

R E V I E W
OF A PUBLICATION,
ENTITLED,
T H E S P E E C H
OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
J O H N F O S T E R,
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND;
IN A LETTER,
ADDRESSED TO HIM
BY WILLIAM SMITH, ESQ.

The Third Edition.

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Houses of the Oireachtas

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Letter stands in need of indulgence ; and is perhaps, in some degree entitled to it. It was begun on Tuesday last, (the publication which it purports to answer, having appeared only the day before) and has been written so expeditiously, that the whole of the work (or indeed one-fourth of it) has never been at once under the Writer's eye,—nor had he even time for reading over his own manuscript ; but was obliged to confine his corrections to those which he could make in revising proofs.

The consequence, perhaps, may be many faults of style, and some repetitions ; owing to the Writer's not having been able to ascertain, with sufficient exactness, what he had already treated,—from his sending the sheets to Press nearly as fast as they were written.

He does not, however, expect that this hurry should excuse him for faults, of argument or statement into which he may have fallen. He should not have ventured to submit his thoughts so hastily to the Publick, but that he had already reflected sufficiently upon his subject, to make him hope that expedition could do little more than affect the style ; a consideration which he conceived to be so subordinate, as that it might be well to sacrifice it to the desire of an early publication.

But it may be asked, Why the Writer has chosen this mode of replying to a Speech, which, as a Member of Parliament, he had the privilege of answering in his place ?

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The fact is, that nothing could be more just and reasonable, than the claim of the distinguished Personage, to whom this Letter is addressed, to be heard upon the great Question of a Legislative Union, upon the first opportunity that presented itself for delivering his sentiments ;—but for the Writer of this Letter who had already, on a former occasion, obtained a long and patient hearing, to have again addressed the House on the Subject of Union, when that question was not before them, would have been highly unreasonable, and presumptuous.

It only remains to observe, that the following Letter is not intended as an original argument ; or full investigation of the Question of Union. It is an Answer to the Speech published as the Speaker's: in an ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND, the Writer has gone into a more direct discussion of the question itself ; and thought it would be wrong here to repeat arguments, which he had already offered to the Publick.

A L E T-

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L E T T E R,

Æc. Æc.

S I R,

THE Speech lately published as yours,* I had the good fortune of hearing you deliver ; and in common, I apprehend, with the rest of your auditors, regarded it as a splendid and convincing proof that your reputation for Commercial Knowledge is as merited, as it is high. Indeed, if the ability of a Speech were to be estimated by the rich abundance of information which it contained, the excellence of yours would not admit of controversy ; neither can I altogether withhold from it the praise to which a judicious selection of topicks is entitled ; and still less am I disposed to contest its claim to approbation on the ground of acuteness, perspicuity and logical precision ; qualities, in which if it be in any degree deficient, the defect is not attributable to you, but to the weakness of the opinion which it was your task to support.

But if, towards estimating the value of an argument, we must advert to the conclusion which it is intended to inculcate, and can pronounce it able, only in proportion as it is convincing, I shall be obliged to withhold the praise of ability from yours ; for though I listened to it with unintermitted, and unprejudiced attention, and with a mind sufficiently full of the subject which it treated, to render me the more capable of

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* By Moore, in College-Green.

weighing the reasons which it contained, yet I protest it totally failed of carrying conviction to my mind.

To this failure, Sir, you are to impute the trouble of my present Letter; in which, without deviating from that respect which is due to you, I shall endeavour to answer the arguments which you have urged. I am apprized of the vast interval which there is between us, in point of talents and information; but, great as it may be, I conceive it, on the present question, to be filled up by the superior force, and number of those arguments, which offer themselves in favour of the opinion that I have embraced; and I feel a confidence, not so much in myself, as in my position.

I shall, in the following pages, aim at no stricter order than that which will arise from my attending you regularly through your topics; and, agreeably to this loose arrangement, shall begin by noticing your first.

You set out by asserting that the adjustment of 1782 was a final one; a position which I conceive to be as true, as it is irrelevant; and which therefore I am not disposed to controvert, but only to explain.

Indeed, it is strangely usual to omit adjusting the meaning of propositions, before we give them our assent. I believe it is Locke who has laid it down, that an accurate definition may preclude a world of argument; and, conformably to his opinion, I am inclined to expect, that, after having examined the meaning of the position which I have just noticed, we shall deem an attempt to draw from it any thing illustrative of the Question of Union, about as hopeful as the Lagado scheme of extracting sunbeams from cucumbers.

The measures of 1782 must have had reference to that, out of which they arose; and the adjustment been of something, which had been in controversy: for I cannot conceive a settlement,

ment, without some subject matter for it to operate upon ; nor extend its operation beyond the limits of those doubts, or controversies, to which it was meant to put an end.

Now, what was the subject matter of the settlement of 1782 ? The claim of the British Parliament to enact laws, that should bind Ireland ; and the denial, on the part of Ireland, of the justice of this claim.

The right of legislating for Ireland had not only been, for centuries, practically asserted by the Parliament of England, but had been expressly recognised, and insisted on by legal and constitutional writers ; and been by them referred to the principle of Irish dependence, and subordination ; a principle, still more mortifying to the spirit of this country, than even the deduction, of a right to legislative control, which it supported.

The pride of Irishmen was naturally offended, at finding it laid down by a commentator on the Laws of England,* that where this country was particularly named, or included within general words, there could be no doubt but she was bound by all Acts of the British Legislature ; nor was the jealousy, which this doctrine was calculated to inspire, appeased by the information, which the same writer gave them, that “ it followed from the very nature and constitution of a dependent state :” still less, were they likely to be soothed by a review of the servile, and invidious provisions, by which the statutes of Sir Edward Poynings had degraded our Parliament, in order to rivet our dependence ;—or of the want of that security to the liberties of the subject, which the inhabitants of England derived from the frame, and limited duration of their Mutiny Bill.

The assertion of such claims on the part of Britain, and denial of their justice by the Parliament of this country,—the degrading

* Blackstone.

grading system by which, on the one hand, these claims were supported, and the impatience with which both claims and system were brooked upon the other,—inevitably produced a controversy the most momentous in its aspect, and to which the settlement of 1782 very fortunately put an end. I accede to your enumeration of those grievances,* of which, at that period, the removal was desired: you truly state them to have consisted of Great Britain's claim to bind this country: the appellant jurisdiction:† the provisions of Poynings' law; and the frame and perpetuity of the Mutiny Bill. The first of these grievances, (viz. the claim of Britain) was the grand point in issue, and to which the others were either appurtenant or allied; and as for the third and fourth, they formed no subject of controversy between the two nations; but furnished mere matter for internal regulation. In 1782 these grievances were removed; and I cannot but exult at our having then been freed from a system of control, too degrading and oppressive to this country, to be justified by that consolidation of the empire, at which it aimed; and which, if not yet so firmly secured as every true friend to British connexion must desire, is yet attainable, by measures which the Irish Parliament is competent to adopt, and which I too much respect the arrangement of 1782, to charge it with having placed beyond their reach.

I agree with you, Sir, that the adjustment of 1782 and 1783, was final; and that the Acts of the 22d and 23d of the King, by repealing the 6th of Geo. I., and declaring that the people of Ireland should be bound only by laws enacted by the Parliament of this kingdom,—formed a compact between the countries, which, without a gross breach of faith, Great Britain cannot violate; and of which Irishmen ought not to yield the benefit, but with their lives.

Therefore, if you shew me any breach of this solemn and final settlement,—any attempt on the part of England to legislate

* Page 9.

† Which second was a *merely theoretick* grievance.

late for this country, or invade the supremacy of our courts of justice, or our Parliament,—I shall join with you in protesting against the injustice of such conduct; but until this be shewn, you must allow me to doubt the pertinence of those reiterations, that the adjustment of 1782 was final, which principally occupy more than forty pages of your Speech:—You are continually pointing to your premisses, when I am looking for your conclusion; and wasting your time in laying foundations which will support no fabrick material to the present question.

Can you, Mr. Speaker, a man of undoubted and distinguished talents, mean seriously to contend, that the British Parliament in 1782, by disclaiming the right of binding this country by its statutes, precluded the Irish Parliament from deliberating on the expediency of a Legislative Union, and adopting or rejecting it, according to the result of such deliberation?—I am averse from imputing to you an argument, which strikes my understanding to be so unsuitably feeble;—yet find it difficult (excuse my freedom) to acquit you of having been rather profuse of irrelevant assertion, unless by attributing to you the design of perverting those assertions, and founding arguments upon them which a judgment, incomparably beneath yours, should perceive they never can sustain. I am driven to suspect, that in asserting the adjustment of 1782 to have been final, you insinuate it to have been preclusive; and that in settling the controversies from whence it flowed, (and which alone it could affect) it incapacitated one of two independent countries from submitting a system to the consideration of another; and disqualified this latter from investigating the merits of the plan thus offered, and adopting it, if it seemed calculated for the benefit of both.

To me it appears too clear for argument, that the adjustment which finally disclaimed the right of Great Britain to
legislate

legislate for Ireland, and thus put an end to all controversies which had been generated by such a claim, did not affect the right of the Irish Legislature, in its wisdom, thereafter, to adopt such arrangements as circumstances might require, and as should seem conducive to the welfare of this kingdom, and the empire.

To me it appears like something worse than extraordinary doctrine, that the adjustment which recognised the legislative supremacy of the Irish Parliament, at the same time precluded it from exercising its supreme authority, by the adoption of a measure, which it deemed pregnant with advantages to that country, over whose interests it presided.

When the British Parliament renounced its claim of dictating to this country, did it part with the harmless right of recommending a measure to our consideration? Did his Majesty, in assenting to any of the measures of 1782, deprive himself of the innoxious privilege of suggesting to a future Irish Parliament, which he should assemble to consult *de arduis Regni*, the consideration of a measure which, to his royal wisdom, seemed calculated to meet the arduous situation of the empire?—Did the Irish Parliament, by the share which it took in the transactions of 1782, despoil itself of its deliberative capacities, and preclude itself from considering, adopting, or rejecting, the measure thus suggested from the throne? If so, the British Parliament, at that period, did more than wave its pretensions to superiority over this country: it surrendered a portion of its inherent powers: it cramped and circumscribed its own internal authority; and imposed restraints upon itself, which render it, with respect to Ireland, less free than it is in its intercourse with any other nation in Europe, or the world.

