsory consolidation at home, will not avail, more than discordant coalitions abroad. *They* have been crushed, like clods of clay, in the hand of a giant. They first erected, and have since sustained a re-action, which in the mechanism of mind, has been not only contrary to action, but more than equal; and France has made the conquest of Europe, by the influence of Pitt, and the subserviency of his coalitions, while the wretched Kings, of wretched islands, are now deploring their calamities, and at this moment, cursing the author of consolidation. Tutor'd perhaps by events, I aver, that French power would have met with more obstacles, or at least would never have risen to such a height, had there never been a coalition formed; and had the different states remained—at home, the sand would

E

have



have broken the tide, which has broken down the mole. That tide would have retired peaceably into its bed, but for the resistance it experienced; and the meditated consolidation of these countries, is, at best, but a second rate coalition, the intention of which, would have been much better effected, by each of these islands resting on the square and firm-set basis of their national independence, valuing that as dearly as their existence. Were every nation to bear that rule in their own country, which Ahasuerus decreed, that every man should bear in his own house, present peace would be the result, and future war would be impracticable.

But if the talented order in any country, should be divided into men of capacity without views, and men of views without capacity; if the *untalented* orders labouring under a combination (I was going to call it conspiracy) of rent and profit against wages, should be presented with a system of national reform, comprised in the licence from a bishop of a different religion, to a parish school-master of a different religion, with an index expurgatorius of Jack Connor and Moll Flanders;

if



if the independence of such a country, has been asserted only for the sake of a partial interest, and the assertion should turn out nothing more than the rivalry of monopoly, were I to smile at this sudden and unforeseen ebullition of patriotism, I should shelter myself under the example of Hannibal, who, being questioned on this insult to the public distress, made answer, That a smile of scorn for those who felt not the loss of their country, until it affected their *private interest*, was a smile of sorrow for Carthage.

Sir—I am satisfied, that if Ireland remain not true to itself, “in scipie totus teres atque rotundus,” it is not your fault, but it is our fault, and our folly. You have done your utmost, in the measure you have proposed; in the manner of proposal; in your assertion of the competency of parliament to kill itself, but its incompetency to manage the country; in the general stigma affixed to the morals and manners of the whole nation; in the broad hints made by your personal friends, of withdrawing commercial advantages to their own eventual misfortune, and of re-enacting the penal code against the Catholics; in this blind



and exceptionless defiance of people and of party, you have indeed done, all that man could do, to embody the party with the people, and the people with the party.

But if the party be one thing, and the people another, if instead of having a common centre with the country, the party should revolve solely *about itself*, and if that self be made up, of a heterogeneous hap-hazard coalition, without any predominance of principle, or habits of affection; if the leaders of such a party should either be unpopular, or should despise popularity, such a coalition must share the fate of the others, and the Minister must soon triumph, for the very same reason he has before been so often defeated. For a little time the whole matter will be allowed to sleep, for a decent interval, sufficient to save the honor of the Irish Minister: and if in that interval, the party should set itself against the people, if nothing should be proposed in the way of conciliation, much less of reform, which is now fatally made to appear but little less practicable than revolution; if no experiment be tried, not even that dignified one, of a PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION, to examine personally



ally and on the spot, the faults, the causes, and the remedies for these disturbances: if there should be a feeble opposition to a new course of coercion, preparing its prongs to rake up the fresh embers of rebellion; the Minister will *then* justify the ground he has taken, by appealing to the world, and to the empire, that Ireland is “non compos sibi,” incapable of self government, and like the unhappy lunatic, must submit to the scourge of coercion, or seek refuge from the torments of political existence, in the euthanasia of an incorporate Union.