The King too, according to this interpretation of the settlement of 1782, must be construed to have parted (rather inconsistently

consistently with the duties of his high station) with an essential attribute and prerogative of that royal dignity, which is, as it were, the centre round which revolve the liberties of our Constitution; and the Irish Parliament must be assumed to have abdicated its situation, and renounced its right of consulting and advancing the interests of the nation. —I hesitate to admit a construction, from which such consequences flow.

The settlement of 1782 did what? It adjusted the controversies which had arisen from the claims of Britain to a right of legislating for this country: a right, which I have your authority (p. 5) for saying, this country had not acknowledged, but had denied.—The arrangement of 1782 then, was merely the abolition of an abuse, and a restitution of the genuine principles of our establishment. Suppose this abuse had never arisen: that Irish Independence had never been invaded; nor the exclusive Legislative Competence of our Parliament disputed, either in theory or practice; and let me ask of any reasonable man, Whether it would be an infringement of this Independence, for Britain to propose (subjecting the offer to our rejection) a Legislative Union of these two Independent Kingdoms?—If not, can such a proposal be said to violate a compact, which has done no more (you tell us) than to secure and reinstate us in that independence, of which the same proposal would have been no infringement?

Has the compact of 1782 rendered Ireland more independent of Great Britain, than this latter country has at all times been of Ireland? and would it be any invasion of British Independence, if we should propose an Union to the Parliament of Great Britain? No reasonable man can say it would; because to submit to the Legislature of a country, an offer which that Legislature may, at its discretion, accept of or reject, can never be construed into the slightest encroachment on the independence of those to whom it is made. Nay, such an offer is not only compatible with their independence, but even with subordination

ordination on the part of those from whom it comes ; and accordingly, in the reign of Anne, before the æra of Irish Independence, we find the proposal of Union coming from the Irish Lords.

Now, can it be said that a proposal, coming from the British to the Irish Parliament, is a violation of the independence of this country, or of the compact by which that independence has been recognised,—when the same proposal, moving from Ireland to Great Britain, could never, by any casuistry, be tortured into the slightest encroachment on the, at least, equally undisputed independence of that country ?

France or Spain are surely as independent of Great Britain, as this island can pretend to be ; yet I will be bold to say, that in proposing a Legislative Union with either of those States, though England might be guilty of gross extravagance and absurdity, she could not be taxed with impeaching their independence : Why then should she be accused of infringing ours, or of violating that compact by which it has been secured, on the ground of having offered that, which she might offer to any State in Europe, without incurring the charge of having encroached upon its privileges ?

But I am, for argument, supposing a case which does not exist : the English Parliament has made us no proposal.—The alledged violation of the compact of 1782, has consisted in nothing more than this,—that the King of Ireland has presumed to recommend it to his Irish Parliament to consider, and adopt, the best mode of consolidating into a lasting fabric, the component parts of the British Empire ! In like manner, the King of England has ventured to recommend to his British Parliament, to enter upon a similar deliberation ; and I have not heard that that high-spirited nation has interpreted this conduct of its Monarch into an infringement of that independence, which it possesses as undoubtedly and securely, as Ireland can hers, by virtue of the compact of 1782.

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The proposal of an Union has been introduced in the most legitimate, and unobjectionable shape possible : it has been offered to the consideration of the British and Irish Legislature, by the common Monarch of both kingdoms.

In the year 1780 we acquired a Free Trade ; and in 1782 we acquired a Free Constitution. Our acquisition in 1780 was not held to preclude a *Commercial* Regulation in 1785 ;* and why should our acquisitions of 1782 be held to prevent a *Constitutional* Regulation in 1799 ? It was indeed indispensable that the arrangements of 1785 should be compatible with the freedom of trade which had been conceded five years before ; and in like manner it is indispensably requisite, (towards their validity,) that any Constitutional Arrangements, hereafter made, should be consistent with the Rights which this Country acquired in 1782 ; and should not violate the Independence which we then asserted.

If the British Parliament had attempted, by a Statute passed in England, to bind this Country to an Union, this indeed would have been to violate the compact of 1782 : but what, on the contrary, has been done ?—the Recommendation from the Throne involved a manifest admission of Exclusive Competence in the Parliament of this Country to decide upon the question ; and the British Minister, in that Speech to which you so frequently advert, has expressly acknowledged the Right of the Irish Parliament to reject the measure of a Legislative Union. Thus the proposal, so far from violating the agreement of 1782, has afforded a signal instance of adherence to that compact, and solemn recognition of the Independence which it secured.

Let me now anticipate, in some degree, upon a topick which belongs to another part of my argument, by supposing, that instead of having been merely proposed, the measure of
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* For no opposition to the arrangement was on this ground ever made or thought of.

an Union had been adopted ; and by enquiring, Whether such adoption would be a violation of the compact of 1782 ?

A moment's reflexion will convince my reader—that much of the reasoning, which, for another purpose, I have had recourse to, will prove that this measure would involve no such violation.

For instance : Is England less dependent upon Ireland, than this latter country is on her ? clearly not. Yet a Legislative Union would not encroach on the Independence of Great Britain ; then neither can it, include a breach of that compact of 1782, which its most zealous advocate cannot pretend to have done more, than render Ireland as independent of Britain, as Britain is of her.

But Union will diminish the number of Irish representatives. Suppose I should consent to desert the abstract question, and enter upon that which, regarding the terms, is not before me, still I may with truth reply to this objection,—that a representation proportioned to Irish territory, population, resources, and contribution, in an Union thoroughly identifying the interests of the two countries, will be sufficient to secure to Ireland, as complete a participation in the privileges of the British constitution, (and what more could her warmest friend desire?) as is enjoyed by the inhabitants of any English county ; whose numbers would yet (if any one were silly enough to compare them) be found to bear no proportion to the sum of British representation.

Again : Ireland is not, by virtue of the compact of 1782, less dependant on Great Britain, than Scotland was on England before 1706. If an Union then would infringe that independence which our compact has procured, it follows, that the Scottish Union involved a violation of the independence of Scotland. But no loyal subject, or friend to order—will flippantly impeach the justice or validity of a treaty, on which perhaps depend

depend the legitimacy of the United Parliament,—the authority of its statutes, and even the title of his Majesty to his Scottish Crown.*

By the Union, the number of Scotch representatives was abridged; and I shall no otherwise answer the epithets which you lavish on an analogous system, when you describe Irish Union as “a destructive and accursed measure,” “a surrender “and annihilation of our Constitution,”—than by suggesting to you the subversive consequences, which lurk behind a doctrine,—that may taint the Acts of the British Legislature for near a century; absolve Scotland from its allegiance, and impeach the title of the reigning family to the throne of that realm; or which at best will leave this great Imperial Arrangement, to depend for its stability on the frail basis of acquiescence, and of an insufficient and short-lived prescription, which we can trace to have commenced in an unjust encroachment on the rights and privileges of an Independent Nation.

The measure of Union can no otherwise violate that compact, on which you so much rely, than by trenching on the Independence which it guaranteed; and if such would be its operation in the case of Ireland, such must it have been in the case of equally independent Scotland. As invectives are not arguments, (else a speech would be logical, in proportion as it was abusive,) I am sure you have too much sense and candour, to expect that I should give a farther answer to those epithets, which you have lavished on the measure of a Legislative Union. You do not need to be informed, that if Union were indeed the annihilation of our Constitution, the many virtuous and enlightened men who are friendly to it, would become zealous converts to your opinion: but those persons hold Union to include no such surrender; and if their judgment be erroneous, yet they are to be refuted by argument, and not frightened out of their sentiments by mere vehement assertion. Let me close

* Secured to the House of Hanover by an article of the Union.

close this part of my argument, by selecting a few passages from the numerous extracts, which you have incorporated into your Speech; and by subjoining a remark on the conclusiveness of such documents.

The first passage which I shall transcribe, is extracted by you (p. 7.) from an address to his Majesty, voted by the House of Commons, on the 16th of April 1782, and is as follows:
 “ The Crown of Ireland is inseparably annexed to the Crown
 “ of Great Britain; on which connexion, the interest and
 “ happiness of both nations depend; *but the kingdom of Ireland*
 “ *is a distinct kingdom, with a Parliament of her own, the sole*
 “ *legislature thereof.*”

Upon this latter sentence, you seem to me to place some reliance; but as it strikes me, without the least foundation. It is manifest, to any person who reads the passage, and has even a general notion of the transactions of that period, that those who penned the Address had no intention of insisting on the distinctness of this kingdom, or contrasting it with the situation which Union would produce; but merely meant to urge this distinctness, as an argument against the abuse, of which they complained; and to insinuate the injustice of their being bound by the acts of a Parliament, *in which they were not represented*: and that this is the true interpretation of the passage is so clear, from even what I have already quoted, that it is almost superfluous to support it by transcribing the next sentence, which, however, is as follows: “ there is no
 “ body of men competent to make laws, to bind this nation,
 “ except the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland; nor
 “ any other Parliament, which hath any authority in this coun-
 “ try, save only the Parliament of Ireland.”

The next passages which I shall transcribe, are extracted from an Address of the House of Commons to the Duke of Portland, and of the Speech with which his Grace concluded the Session, and occur in pages 14 and 15 of your Speech.

“ We”

“ We” (say the House of Commons,) “ shall have seen
 “ this great national arrangement established on a basis which
 “ secures the tranquillity of Ireland, and unites the affections
 “ as well as interests of both kingdoms.”

“ Convince the people” (says the Lord Lieutenant) “ in
 “ your several districts, that the two kingdoms are now one ;
 “ indissolubly connected in unity of Constitution, and unity of
 “ Interests.”

Upon these passages I would remark, that the language which they hold was encouraging and useful ; calculated to promote harmony between the two countries, and produce that lasting cordiality which it proclaimed. But with all due respect for the Speech of a Viceroy, (which yet the Constitution recognises as the Speech of the Minister,) and all proper deference for the Address of a House of Commons, I would observe, that both the Viceroy and the Commons, when they travel out of facts, and expatiate in conjectures, risk falling into those errors from which no human creature is exempt. There is but one Potentate, that I know of, who claims to be infallible, and his claim, the tenets of my Religion do not oblige me to admit. But, if I be not bound to acquiesce implicitly in all the obiter opinions, which are promulged by a Viceroy, or a House of Commons,—still less am I obliged to swallow their predictions. When they turn Prophets, I feel myself warranted to doubt their inspiration ; though, in the present instance, I chuse to shift from myself, on the Societies of United Irishmen, and hordes of Irish traitors, the disrespectful task of comparing certain events and doctrines which we have lately witnessed, with those predictions which foretold the permanent tranquillity of Ireland, the mutual affection of the Sister Countries, and their indissoluble connexion,—as the inevitable consequences of the arrangement of 1782.

The next (and last) reference, which I shall rather digress from the train of my argument to notice, is that which you make to the modification of Poynings’ law, and which will be found

found in p. 24 of your Speech. That statute, you say, "enacts
 " that no bill shall pass into a law in Ireland, unless it be re-
 " turned under the Great Seal of Great Britain."

This provision you state, with a triumph which I cannot understand. To me it seems to involve a signal acknowledgment of the frailty of that bond by which these countries are connected; and to apply a weak and inadequate remedy to the evil which it admits. What is the cure which it administers? Forsooth the responsibility of an individual to the Parliament of Great Britain. This wonderful *Nostrum* is to remove all the separating tendencies, and acrimonies, and eruptions, which may arise from the nature of our present connexion, and announce the cachexy of our Imperial Constitution.—No: I advert to the defect which this provision announces, and place little reliance on the cure which it provides. I consider the law as an argument for a Legislative Union, inasmuch as I do not estimate the vigour of a man, by the number of his crutches, or the stability of a house by the number of its props.

Having now finished my examination of those documents to which you refer, I return from that short digression which, in noticing the last of them, I have made; and close the answer which I have endeavoured to give to this part of your Argument, by admitting, in the very language which you have chosen to adopt, "that the adjustment of 1782 was final: that
 " by it the Constitution of Ireland was fully and perfectly esta-
 " blished; and that no Constitutional Question can exist, to
 " interrupt the harmony of the two countries."*

But, as the adoption of Union by an Irish Parliament, independent, and uncontroled, would not unsettle that final adjustment, which did no more than assert the Independence of that Parliament,—as the mode in which the measure of Union has been introduced, so far from assailing that "full and per-
 " fect establishment" of our independence, which was secured

to

to us in 1782, has, on the contrary, at the risk of losing this great measure, most solemnly and explicitly recognised that independence,—as Union is no “Constitutional Question,” but an Imperial Arrangement *submitted* to the wisdom of our Parliament, and which that Parliament is competent to reject,—and above all, as I acquiesce in the proposition contained in his Majesty’s Answer to an Address in 1782, that “the constitutional connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, is essential to the interests and happiness of both nations,”*—I am, for these reasons, unable to discover how that position on which you so rely,—that the adjustment of 1782 was final—is at all material to the present question; and I am ready to adopt a measure, which, without repealing that recognition of the Independence of Ireland, seems calculated to give stability to its connexion with Great Britain.

In denying the settlement of 1782 to have been final, it seems that Mr. Pitt meant to assert no more than I do.—He could not mean to deny, that that arrangement put a final period to all British claims of legislating for this country, and all doubts respecting Irish Independence. That he did not intend to dispute this, he has very unequivocally proved, by an explicit admission of the Independence of our Parliament, and its competence to reject the measure which was submitted to its consideration.—He seems merely to have deprecated a perversion of this truth, to the purposes of falsehood; and, while he admitted that the compact of 1782 was a final settlement of all controversies, to have denied *that it was a final abolition of the inherent powers of Parliament*: that it extinguished or abridged the deliberative or (internally) legislative capacities of either legislature; or debarred the Irish Parliament from the unalienable right of employing the supreme authority of the State, towards attaining the permanent welfare of the Empire.—This, I apprehend, was all that he denied; and heartily do I concur in the denial: deliberately do I record my dissent from those
who

who pronounce that, in accomplishing an Union, the British or Irish Parliament would violate the final settlement of 1782.

I might not state accurately (as I have not the printed copy before me,) and therefore I do not attempt to state at all, the Speech of the British Minister: I merely suggest, that he appears to have made no assertion, *substantially* different from mine, upon this question. The immense superiority of his talents and political knowledge over mine, may have prevented him from treating the subject as I have done. He, for instance, may have dwelt on the presumption which arises, from what passed in the British Parliament on the 17th of May, 1782, that some further measures of constitution were then in the contemplation of the British Legislature.*

“The fact” (you tell us) “*seems* to be, that the resolution in respect to future measures had commerce, only, in view.”†

In the above passage you appear to admit some further arrangements to have been in contemplation; which, whether they were commercial, you can but conjecture, and we may be allowed to doubt.—But suppose they were.—Still the fact supplies this inference, that the compact of 1782 did not preclude the Parliaments of these countries from keeping up a friendly and federative intercourse, and entering into such new compacts as circumstances might require. And why not into political, as well as commercial compacts? The Agreement of 1782 had decided a point in issue: it had put an end to controversy, not to intercourse, between the countries; and they still, compatibly with the spirit of that contract, were at liberty to enter on any new treaty, political or commercial; provided, in concluding or abandoning it, the Irish Parliament was allowed to exercise as uncontrolled a discretion as the British; and, in short, provided the basis of the transaction was an acknowledgement of that independence which we established in 1782. But the Address of the Irish Commons to his Majesty, at that period, having (with truth) denied that “any other
“Parliament

* P. 19.

† P. 21.

“Parliament hath authority in this country, save only the
 “Parliament of Ireland,”* therefore a Legislative Union would
 disturb the settlement of 1782!—I deny the conclusion. It is
 only one of the numerous forms, in which the unproved and
 untenable assertion appears, that, after Union, the Supreme
 Authority would not continue vested in the Parliament of
 Ireland;—and can have no influence on any minds, but those
 which confound Distinctness with Independence, and Union
 with Subordination. After Union, the power of legislating for
 this country would still remain vested in the Parliament of
 Ireland, if, at this day, the Parliament of England be that
 of Yorkshire, or the Parliament of Ireland be that of
 Dublin; and, if the contrast between the number of Irish and
 British Representatives in the United Parliament, were less silly
 and delusive than I contend it is, still, of the inferiority on the
 part of Ireland I might say, as on another occasion you have
 done, that “if it created a *theoretick* difference in the consti-
 “tution of the two kingdoms, which renders ours inferior, it
 “is one, not injurious to us, but necessary from our situation
 “in the Empire, and which secures Union and Connexion on
 “a firm and lasting basis.”† With far more justice may this
 language be appropriated to the measure which I am support-
 ing, than to the more invidious, yet less effectual one to which
 you apply it.

Union would proportion Irish Legislative weight to the
 importance of this country, in point of territory, &c. and thus
 that inferiority, (which, when our interests were identified,
 must besides be uninjurious,) would be one arising from our
 physical situation, and derived rather from the law of nature
 than of convention; but the modification of Poynings’ Law,
 which you extol,‡ for having put one of the co-ordinate estates
 of the *Independent* Irish Parliament in absolute *dependence* on
 the British Legislature,—this statute, I say, without which
 D you

* This answer will also apply to p. 8,—where the same reasoning is
 insinuated in the following passage:—“While Ireland retains a Parlia-
 “ment, she has the means of redress.”

† P. 24. ‡ P. 24 and 25.

you admit that the boasted arrangement of 1782 would have been imperfect,* lamely and incompletely achieves its purpose of strengthening the connexion, by delivering Irish Independence into the guardianship of a British Minister, and thus proportioning our inferiority, not to our relative natural situation, but to the possible caprice, or ignorance, or wickedness, or usurping policy of an Individual, or a Cabinet.—I will admit, what it might be disrespectful to assert, that the arrangement of 1782 was imperfect, (and if so, its deficiencies were ill supplied by the statute which I have just noticed;) but it, in my opinion, laid a glorious foundation for that measure, which I still conceive to be necessary, towards permanently consolidating the strength and interests of the Empire: it raised us from that subservient situation, in which England might have dictated to us the terms of Union; and by restoring or asserting the Independence of this country, it enabled us to treat on equal terms, and to dictate, in our turn, the only Union we would accept. I will not disparage that settlement which fixed the Constitution of this kingdom, by, on the one hand, forgetting that it has raised us to a situation, from whence we can treat securely and advantageously with the Sister Country; or, on the other hand, by insisting that it has paralysed our Parliament, and precluded them from directing those powers which a Supreme Legislature must possess, towards accomplishing what they deem conducive to the prosperity of the Irish people.