Then indeed the party, high and powerful as it may now deem itself (though perhaps that *now* is already past) then indeed will it be flattened to the level of the people, by the great hammer of consolidation, the found of which is heard across the Atlantic as well as here, lifted by that great political mechanic, President Adams, as it is here by the Minister Pitt; while both these mighty black-smiths, are sweating in sympathy, and labouring by time-keeping and alternate strokes, to give the hard and rigid independence of the country, a proper malleability, and to turn ploughs and  
shuttles,



shuttles, into spears and bayonets. Then indeed, I say, the party will become the people—when there will be no country, and countrymen—when there will be no Ireland. No,—I am not surprised, that a country, who considers her constitution as a revelation from heaven, precluding improvement from reason or experience; whose will and whose wish is, I think, against reform of any kind, because she looks upon the actual state of things, as the public law; and the actual Minister, as the existing government—no—I am not surprised, that a country, incorporatively united with the war and Mr. Pitt, should act and suffer as she has done, and as she does. But I confess, that among the miracles of human nature, it appears to me the greatest, how country gentlemen, could have been in *this* island, so panic struck *out of* their property, how, on one side really invaded, and on the other, invaded with the fear of invasion, they could still lend a helping hand to the screw of coercion, with such recent experience of its effects in inviting invasion, and opening a way for the enemy; how they should equally facilitate the power, that on one part wishes to make a conquest, by the consequence of an Union;



Union; and the power that, on the other part, wishes to conquer by separation; and when neither object can be accomplished on the instant, how men, fond of their persons and property, fond of their cattle and their country, can cheerfully join in the design of both enemies, to weaken, distract, distress and hamstring that country, until it may find no resource, but in suicide or separation—if any thing is most strange in this strange world, this appears to be so.

I do declare, that it would appear to me far less strange and unnatural, if the propertied mass of this country, in the just apprehension of being, not merely squeezed, but ground down to powder, between the two hostile principles, should take those means, that the law and constitution still place in their power (notwithstanding the hanging up of the Habeas Corpus) to impel administration into a second treaty with the reputed leaders of the populace, if not of the people. Those who condescended to treat once, may condescend to treat again, and the same large state necessity, which sent Malmesbury twice, and may send him a third time, to shake hands with the murderers



murderers of their Sovereign, might be plea sufficient, for taking *any* measure that would *extinguish* France in Ireland, suppose, by asking these men what did they want, and if emancipation and reform were still made use of as pretexts, by removing at once the *pretexts*, and thus disarming the leadership, while it unmasked their hypocrisy. O God! might a country gentleman exclaim, is all this public and private distress, merely, in order to preserve the smell of a rotten borough under our nose, and to prevent a Catholic from sitting by our side? Is the *neutralism* of the county (a strong but latent power) able to ground the connexion, on no surer foundation than the abuses of the constitution, and if influence, or in coarser phrase, if corruption, is become too expensive a cement for this connexion, cannot even the selfishness of property suggest some means, or at least by its power of inactivity, give weight to some measure, that would produce *federal* friendship with *self-existent* sovereignty, rather than be consolidated, compressed, and assailed into the redemptionless servitude of an Union? Would to God, that I were as able as I am willing, to suggest such a measure, and that I could glut my political



political vengeance upon Mr. Pitt, by making an address to him, who betrayed the rights of the people, the medium of a redress to their wrongs.

Sir, one thing is certain—These countries never can be *faithfully* connected, but by their mutual independence, and the measure of an Union, injudicious in any but ephemeral policy, and impracticable in nature, would really make that a hostile, which ought to be a social separation; the sociality of manners, of language and of laws; the separation of governments, who might and ought to unite in every relationship, but that of mastership and subjection; not an Union by conquest, not an Union by monopoly, not an Union by gold or by iron, but an Union of mutual interest, the only bond of affection between nations, and supported by *public opinion*, without which Union, the spider weaves as strong a web as Mr. Pitt. Britain, by her past system to Ireland, has in reality diminished *her own* enjoyments, and curtailed *her own* industry, by taking away that stimulus, which our new wants would have supplied; and, in her present speculation, of uniting impending  
F bankruptcy



bankruptcy with solvency, and assimilating the taxes, if not the tempers of the two countries, she is equally deceived in her views of profitable adventure, equally deceived with the Minister, whose chief object is, *military* conscription, and to make this island, a *salvage* for the empire. I question, if Britain has gained as much, by anxiously making herself, the medium of our contracted trade, as if this island, had been what nature designed it, a Free Port for the world; and I am convinced, that the monopoly of political power, denominated an Union, is equally ill calculated to draw forth the real strength, and resources of the two islands; which, by their being left more to themselves, and partial ascendancies being levelled to equal laws, would come forth, spontaneous, and unsolicited, from united and incorporated nations. Nor will it be the distractions of the country, nor the system of influence, reverting to the old system of military power, nor the pretexts of invasion, which will make an Union more palatable, to the selfishness, to the pride, to the integrity of the nation; to the heads of parties, or to the tails; and if, by a reliance on such measures, you, Sir, should be so impolitic, as to propose  
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the matter a second time, and so unfortunate as to succeed in it, you will only accelerate that ultimate decision, which we would both deprecate as the worst of evils.