But, “ if the work of 1782 was incomplete, why “ were not the measures followed up to their completion?” § Why was not an Union then accomplished? many causes may have prevented it. Perhaps this was not precisely the further measure, which was in the contemplation of the ministry of that day: perhaps the prejudices, or if you please, the temper of the Irish people, were not then such as to promise a cordial reception of the measure: to have offered Union, when we demanded independence—might have seemed a sort of jealous

jealous compromise, and brought a suspicion upon the project, as if it were something less valuable than what our Parliament had asked. In the excited state of the Irish mind, at that day it might have been impolitick to have afforded them even a less pretext for jealousy and discontent: nay, the coolest Irish patriotism—if an Union had been then proposed—might have plausibly, at least, objected to the incorporation of the countries, under the relative circumstances in which they stood: might have demanded a recognition of Irish Independence, as a preliminary security for our obtaining Union, on beneficial and honourable terms, and meantime required a trial of the effects of this Independence, as a reasonable experiment, and one gratifying to the feelings of a proud and generous people. If any evils have arisen from Independence, yet before it had existence, they could not be felt, and might not be foreseen. The trial, however, has now been fully made. It is since 1782, that the Commercial Propositions have been refused, that the transaction of the Regency has taken place, and that bills, for Parliamentary Reform, have *fortunately* been rejected, which, if they had passed, (as they might have done) would have sapped the connexion, by destroying the similitude of the Imperial Parliaments, and giving Ireland a Legislature, differently constituted from that of Britain. It is since 1782, that France has become a monster, devastating Europe, and manifesting such distinguished hostility to Britain, as calls upon us, to consolidate the defensive force of that empire, of which, you admit, we form “a constituent and inseparable part.”* It is within the same interval, that under French auspices, separatism has flourished so formidably in this country, and ripened to a Rebellion, of which, (spite of the “perpetual pledge of amity,”† by which we were pronounced to have been “indissolubly connected,”‡ in 1782,) the object was not to strengthen our connexion with Great Britain. It is since 1782, that religious discord has assumed a character of so much animosity, as to suggest, that whilst, on the one hand, it may, in our present situation,

* P. 26.

† P. 31.

‡ P. 33.

situation, be dangerous to grant, it may, on the other hand, (if a divided people is an evil) be impolitick to withhold.

These several facts and circumstances, and the reflections which they supply, may have furnished many arguments for an Union, which did not offer themselves in 1782; and, by reducing theory to practice, may have considerably strengthened those reasons, which existed even then: in short, there are a thousand obvious causes, which may have prevented the accomplishment of an Union at that period, and which it would be nearly as little difficult, as it would be material to enumerate. And, if after all, the measure has been too long delayed, does it follow that it ought in prudence to be finally abandoned? and this, at a moment, when the events passing in the world demonstrate its expedience, emphatically and clearly; and even render it doubtful, whether Union ought not to be adopted, on terms less advantageous than it is in our power to ensure? In vain do you ask “what reliance we can place “on the British Minister’s adherence to any compact, on “which he might rest his projected Union, if he has already “violated a compact solemnly made and ratified?”* Your question assumes that the agreement of 1782 has been infringed; a position, which I have denied, and, as I hope, disproved. But this renowned adjustment, (which you are mistaken in supposing that Union will disturb,) has showered “down upon us blessings, trade, and affluence,”† almost incalculable. After having begged to except from this list of blessings—the internal discord—the attempts at separation—the deep-laid conspiracies—the rebellion and invasion, which we have witnessed—and are still witnessing, and which have all occurred since 1782, I would express my doubt, whether these advances in commercial prosperity are fairly attributable to the adjustment in question. Without the aid of any adjustment, if we believe Rose and Chalmers, (nay, if we do not shut our eyes on an obtrusive truth) Great Britain has in the same interval, made advances as enormously exceeding those, which she

* P. 33.

§ P. 34.

the had made in former periods. We cannot impute these to any thing that passed in 1782. Why then should we trace the accelerated progress of Irish prosperity to the constitutional occurrences of that period? Events, from which might have been more naturally expected that domestick content, and tranquillity, which they have utterly failed to produce! Why may we not rather attribute such rapid strides to affluence, to those causes, whatever they be, which have aggrandised Great Britain, and consider them as our portion of the common benefits of imperial greatness, and as a motive for strengthening that connexion, from whence they have flowed? From our free trade,* they may indeed be in a great degree derivable: but that freedom will not be abridged by Union, and was not acquired in 1782.

I have already protested against being held to any more strict arrangement, than a mere regular pursuit of your reasoning will supply:—I am answering your argument, and cannot, if I wished it, be more systematick than you are; unless I deviate from that course which you have prescribed, and to which it is my business to adhere.—Therefore, having followed you in your investigation of the adjustment of 1782, having digressed *with you* from the transactions of that period, and *with you* recurred to them again, I now accompany you to the discussions of 1785.

The Duke of Rutland, at the opening of the Session, recommends “to the earnest investigation” of Parliament “those objects of trade and commerce, between Great Britain and Ireland,” (you say “mark the expression,”) “*which had not yet received their complete adjustment.*”†—The meaning of these expressions is sufficiently apparent: they were made use of on the subject of *commerce*, merely, and involve no more than the assertion which you yourself make, that from 1782 “no advance was made as to commerce in general, except
“ what

* Granted by the British Parliament.

† P. 16.

“ what was done by Yelverton’s Bill ;” *—the inadequacy of which you had shewn in page 30, and also shewed by your support of the commercial arrangement in 1785. And you must allow me to take *this occasion* of acquiescing in the truth of your position, in page 45, that “ to select general expressions made use of on the subject of commerce, and apply them to the subject of Constitution, shews no great candour in reasoning.” This doctrine of yours also applies to the observation which you make on another part of the Duke of Rutland’s Speech, in which he states a “ common interest in treaties with foreign States, as forming a bond of mutual connexion.” † This passage you contrast with Lord Castlereagh’s opinion, (in which I most heartily acquiesce) that the consideration of the federative relations of the British Empire, with foreign States, furnishes strong inducements to a Union. You forget, that the Duke spoke merely of commercial treaties ; and that (as you very properly remark) “ to select expressions, made use of on one subject, and apply them to another, shews no great candour in reasoning.”

With respect to your own conduct at this last mentioned period, far be it from me to make, what after all might be an unsuccessful attempt, in demonstrating your inconsistency, to detect spots in the political character of a man, so superior to myself. In shortly contrasting your past, and present conduct, my object is only to tempt you to revise the latter ; or, if I cannot accomplish this, then to lessen the weight of your authority against me, by balancing one opinion of yours against the other.

You admit yourself to have said, in 1785, “ that things could not remain as they were : that commercial jealousy was roused, and would encrease with two Independent Legislatures, if these did not mutually declare the principles whereby their powers should be separately employed, in directing the common concerns of trade ; and that without this united
“ interest

* P. 35.

† P. 37.

“ interest of commerce, political Union would receive many shocks ; and separation of interest must threaten separation of connexion.”* In vain, Sir, would you dilute the strong effect of these assertions, and soften the contrasted colouring with which they relieve your present conduct.—On what occasion, and for what purpose, did you make use of these positions?—to shew that the two Legislatures should enter into a compact, (for this is what was proposed) respecting the mode of forming their commercial regulations. When you declared that things could not remain as they were, your meaning, exclusively, and evidently, was that such a compact was necessary to the security of the connexion : when you observed that the jealousy, which was roused, would encrease with two Independent Legislatures,—you manifestly implied that this distinctness was pregnant with dangers to the connexion, which required the correction of some imperial compact, that, qualifying this independence, should be binding upon both ;—and in adding that, without that commercial Union, (which nothing but this compact could permanently secure,) the political Union would be exposed to shocks, which would threaten the connexion,—you, in my mind, promulged a doctrine, which was as true, as it is irreconcilable with your present opinions.

Any other interpretation than this, which I have given of the passages above cited, would render them impertinent to the propositions which you employed them to support. How then can you now assert that “ things do not remain as they were,”† when you are aware, that no compact has been entered into ? and that the Irish Parliament is not bound to conform to the British laws, which may be made respecting certain matters of trade and navigation ? or, how can you desire that things should not be modified, when you admit they cannot remain as they are ?‡ and that the security of the connexion is endangered by the want of that compact, which, in consequence of the distinctness of our Legislatures, has been rejected?—

“ The

* P. 45, 49.

† P. 45.

‡ P. 37.

“The passing” (you say) “of the Commercial Propositions into a law, would have completely answered all the purposes of the present project,”* (of Union :) without acquiescing in the rectitude of this doctrine, I may yet remark that they have not passed into a law, and therefore, that, even conformably to your own principles, a Union may be necessary.

But things, you tell us, have not remained as they were. “The evil, of commercial jealousies, acting upon the laws of two Independent Legislatures, has been remedied by the good sense, and mutual interest of each country, from time to time passing all laws necessary, to prevent the inconvenience of commercial jealousies.”† Sir, the danger is, that the exercise, by distinct legislatures, of their undoubted privileges, may produce imperial dissension; and that the good sense of the countries, in having as yet prevented the mischief from arising, has annihilated that risk, which springs eternally, and inevitably, from such a legislative organization, is a position, which it is more necessary, than it is easy, to demonstrate.

You seem, too, in 1785, not to have foreseen the all-healing efficacy of this good sense, when you argued so strongly for the necessity of a commercial compact; nor does it afford an uninstructional lesson of human prejudice, and inconsistency, to find a person of your distinguished sagacity and talents, in one place,‡ considering the Great Seal of Britain to be a better security, than the good sense of Ireland, for a continuance of the connexion between the two countries; and, in another place,§ preferring the junction, which this good sense, you say, has formed, to the guaranty which a solemn compact would bestow; though a casuist might doubt whether that roll of parchment, which you so despise,|| be a more frail assurance than the piece of wax, in which you place such implicit confidence. Some, I know, have pushed this contempt of parchment farther than you do, and even extended their

* P. 51.

† P. 25.

‡ P. 51.

§ Ibid.

their sacrilegious irreverence to wax. On their arrogance, a parchment, adorned with the Great Seal of England on its right side, and of Ireland on its left, can make no impression of respect. They affirm, (but they are calumniators of our Constitution) that Irish independence (which they admit to be remarkably well-sounding words) is no where to be found, but in certain rolls of parchment, called 22 Geo. III. c. 53, and 23 Geo. III. c. 28; and these, they are so far from respecting, that they quite mistake their operation, which they conceive to have been (I was about to say, *purely*) of a commercial nature, and to have erected an Irish aristocracy into a company, for exclusively carrying on the trade of Jobbing, and of Parliament. This commerce they indeed contend to have flourished under their protection, but doubt whether the prosperity of the country has advanced in proportion: whether the commodity in which they traffick—I mean connexion—was not secured as well to England, and less expensively and gallingly to this country, before their aristocratick monopoly had accrued; and whether, in short, British ascendancy might not, with as much advantage to both kingdoms, have remained in the keeping of an English Parliament, as been transferred to Irish Commissioners, to administer. Nay, they insist, that by the ingenuity of British Councils, this wax and parchment has been manufactured into a mask, beneath which, English Superiority, wearing the features of Irish Independence, has ranged without control, and been less susceptible of confinement, within the limits of that ascendant, which, (I speak this seriously) Britain ought to possess: which belongs to our situation, and is necessary to our connexion; since I hold it for a maxim, that this country must be united with, or separate from, or in a certain degree practically dependent upon Britain.

In truth, I conceive you, Sir, in 1785, to have very signally recorded your concurrence in my doctrine, as to the propriety of such control. I mean by the support which I apprehend you gave to propositions that were resisted by Messrs. Flood

and Grattan, on the ground of their “interfering with the Legislative Authority of the Irish Parliament,”—violating that compact of 1782, on which you now so much rely,—and “putting an end to the free Constitution of Ireland.”* And as, in truth, that commercial system went to bind this country in certain cases, by the acts of a Parliament *in which she was not represented*, (by pledging her to the adoption of such acts when made, and thus so far divesting her of all Legislative Freedom,) I am the more surprised at your constitutional scruples about a Union, which would not bind Ireland by the acts of *any legislature, but one in which her aristocracy, wealth, and population, were adequately represented*; and I cannot easily reconcile your affirmation, that not “an atom of our Constitution”† was surrendered by the plan which you recommended in 1785,—with your position that the system now proposed involves its utter annihilation. To me that measure seems somewhat more than merely eligible, which, by identifying even to vulgar eyes, the interests of both countries, will appease the factions, and promote the wealth and tranquillity of this:—which, instead of destroying the substance of our establishment, will animate its lifeless forms with the pure and genuine spirit of the British constitution, and give it a vigour that shall scatter blessings through this too-long drooping land.

But will Union produce these advantages to our country?—This, I admit, is the real question. The intrinsic merits of the measure form the true matter for our discussion;—to which the competence of Parliament, and the compact of 1782, are about as pertinent as Lord Macartney’s embassy to China.

You ask,‡ what defects, tending to separation, the present state of our connexion involves? For my part I discern enow
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* See Woodfall’s Sketch of the Debate; and N. B. That these observations of Messrs. F. and G. were applied to the *Bill* of Mr. Orde, which the then Chancellor of the Exchequer supported.

† P. 44. ‡ P. 52.

to produce difficulty in selection, and tediousness in enumeration. If our Independence be real, I see a range of possible dissensions, as wide as is the sphere of legislative dominion in a state. I see that jealousy, which will be apt to mistake acts of animosity, for assertions of independence, conspiring with a thousand nameless contingencies, to turn this theory into practice; to loosen the connexion, and "strike the Crown into the hazard." If our Independence were merely nominal, the thing would be still worse: it might involve a dependance the more galling, and aggravated, because concealed: at all events, it would be a fraud; and would contaminate, and render odious, that connexion, of which it made a part; whilst it might expose our ostensibly independent Parliament to the distrust and abhorrence of the people; might bring their most meritorious acts, and those most necessary towards supporting the connexion, into suspicion, and make them pass for symptoms of corrupt servility. Again, if our Independence were, as it might be, something fluctuating between reality and name,—substantial on some occasions, and but apparent upon others,—it seems to me, that the likely consequences would be, its combining the mischiefs of both systems: in any of the three cases, I discern in our distinctness, (that is to say, in the theory of our present relation to Britain,) a store of weapons, whereof faction might avail itself, to wound and sever a connexion so frail, that even a pique between two individuals, on opposite sides of the channel, might give to its friends some reasonable ground for trembling.

If, in our present Imperial Arrangements, there lurk these tendencies to disruption,—have the situation and views of France so little aided their effect, as to render it unwise in us to wrest from our foe, the arms which we had inadvertently committed to his hands? Have separatists at home looked idly at the weakness of our system, or profited by that weakness, in attempting its destruction? Has our populace manifested such a contented fondness for the present establishment, or that celebrated compact of 1782, which secured it, as that we need entertain fears

fears of modifying it, lest we might thereby damp the *loyalty*, evinced by our liege pikemen, at Rofs, or Vinegar Hill?

The history of (would I could say the late) rebellion,—the descents upon our coasts,—the fatigues of our Yeomanry,—the stern, though necessary provisions of our Legislature,—the scenes of scourging in our metropolis,—the multitude of our troops, with all the train of consoling details, which attend on civil discord and disaffection, accompanied with the comments of the empty, arrogant, and applauded Tone—will supply answers to some of the enquiries which I have made, and suggest whether the defects of our system be practical or merely theoretick.

But you, Sir, “can find only two defects even suggested: “the one of Peace and War, including treaties; the other of “a Regency.”*

As to the first, you say, that as the two kingdoms may happen to dissent from each other, so a disagreement between two Houses of Parliament may take place; and therefore the argument which proves the expediency of consolidating the Kingdoms, would go to recommend a consolidation of the two Houses of Parliament; *quod est absurdum*.

This reasoning appears liable to some strong objections; which I shall take the liberty of offering without much order,—suggesting them as they occur.

First. One Empire, with two Legislatures, is somewhat analogous to the idea of one man, with two wills; and is indeed little short of a contradiction in terms: therefore, that the legislative powers of an empire should not be scattered, but concentrated, is at least desirable, if not essential, to constituting and giving existence to the Empire.

But one Legislature, consisting of distinct branches, is perfectly intelligible in point of theory, and highly beneficial in point of practice.

Therefore,

Therefore, legislatively to blend two kingdoms, if they be parts of one Empire, would be to remove an inconsistency, and obtain a good ; whereas, to consolidate two branches of the Legislature, would be to produce a mischief, and this without the pretext of having had any anomaly to remove.

The British Legislature is divided into distinct branches, because the community, which it represents, is split into different interests : but the kingdoms of the British Empire have but one interest, if properly understood ; and therefore the necessity for division does not exist.

It contributes to constitutional freedom, to have the branches of a Legislature distinct : it contributes to imperial energy, to have the Legislative of the empire consolidated, not dispersed.

If two Houses of Parliament disagree—the effect is, that the measure falls to the ground ; and in matters of internal regulation, this may happen without ill consequence ; but how languid will the Empire be, if in great imperial concerns it must remain inactive, paralysed by the disagreement of its two Legislatures !

Why are the Houses of the British Legislature kept distinct ? In order to give them an opportunity of disagreeing with effect : in order to give efficacy and operation to their disagreement ; and make each of the branches a check upon the other.

When you prescribe* separate Legislatures, for the British Empire, is it with a view to give efficacy to their dissensions ? *If it be not*, you cannot support your measure, on the theory on which the construction of the British Parliament is founded : *if it be*, you do not much consult either the tranquillity or vigour of the Empire.

The British system of Legislative balance is compounded of three parts ; and involves in it a principle as well of Union, as of Separation, It possesses, in the Royal Estate, a guide to the

the deliberations of the other two,—and middle term, which connects and consolidates them into one Parliament.—But in your Imperial System, I perceive the seeds of nothing, but wrangle and repulsion. It is composed of but two estates. It provides amply for dissension ; but nothing for harmony.

His Majesty has, indeed, at the opening of the present session, in his Speech to both Legislatures, less remembered their distinctness, than that they formed a great council of the empire. But you condemn the Minister who advised this Speech : you applaud the Irish House of Commons, which declined the royal guidance to deliberation ; and inveigh against the presumption of the British Legislature, in having paid more attention to the recommendation of the Crown.

One word more on this subject, and I have done.

You say that “ Theory says the two Houses of Legislature “ may disagree ; and that theory *only* says the same of the “ separate Parliaments of the two kingdoms.”

I answer, that if theory had (which it has not, or they would not have been so divided,) affirmed that the Houses of Parliament might mischievously disagree, it would have been amply and repeatedly refuted by practice ; whereas, if the same theory had denied that the Independent Parliaments of the empire might most importantly and alarmingly dissent,—the annals of 1785 and 1789 would be sufficient to contradict them.—Nay, the history of the latter year might render it doubtful whether you were warranted in pronouncing* that it was “ *unnecessary to shew that, by law, the Executive is, and “ ever must be, the same, and with the same constitutional powers “ in each kingdom.*”—Powers limited and unlimited, seem not to be the same ; and therefore the address of both Houses of the Irish Parliament in 1789, appears to me to have given us an Executive, with different constitutional powers from those, which were likely to be conferred in England. I say
from

* P. 52.

from those which were likely to be conferred in England; for the British Parliament had not as yet appointed any Regent; and therefore, by our promptitude, we risked having an Executive different as well in person, as in powers. The Regency Bill, which was lately introduced, and in support of which you made the Speech which has produced my present Letter, admits that, upon that memorable occasion, the distinctness of our Imperial Legislatures did not obviously contribute to the stability of our Imperial Connexion. That (not declaratory but enacting) bill has, however, made many other inadvertent admissions, besides the deliberate one which I have noticed:—for having no otherwise escaped from one class of valid objections, than by exposing itself to others of equal force,—in its text and its annotations,* its provisions and its rejection, it reluctantly admitted—that the evil which it had recognised, it could not cure; and that none but an empiric would attempt purifying an acrimonious habit, by clapping a plaister of basilicon to the eruption.

But, supposing the present state of our connexion to be defective, you doubt whether the defect be more than theoretick, and reprobate Union, as a remedy worse than the disease. You illustrate the question, by the case of juries from the vicinage.† I have too sincere a respect for ancient establishments, to attempt impeaching this legal provision with respect to juries. But having got on what may, perhaps, be truly called the dunghill of my profession, let me suggest to you that the wisdom and liberality of latter times, guided probably by experience, has greatly detracted from the force of your illustration. The statute (of Anne, I believe,) which, instead of packing juries from the ward, directed them to be summoned from the body of the county at large,—gave a most christian-like enlargement to the culprit, or suitor's neighbourhood; and resembled (so far as the analogy which you

* The clauses which had been struck out in Committee, were printed in the form of Notes to the Bill, and were as much at variance with the clauses which had been let to stand, as these latter were inconsistent amongst themselves.