Were any one, therefore, as a perpetual preventative of these evils, to propose, supporting monarchy in both islands, not by the hazardous project of uniting the two legislatures, with the immediate loss of existence to the one, and the eternal loss of Liberty to the other; but by the division of the crowns, through the authority of parliament, to the satisfaction of the King and the father, and with the acquiescence of national opinion; were it to be supposed, that it is the preponderating influence—I should be ashamed to say—corruption—necessarily attending on a *double* crown, which totally destroys the balance of the constitution, while it has been made the only principle of the connexion; and were this man to propose, grounding this connexion, on a more honest, a more honorable, and a more durable basis, by a self-existent, inherent sovereignty, attached to the British monarchy, in the relationship of blood; and by a self-legislating people, attached to the British



tish nation, by the reciprocity of good for good, not evil for evil, I should think the intention of the design, more meritorious, and the execution equally practicable with that of the Right Honorable William Pitt.

Is it not possible, that the British constitution, should, in the one island remain as it is, with all those conceived abuses which however, the public will *there* seems to cherish; and in the other island, the *same* constitution, should be more accommodated to the same general sentiment, at least, in being freed from the monstrous absurdity, of excluding the great mass of the people, from any share of political power, yet, *at the same time*, imperial connexion be preserved, without indivisible and irrevocable consolidation? Is it not possible, that instead of imitating the errors of the English system, in commerce as well as constitution, this country might imitate its excellencies, without impeaching the connexion, or diminishing the resources of the empire? Is it not possible, that one country, getting above the spirit of a corporation, and the other getting out of the spirit of an exclusive company, both countries might be better united, and



and their strength consolidated, merely by letting them alone? Is it possible, for example, that the *political* purposes of exactly assimilating the taxation of the two countries, and all the errors of the commercial system, in its high duties, and consequent encouragement to smuggling, in its taxes on necessaries, in its inconsiderate bounties, in the multiplied trouble and vexation of the Custom-house, in the confusion, obscurity, and craft of the book of rates, in the monstrous expence of raising the revenue, is it possible, I say, that the political purpose of multiplying patronage, and strengthening, at such a cost to King and country, the influence of the crown, might be effected by any expedient, that would at the same time, sustain the firm of government, while it purified its substance, the morals, the manners and the industry of the people, their integrity and their independence?

It is utterly impossible! answers one, who can make no distinction between things extraordinary and things impossible. It is utterly impracticable! answers another, who has an interest in causing that impracticability, or whose views extend farther than his ability  
to



to reach them; but if men would take only *the trouble*, of saving their lives and properties, from the coming conflagration; if they were not petrified to one spot, and, like those who see a bomb flying through the air, fixed by very irresolution, I do think that in this providential *time* granted to them, they might give speed and finew to some patriotic expedient, which parting from Mr. Pitt as the east does from the west, would in its circuit and circumnavigation round this great measure, *gain a day* which he has lost—if they were sensible, as I am, that it is the interest, and should be the business of their lives, to advance the constitutional independence of their country, by a single year, by a single month, by a SINGLE DAY.