† P. 56.

you have chosen is just) referring the suits of the Irish people to the tribunal of an Imperial Parliament.

Besides, the law contemplates, and corrects, those "prejudices, animosities, and friendships," which you notice, and to which you suppose it blind.—Where there is reason to suspect that a fair trial cannot be had in the vicinage, (though that vicinage embraces the whole of a county,) the courts, to prevent injustice, will change the venue.—But prejudices, alas! will spread themselves from counties to provinces, and may taint an entire kingdom at the last! and if a suitor people should distrust the impartiality of the grand inquest,—how assure them, but in changing the venue, by an Union? But "local knowledge is the very essence of a jury's capacity to administer its functions?"*—Be it so; will not Ireland return a pannel to the United Parliament? Is a jury of the county of Louth less qualified to perform its functions, sitting in Dublin, than if it sat in the town of Drogheda?—And may not the Imperial Parliament combine possession of local knowledge, with exemption from local prejudice? Or will you complain that, on this grand inquest of the empire, the representatives of its British, as well as of its Irish district, claim to sit?

But the British Minister's object in pressing a Union is taxation! † the grant of eight millions which has been made this year, and which you notice, might alone be sufficient to refute your imputation. But suppose it were not; the man who after having observed, even cursorily, our history for some years back,—after having glanced his eye upon the present state of Ireland, and the world,—and looked as far into our future (civil and religious) prospects as he dares,—can see no motive, but a pecuniary one, for desiring a Legislative Union, and assign no views but of finance and taxes, to the Minister who proposes it, must have a mind very differently constituted from mine.—Blind and weak that Minister must be, who, in a period like the present, does not aid at rendering the subject satisfied and

* P. 57.

† P. 58.

and happy: who does not prefer possessing the hearts, to grasping the purses of the people: who does not perceive that, considering the spirit of insubordination which has gone abroad, and the jealous keenness, with which even flaws in government are marked, ruling powers ought, if it were but from mere policy, to pursue measures of conciliation, liberality, and justice: that before they aim at rendering their system profitable, they should take care that it is secure; and not, like Archimedes, be making calculations when an enemy is at their doors.—It is a libel on Mr. Pitt to say that the purse of the Nation is his object.—It is not he, that has taxed the Empire: it is the Directory of France. It is he that has contrived to lighten the burthen, while he imposed it; and to spread and strengthen the commercial basis by which it was to be sustained. Under his auspices it is, that perpetual drains have been turned into mere temporary annuities; and Publick Credit has been upheld by a mode as simple as efficacious: that Great Britain has been at once diminishing her debts, and adding to her resources; and this in a degree so rapid and immense, that the incumbrances which she is paying off, she might disregard; and that her imposts are become little else than a sort of import duty on her wealth. But the Minister, you say,* will not be contented with our purse: he is also desirous to deprive us of our trade. These charges appear to me to be strangely incompatible with each other. It is as if a parson should wish to spoil the crop from which he was to receive his tythe; or a landlord to lay waste the farm out of which he was to be paid his rent. It seems to me, therefore, that you must elect between the imputations which you would cast on Mr. Pitt; and cannot bring more than an alternative charge against him. I will suppose that you have assigned him, as his motive, the desire of getting the national purse into his possession. Is it not likely then that he declares no more than his real opinion, when he represents an Union as tending to secure and advance our prosperity? Is an empty purse the mighty object of his financial ambition? Could he have the cruelty to forbid our putting a few pieces

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into the coffer, of which he held the key himself? Or would he prefer possessing all its emptiness at Westminster, to leaving it here in our custody, well supplied,—with the privilege of thrusting his hand into it from time to time?

From this discussion of Mr. Pitt's motives, you return* to the question of Regency; and it being my business to attend you in your arguments, I make no excuse for digressing with you to this subject.

You say that, upon that occasion, the difference between the two countries, which you admit to have been “unfortunate,”† and which arose from the distinctness of the Imperial Legislatures, regarded not the person of the Regent, but merely the limitation of his power. Though this were so, such disparity of prerogative would in effect have impaired a principle of our Constitution; and given the countries two Executives, instead of one. But you seem to me to abridge the true extent of the difference, which took place between the Parliaments at that period. You forget not only that the coincidence with respect to person was accidental, and therefore cannot be relied on as proof of conformity between the Legislatures,—but that, in fact, no Regent was ever appointed for Great Britain. His Majesty's recovery interrupted the British proceedings in their progress; and however bordering upon strict certainty our conjectures may be, and are, that the Heir Apparent would have been the person nominated, this will not lessen the truth or relevancy of my assertion, that the Irish Parliament named a Regent, before one had been named in Britain; and conferred that authority unlimited, which the English Parliament was restricting; and in doing so they risked having an Executive different in person, and more than risked having one different in respect to powers. But they were not (you say) the Parliaments,—they were only *two* truncated Estates, that differed on that occasion.‡ In truth, the act of annexation has (*by an Union*) secured

* P. 60.

† P. 59.

‡ P. 59.

secured the harmony of the *third*; and so long as that statute shall prevail, I answer for the perpetual amity of the King of Ireland and Great Britain.

But the proceedings of our two estates, you think, at that time were of no avail: for “ notwithstanding what passed in
“ 1789, the act of annexation extending to the case of a Re-
“ gent, and the law of 1782, about the Great Seal, having
“ besides put the matter out of doubt, there does no real
“ difficulty exist;—and the Regent of Britain can alone re-
“ present the third estate of the Irish Legislature.”*

But spite of the efficacy of your argument to shew the impropriety of what took place in 1789,—and spite of my respect for the waxen dignity of that idol, which was set up in 1782, to guard the connexion between the countries,—I should tremble to see that connexion await the issue of a combat, in which two branches of the Irish Legislature, unchecked and uncontradicted by any third estate, were in array on one side,—and a piece of wax opposed to their decision on the other. Nor does it seem that we differ in sentiment on this point;—for although you pronounce the case to be “ free from
“ all difficulty and doubt,” yet, in order to

——— “ make assurance double sure,
“ And take a bond of fate,”

you support, not a declaratory, but enacting bill, which purports to remove those doubts, of which you have denied the existence;—or rather (to state the operation of that bill more truly) which, agreeing with you, that this was not a case of doubt, distinctly contradicts your opinion on past law, and denies that, without the provisions of this act, the British Regent is *ipso facto* the Irish third Estate.

Be this as it may, however, I concur with you in the expediency of preventing the repetition of such dissensions. We do but differ in the means, which we deem calculated to attain this end. In the transaction of 1789, I see no more than a single consequence of the distinctness of our Legislatures;—

a cause

a cause adequate to the production of many mischiefs beside. Whilst you, therefore, are content with plucking off the fruit ; I am rather for eradicating the prolifick cause : while you are making topical applications to the symptom ; I am endeavouring to remove the disease.

You affirm that there is already an Union between the countries.* Do you cite the Regency to prove that it is a close and firm one ? Did you support Mr. Fitzgerald's bill to record your opinion on the present solidity of our connexion ? And do you continue to trust implicitly in that recreant wax, which deserted its post so shamefully in 1789, and left the field open to our two Houses of Parliament ?

But, " Union is a merging of the Irish Parliament in the British."† No : it is only a merger of it in the Imperial Legislature. But suppose your position granted : what then ? This vile measure, forsooth, will leave us in as ill a political situation, as Wales or Yorkshire are in at present ! Union does not take away our Parliament : it merely changes the residence of that body ; and in regulating the number of Irish and British Representatives in the United Legislature, strikes that equitable proportion to the territory, population, and resources of these respective limbs of the empire,—which, while our Parliaments remained distinct, it was unnecessary to strike ; and which, when settled, will leave this country in as secure a situation, as any equal tract of territory in the British dominions now enjoys. But Mr. Pitt, in recommending this measure, has stated Ireland " as the "vulnerable part of the empire ;—torn by contending factions."§ —Was the statement untrue in point of fact ? or immaterial in point of argument for a change ? For its truth, we have some bloody documents ; supported by the testimony of Hoche and Humbert, and an host of foreign enemies, and domestick traitors : we have the representations of Tone to the government of France, as to the state of Ireland so long ago as 1793 ; || and the Report of our Committees of Secrecy, as to its more recent situation. To those who are friendly to our connexion with Great Britain, is it no argument for a change of the nature

* P. 61.

† Ibid.

§ P. 62.

|| This appeared on the Trial of Jackson for High Treason.

nature of that connexion, that its present state exposes it to the foes endeavours to dissolve it? and is there no ground for presuming, that the measure which identifies this country with Britain, must render it as little vulnerable, as our enemies think this latter district of the empire to be at present? It is not the "Roll of Parchment"* which will effect the change: it is the operation of those provisions, which that parchment will contain: the cordiality which it will announce, and record: the liberal and cementing system, which it will legalize and introduce.

But Union, instead of assuaging, tranquilising, and fortifying this country, "will deprive Ireland of the resident gentry, and "upper ranks;" (with their amazing and edifying stock of good morals, and good example!) will rob "villages and estates "of their benevolent protectors; and encouraging land jobbers "and pirates, will degrade the hospitality of the old mansion- "houses into the niggardly penury of agents dwellings."†— It must be confessed, that if this be the necessary consequence of Union, it is difficult to conceive what object the British Minister could have in desiring it; or how the Irish Lords came to vote as they did on the first day of our session: nay, how on the same day there came to be a majority on that side in the House of Commons. Our Lords must have been strangely blind to their own interests: our Commons under the temporary influence of an extraordinary delusion; and Mr. Pitt, who has not usually past for a silly personage, must be acting under the grossest infatuation. Apprehensive that Ireland is not sufficiently discontented, nor France enough disposed to take advantage of her discontents, he must be supposed eager to adopt a system, of which the manifest effect will be to render this country more vulnerable, and the Empire less secure. I shall not examine the details of that picture which you have drawn; and which I take to be a mere fancy piece: resembling nothing which Union would produce to Ireland;—and *contrastedly unlike to every thing which it has produced to Scotland.*

You desire me to look to Scotland, and Wales, which are united.‡ I do; and ask you, are they less free than Ireland,

or

or than England? Are they, in proportion to their natural advantages, less prosperous than we are? I have not heard of any suspension of the Habeas Corpus act in Wales; or of the stern provisions of a law for the suppression of rebellion. I have heard indeed of a descent upon the Welch coast;—and from comparing what happened on that occasion, with what took place on the landing of the French at Killala, I conclude that Union has no tendency to impair allegiance; and that the united Welch are as loyal as the inhabitants of disunited Ireland. But you ask, is Scotland, or is England herself, exempt from the taint of disaffection? and you infer, particularly from the case of Scotland, that Union is no protection. I am content to meet you on this ground; and to assert, that Ireland has been the foyer of conspiracy,—and centre of that sedition, of which the flames may, in a less degree, have reached other quarters of the Empire. Thus, if a comparison of the situation of the respective parts of the Empire proves any thing, as I admit it does,—it proves that Union would contribute to the tranquillity of Ireland.

It demonstrates what was too evident to need being shewn; that by diminishing the chances of separation, you will discourage *those attempts at it, which have disturbed our country*; and that the more complete is the connexion, the less easily can it be dissolved.

These considerations lead me to a part of this discussion, which, I confess, I do not enter on, without embarrassment.—To encounter you, on a point of commerce, would require uncommon strength;—and unfortunately my qualification is uncommon weakness. But I derive courage from the impregnable truth of the opinion which I am supporting: from the concurrence of Mr. Pitt, who recommends this measure: who pursues it, you say, with financial views; and whom you admit to be an eminently able financier;—which it requires no profound commercial investigations to pronounce he could not be, if he sought to carry a measure, detrimental to the prosperity of Ireland.

On

On the whole, therefore, I meet you even upon this ground ; with much the same superstitious confidence in the justice of my cause, as in the days of chivalry would have induced me to throw down my gage, with a " God defend the right ! " against some abler combatant than myself.

" How, or why," say you " should Union diffuse British wealth, or induce British capital to settle here ? " * Let me select one from a thousand answers ; and say, by promoting our tranquillity.

But how will it promote this ? I have already tried, and may, before I have done, again endeavour to shew. Meantime let me observe, that the question which I have imputed to you, withdraws us from the present enquiry ; and admits that if Union promotes tranquillity, it must advance our commerce.

In truth this is an admission, which, *important as it is*, you yet cannot avoid making. You cannot avoid admitting, that without internal harmony, all other requisites to commercial greatness are unavailing : there can be neither Industry, nor its creature, Wealth. In the storms of a disturbed political atmosphere, Commerce will

" Forbid her gems to swell, her shades to rise,

" Nor trust her blossoms to the churlish skies : "

It is no declamation,—it is sound reason—to affirm that in establishing tranquillity, Union must so promote our trade, as that even supposing (contrary to the fact) it in some respects restrained it,—yet it must, on the average, be eminently beneficial. It is no proof of an argumentative, but of a little mind, to withdraw from this grand and general view of the subject,—to lose ourselves, and perplex our hearers, in petty calculations. Yet often—have I seen wide views mistaken for Extravagance ; and the minutiae of Imbecility worshipped

worshipped as Wisdom and Discretion. It is no flourish,—it is a truth,—to state that by removing the terrors which obscure and blast our land, we reinstate it in the possession of whatever advantages Nature gave it; and relieve the British possessor of capital from all apprehensions of availing himself of those advantages, and settling it in that part of the Empire, where it will be most productive. I will ask any candid man, what, after Union, *political* difference there could be between Ireland, and the same quantity of British territory in England? or what should deter the capitalist from establishing himself in this district of the empire, if its *natural* situation made it suitable to his purposes? Will any man deny that Ireland is possessed of eminent natural advantages? or that hitherto some fatal impediment has prevented them from being fruitful? No man will be believed, who controverts either position. No man can expect credit, who affects to doubt, that the distinctness of the kingdoms, and consequent supposed insecurity of their connexion,—the convulsions which have depreciated the value of property, and damped the spirit of commercial enterprise and exertion,—and which having aimed at destroying the connexion, might be attributed to that distinctness, which rendered it insecure,—the views of our enemies directed peculiarly to this country, and involving a presumption, that they discovered some frailty in the connexion,—that these, I say, were causes, adequate to restrain our commerce, and deter capital from settling amongst us,—and that they are causes which Union would remove.

Observe the language which the Dean of Gloucester puts into the mouths of certain English manufacturers, who were opposing the puniness of their selfish details to the prosperity of the empire:—"They" (the Irish) "would run away with our trade:"—(You differ from this conjecture of the English traders:)—"Who" (replies the Dean) "would run away with it? or where would they run to?" "Why, truly, our own people" (the Irish) "would carry some part of a manufacture from us to themselves."—"But what detriment
" would

“ would this be to the Publick? the people of Yorkshire
 “ have done the same by Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.”*—
 Thus this writer admitted (and the English traders urged) that
 Union would carry capital into Ireland; but he wisely added,
 that this would not be a loss to England, but an acquisition to
 the empire.

Truly has the British Minister asserted, that the interests of
 the two countries should be taken together; and that a man
 cannot speak as a true Irishman, without speaking as a true
 Englishman; nor *vice versa*.† Union could not contribute to
 British greatness, without encreasing the prosperity of Ireland.
 The Imperial Advantages which it produced, would not stagnate
 in England: they must ultimately circulate through all the
 limbs of the British empire.

Having protested against their conclusiveness, I attend you
 into your details.

After enumerating the four principal manufactures of Eng-
 land, you affirm that the want of fuel will prevent their migrat-
 ing into Ireland.‡

Suppose (however improbable) that they should not; and
 what does this prove? only that the capital which travelled
 hither, would employ itself in a mode more conformable to the
 natural soil, means, and situation of this country.

But you forget the comparative cheapness of labour and
 provision here. Undoubtedly, in England, a manufacture in
 which fuel was wanting, would not travel from the neigh-
 bourhood of a plentiful colliery, to a country where coals
 were scarcer, while the price of food and labour remained the
 same. But (not to mention that the objection will not apply
 to the chance of manufactures being established on our coasts)
 G the

* Dean Tucker's Proposal.

† See Mr. Pitt's Speech, of which, since I began this Letter, I have
 obtained a Copy.

‡ P. 69.

the comparative lowness of wages, and rate of provision here, might more than compensate the greater dearness of fuel, and either afford, on the average, a temptation, or at least to equalize the opposite inducements in this respect, as to leave the adventurer free to weigh the respective benefits of an Irish and English situation in other points.—Nay again, these other advantages might so predominate on the side of Ireland, as to redeem the objection of scarcity of fuel,—though not compensated in the degree supposed, by the cheapness of that food and labour, which are as requisite as coals can be to a manufacture.—Besides, what should prevent British adventure from putting an end to all your arguments, by finding coal in Ireland? It is true that in p. 69 you say, she has it not; but in p. 88, you acknowledge that “Coal exists in Ireland; which we have “never looked for effectually, but for which necessity may “compel us to search.” It may be the mere want of capital which has hitherto prevented a successful search;—and the numerous other advantages which this country offers, might very probably cause its being employed* (by working our collieries,) to remove the only impediment which you suggest, to the establishment of manufactures.

“England” (you say) “finds a full call for all she makes: “every year affords an encreasing demand.”*—What follows? a temptation to vest more capital in business: a temptation, which would immediately operate to send such manufactures to tranquilized and united Ireland, as her situation gave opportunity for establishing to advantage; and which, as by the Union the empire waxed more strong and prosperous, would operate still more powerfully in favour of this country; both by encouraging enterprise, and by rendering Britain too small a sphere, for its overgrown capital to move and act in.

The (constructive) bounty to the Irish manufacturer, of forty shillings on every ton of imported iron, has not brought capital into Ireland.†—Is your inference that Union may not introduce it?—I, for my part, can conceive that conspiracy defeated—

property

* P. 70.

† P. 69.

property secured—the connexion strengthened—the people conciliated—the country tranquilized—the enemy baffled in all attempts at separation—might operate more effectually to bring capital into Ireland, than even a bounty of forty shillings a ton on imported iron. Then, indeed, this bounty might have this additional (though comparatively puny) effect; and tend to induce the settlement of a manufacture here.—But after Union “this bounty will be extinguished:”* Not abruptly; or to the discouragement of trade. The system of protecting duties, according to the best commercial authorities, is founded on an erroneous principle; but it will not follow that what it was injurious to establish, it will therefore be wise too suddenly to demolish; and therefore you very truly state that the articles of Union merely propose a *possible period* at which those duties are to cease.†—Dismiss your fears—that “Individu-
“viduals will look to winding up their business, in order to
“withdraw their capital against that period.”‡—They will be content to have trade nursed as long as it continues weak; and will not prepare to withdraw their capital from a manufacture, because it is likely soon to throw away its staff, and cease to lean on the protection which it has ceased to want.
—“We import iron at 12s. 6d.: Britain imports it at nearly
“3l.; and such import duty on this raw material, is fitted
“to our infant state.”§ If you be warranted in this last assertion, which I do not mean to controvert, I must, however, on that very account, dissent from what you add; and deny that “every man concerned in the iron manufacture here,
“must expect the United Parliament will put these duties
“on a level.”|| If the Imperial Parliament have (as it may have) a discretion on this point,—the presumption is, that it will so regulate, between Britain and Ireland, the import duties on the raw materials of manufacture, as to proportion them to the maturity or infancy of these states. Even suppose finance to be the object of the Minister, yet to make Ireland productive, he must make it affluent; to make the empire thrive and flourish in all its parts, he must promote the
prosperity

* P. 69. † P. 92. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. || Ibid.

prosperity of its Irish limb ; and consequently he will adopt measures, that shall foster our manufactures, and encourage loose capital to fix itself amongst us.