SIR—it is your great and exigent purpose, and as far as I can gather from the languid loquacity of your Irish translator, it still continues your purpose, to press—I was going to say—to crimp this country, by a plan of base value, though artfully stamped with the image of the Sovereign, into the perpetual service of a war, disastrous even in its victories. It is my purpose to appeal from such false and fallacious statement



statement to the independent spirit of the country, and of parliament, who might by that very independence which you object to, have once become the saviours of the Empire, and might still prove the salvation of Ireland. It is your purpose to extinguish patriotism entirely in this island as a principle of action. It is mine to bring Ireland home to every heart. Sensible as you are, of the precariousness of power, mighty as it may be, which partakes in the instability of winds and of waves, it is your design to dry up the channel. It would be my wish to make it ten thousand times broader than it is, but if that project be as impracticable as your own, *if* nature has rendered it impracticable that we should be so lost to ourselves, as to feel the use, the pleasure, and the necessity of living in peace, and of loving each other, I should then wish for that INSULAR CONNEXION, which might yield supplementary strength, but still retain public independence; which might, in each island, assimilate, but not in both, annihilate the British constitution (the inevitable consequence of an Union) I say, the British constitution, *as*, and *only as*, established in fundamental principles, immemorial usages, and memorable precedents, such as the Great Charter,

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the Bill of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, and that memorable precedent which altered the descent; and brought another family, as it might now, with the same parliamentary authority and popular acquiescence, bring another person from the same family to the possession of the Irish throne.

It has been your crime, your error, or your misfortune, to have weakened the strong hold of that family in the hearts of their people; to have weakened the force of the empire by a distraction of the legislatures; and to have weakened the strength of this island, by political persecution under religious pretexts; for nothing is of greater verity, than that the Catholics are not subject to a foreign jurisdiction except in spirituals, and have solemnly and repeatedly disavowed it; just as the Dissenters disclaim any temporal authority, and rest their faith, in the words and works of *another* supreme power—their Redeemer and Judge. They as little acknowledge the competency of the state, to regulate their religious concerns, as the Catholics; and the Catholics suffer for the same cause, and on the same grounds, in which the Dissenters have so often suffered at the stake, and bled in the field. ALMIGHTY GOD!—Universal FATHER!—Pity  
and



and forgive the folly of thy creatures, claiming from thee the ETERNAL! the privileges of primogeniture, and by acts of supremacy and uniformity, making thy divine justice, and thy omnipresent benevolence, the accomplice of their pride and partiality.

It would be my plan, to bind the islands together, not by cramps of iron, but by coincidence of interest and community of privilege; to subdue open and smothered war in this country, to conquer France at least in Ireland, by speedily placing the whole people on the same level of political equality, which Alfred gave to the Danes, and to the English; which the truly heroic Alexander, in spite of Aristotle, gave to the Persians as well as Greeks, although the latter had such an extraordinary opinion of themselves, as scarcely to acknowledge the rest of mankind as of the same species; that same political equality, which even the Moors granted to the Spaniards for the space of four hundred years. It would be my plan, to counterpoise the power of France, in the affections of the people, by fighting it with its own weapons; not to trou-



ble yourself by marching to Paris, but to make the genius of the British constitution, encounter the genius of Jacobinism in the covert recesses of the human heart. What, vainest and most vaunting of men! What do you boast of? Armies and navies, martial laws and loans of millions, tactic of Toler, and finance of Corry, when there is a SOMETHING in *abeyance*, perhaps the more formidable by not giving it a name, which I might call, if not the spirit, the ghost of the old British constitution; that, terrible in its form, and excelling in brightness, passes at times across your mind, and makes you tremble in the seat of your pride. I do repeat it, that France must be encountered in the human heart, and without you gain possession of that little organ, your military organization, and your political consolidation, penal codes revived, or new courses of coercion, are at present precarious; and will ultimately prove unsuccessful. An engineer as little as a dwarf, lean and pale, can do what two thousand savages, stronger than Milo, are not able to accomplish; and one or two conciliatory laws, short in their letter, but stupendous in their moral force, would



would have an effect beyond ten thousand of Barbarian policy. Sir!—Sir!—While you want the master key to the Irish heart, you will find it vain to pick the lock by corruption, or force it by intimidation.

Enlightened, but not warmed with classic lore, it has been your aim, to check the Liberty of literature, from a fear of the literature of Liberty; and from a dread which the REPUBLIC of LETTERS inspires, even by its very name. Without looking to the context of his life and opinions, without regard to the immortal interests of science and Philosophy, Horne Tooke was immured in the Tower, and his courageous integrity, and his *vital* friendship put to the test, while Windham was hunting after some rival, who might at the same time, put down his ingenuity and his learning. Had they lived, Milton would have been called down from the music of the spheres, by the imperative rap of a bow-street runner; and Shakespeare would, for certain passages in his Julius Cæsar, have received a castigatory examination from the son of the poet Canning. Boyle and Locke would have been huf-



tled out of the Country, and Bacon would have kept his place—only by being the meanest of mankind. It is the consequence of your plan, to blast and destroy literature for ever in this country, its young hopes, and prospects of excellence. It is the Dutch policy, to burn all the spiceries which a *too* fertile season produces, beyond what they expect to dispose of with profit; and to collect the young blossoms, and green leaves of the nutmeg trees, in order to extirpate them. England!—I envy you *your* Sheridan, though I freely part, with all that was English, in *your* Burke.

Instead of making this island a nursery, from whence, principles and practices may be transplanted noxious, to your own English constitution; instead of sending Irish genius, to be fawned and flattered in a British senate, into its living shame and its immortal infamy, I would cultivate the blossoming talent of my own country and keep it there. The wily wisdom of Dundas, should in vain hold out the temptation, of a more ample field for the play of interest and ambition in continental cares, and European politics—Dundas—himself



self belonging to a country, in which there are fourteen millions of acres of waste land, in which a tract of land composing a fifth part of Great Britain (I mean the High-lands, the Connaught of Scotland) with some exceptions, is in a state of nature, where a great body of the people, the most virtuous of the whole island, have been dragging out a miserable existence, perishing through want, or forced, through wild despair, to abandon country, kindred and friends, and to embark moneyless and unknown, indented slaves; a country through which Johnson rambled, throwing out his Londoner sneer at its desolation, and feasting and flattered in the hall of Macleod, while the storm raged abroad, drowning the cry of human misery, that would have touched a more sympathizing heart, and which even a pensioner might have repeated to his sovereign.—Let Dundas of Scotland, but to his great comfort *out of* Scotland, present his allurements to Irish ambition, while he taunts us as a little island “*surrounded by the seas,*” (I pardon the tautology for the truth of the expression) but in my opinion, there is no subject more completely adequate to the highest



est sublimity of genius, and to the better intellect of a capacious heart, than the care and education of our own country, though it were ten times smaller than it is; and, to my eyes, Ulysses appears greater, and more humanly divine, while wistfully watching the curling smoke that ascended from Ithaca; more sublime, when he poured his vengeance on the suitors, than when he spoke in the congress of kings, or fought in the plain of Troy, or descended from the fatal horse, in darkness and treachery, to plunge his sword in the bosom of a sleeping city.

IN FINE—Sir—it has been your plan, to put down private opinion by open force; to give political intolerance the edge and rancour of a religious persecution, and to take away the life of man, for the diabolical crime of taking a Test,\* and entering into particular associations, which the right administration

\* It is an historical fact, that the first Christians used a covenant and agreement, and those who were not united were called “Asyntheticous, kai aspondous,” “incompositos, et sine fœdere.” Their Test of Association



tion of general government might have superseded, and STILL MIGHT SUPERSEDE. It would be my plan, to destroy intrigue from France, and corruption from England, by rallying every Irishman without distinction, about his own interest, in the LOVE of his COUNTRY. Vain wish! it may be said, while William Pitt continues Prime Minister, and Charles Fox a private man. Yet, before I sink into the silence and obscurity of nature and station, let my national pride, give the personal pride of that Minister, a piece of advice contained in three words, which take in the whole extent of Adam Smith, and sound the depth of David Hume; which form the golden rule of a good, wise, and permanent government; the grand secret of commercial concerns, and political œconomy; the true means of consolidation, and most durable ce-

Affociation was called Syntheke, which is translated Conventus, but in reality it clearly signifies a Covenant; and Pliny tells us, that the Christians took an oath to live "thus, and thus," that is, to cultivate a brotherly affection.

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ment of connexion; uniting laconic brevity with attic terseness, and the sagacity of the sage, with the simplicity of the child—in three warning words—LET US ALONE.

WILLIAM DRENNAN.

MARLBOROUGH-STREET,  
28th February, 1799.