The same reasoning will apply to what you say, with respect to farmers. “ These,” you observe, “ must look with uncertainty to the continuance of the corn bounties ; and expect that the principles, on which those bounties have been discontinued from one part of Ireland to another, and from the whole of it to Dublin, will be extended, on a similar reasoning, by the United Parliament, to the whole of the united Empire.”* You, Sir, I recollect, supported the discontinuance of those corn bounties : I must presume that you suffered them to remain, until the farmer had ceased to require this encouragement ; nor do I suppose, that an United Parliament would extend the like discontinuance to the whole of the united Empire, until agriculture, grown more vigorous, no longer wanted such support.

Much of what you urge, appears to me to be objectionable in one of the following points of view : it either merely goes to shew what the terms of Union should provide ; or what ought to be the future conduct of the Imperial Legislature ; (and therefore would be fit matter to offer to the united Parliament, or to ours, when the terms of Union were discussing ;)—or, secondly, your arguments rest on the sophistical assumption, that the situation of the countries, when united, will remain the same which it is, while they are distinct :—and thus you debate the question upon false premises, and upon a supposition of circumstances, which will not then exist.

Of the first description, are your reasonings in page 93, and 110. The first of which might have great weight with the united Parliament, or with the Commissioners, whose province it was to arrange the terms,—to shew to them, that different systems of taxation should be pursued here, and in Great Britain ; and the second might, in the same place, be equally efficacious,

* Page 92.

cious, to prove that some special measures should be adopted, towards securing the purity of our elections of members to the Imperial Parliament. Of the second description is what you urge in page 70; where, because the English trader has now the Irish market at his door, you conclude, he will after Union continue to possess it; and found, on this hypothesis, an argument against the measure. ¶

Your premises in page 72, I better understand, than what is the conclusion, which you would deduce from them. You state the export of woollen cloth from Ireland to have diminished so considerably within this century, that in the last year it amounted to little more than one-tenth of what it had been in 1698. This merely proves that, of which we were not ignorant, and which seems not very much to the purpose, that the line of Irish trade has changed. Linen has, in the interval, become our staple, and its export, as you inform us,* was in 1796—eighty-eight times greater as to quantity, and one hundred and thirty-seven times greater as to value, than it had been in 1700.

But how does this prove that Union might not bring over British capital, to establish the woollen manufacture? You say† we put down our woollen trade to oblige England. If so, with the assistance of her capital, we may take it up again, without fear of displeasing a country from which we shall have ceased to be distinct: whose jealousies, by Union, we shall have swept away; and whose interests we shall have identified with our own. And here permit me to confess a difficulty, which I have in reconciling your assertion,‡ that the woollen manufacture cannot travel into Ireland,—with your statement, that the value of our woollen export was 110,000*l.* a hundred years ago;§ —and that even under the disadvantages of our present dearth of capital, woollen and cotton manufactures have been established successfully near Cork.||

Suppose,

¶ I am not overlooking this, that, by Union, the market of each country will be opened to the other: I mean only to say that when trade is advanced in this country, the Irish consumer may be supplied at home.

* P. 105. † P. 83. ‡ P. 69, 72. § P. 83. || P. 97.

Suppose, however, that this should not be so:—that the great encrease of agriculture, and of the linen manufacture, giving a greater profit in land than sheep afford,* the consequence should be, that the British Settlers would not turn their capital to the woollen trade; but would engage in tillage, or the linen trade, or fatten pork for the provision trade, (as you say they have begun to do in England;†) or enter upon any other commerce, more congenial to the circumstances, or habits of this country. What difference would this make? the object is that capital should be introduced into Ireland: not that it should be employed in this or that particular way. Capital (next to tranquillity) is the great commercial want of this country; and capital, by introducing expensive machinery, would remove that obstacle to the establishment of the cotton trade here, which you state the great use of machinery in that manufacture to produce.‡—As to the ineffectual operation of Arkwright's patent as a bounty, I have already remarked, with respect to the constructive bounty on imported iron, that the disturbed state of Ireland, and precariousness of its connexion, (as well as those habits of distinctness, which discouraged the indiscriminate dissemination of capital through the entire Empire,) supplied dissuatives, more than sufficient to counter-vail the effect of these light pecuniary inducements: and if Arkwright's patent has expired in England,—yet let Union repeal the patent of Irish jacobinism and sedition,—and I defy the effects of the ceasing of this bounty. In 1785, the English cotton manufacturers “were under great anxiety and uneasiness, lest the Irish,” (in consequence of an arrangement which partially and inadequately achieved the commercial effects of Union,) “should draw over all their workmen, all their trade, and all their capitals; and be able to undersell them in their own markets, by at least 13l. per cent.”§ It is probable that these apprehensions were exorbitant; but it is also likely that they were not altogether destitute of foundation:—and how strangely do they contrast with your exclamations, against the absurdity of supposing that the cotton manufacture might, after Union, be established here!

As

As to linen, you admit it to be “an article, which, if British capital could be induced over, would very obviously invite it.”*—But could not British capital be induced to settle here? you answer no; because scarcely any has settled amongst us yet.—This indeed is a reason for despairing that, so long as Ireland remains in *statu quo*, English wealth will overflow its banks for her enrichment: but it would be tedious to repeat what I have already stated,—the very adequate preventives to the importation of British Capital,—which our distinctness furnished, and which our Union must remove: it would be tiresome and superfluous to insist upon the impossibility of shewing any sufficient cause, (for its scarcity will not be urged,) which, after Union, could restrain British Capital from pouring into Ireland.

But it is mere parade, you think, to tell us that, in consequence of this measure, we shall participate fully in the wealth and commerce of Great Britain. We are already as free to trade to all the world as she is.† Yes:—on our *no* capital, and our *no* industry, we are at liberty to trade with all the world: and keeping civil and religious discord for our home consumption, may export our traitors to Fort St. George, and deal in recruits with Prussia.

“What port in the known world can a British ship go to from Britain, that an Irish ship cannot go with the same cargo from Ireland? What article can a British ship import into Britain or Ireland, that an Irish ship cannot import equally into Ireland or Britain? What manufacture can Britain establish or encourage, which Ireland is not equally free to do? If new sources of trade shall be opened by conquest or by treaty, do they not belong equally, and at the same instant, to Ireland?”‡ I have adopted literally your own expressions, and now would ask you, if your list of questions be not a list of reasons, Why, after Union, British capital should be vested here? more especially if this country be, by nature, advantageously situated for trade, (and that it is so, eminently,

* P. 75.

† P. 77.

‡ Ibid.

eminently, will not be denied,)—if the rate of labour and price of provisions be lower here than they are in England,—and if British capital be grown too bulky for the present limits of its exertion.

In page 79, you proceed to shew that our commercial intercourse with England is in a higher degree beneficial to that country, than to us. The evidence which you adduce of this, does not thoroughly bear you out:—for the statement, which you take from the Custom-house books, leaves a balance against Britain; and as “the Custom-house value” (you say*) “serves every purpose of proportion or comparison,” it seems as if you might have abided by it on this question of *comparison*: more particularly as it is the proof to which (p. 90) you have resorted, to shew how good a customer this island is to Britain. To me, however, this adjustment of benefits seems so little pertinent to the present enquiry,—and I am so persuaded that the countries are mutually of incalculable value to each other,—that I shall not enter farther into the discussion.

I might perhaps, upon the same ground, decline reviewing your enquiry, whether our linen trade depends on the British Parliament; † but yet must be permitted to attend you, shortly, through this part of your investigation.

At first, (seemingly admitting that we are indebted to Britain for this manufacture,) you say that she is bound by compact to encourage our linen trade. I am sure she is bound by interest to encourage this, and every other Irish fabrick; and I believe she sees what is her true interest in this respect:—but what was the nature of this compact, or when or where it was entered into, you have not informed us; and I, for my part, do not know.

The British measures which protect our linen trade, are, first their duties on the foreign linens; and secondly, their bounty on the export of Irish linens. Does not the continuance of these measures depend on the British Parliament? How then

* P. 90.

† P. 8.

can it be denied that our linen trade is fostered by their protection? But neither duties nor bounties were given for us! To enquire scrupulously into this would, I think, be very childish. Facts and consequences are obvious; but motives are more abstruse; and here the question is more as to the utility of the grant, than the generosity of the grantor. Now as to the value of a concession, affecting that linen, which, according to Mr. Pitt, constitutes four-fifths, and according to you, about one half,* of our exports to all the world, no reasonable doubt can be entertained; and as to what you state, p. 85, in disparagement of British kindness, it seems to me to prove no more than this, that while she was encouraging our linen manufacture, she also tried to serve her own carrying trade.

I beg to decline following you in your enquiries into the respective powers of Britain and Ireland, to hurt each other by a war of duties and prohibitions. You avow yourself that it is an unpleasant discussion; and I admit, that so long as the two countries remain *distinct*, they have the power of interchanging injuries so material, that it is not worth enquiring which could do most mischief to the other; but would be better to deprive both of their noxious powers, and preclude all wars of duties and prohibitions, by *an Union*.

But Union, by encreasing the number of absentees, would injure the trade and manufactures of Ireland!† Prove this to the British Minister, and I will answer for his abandoning the measure. But if it does not “take a great portion of the “men of property to England,” and replaces those it takes, by an useful description of persons, the ground of your apprehension about our trade will be removed: “No absentee” (you say) “can expect to be elected a member of the United “Parliament; and every member must be a man of considerable property.”‡—Is not the necessary inference from your own statements this,—that if a seat in the United Parliament shall be, as it must be, an object of ambition,—an inducement will be held out to men of considerable property to

H

reside

* P. 86.

§ P. 91.

† Ibid.

reside in Ireland?—Let me briefly add upon this subject, that Union has not hurt the trade or manufactures of Scotland. You quote,* with considerable triumph, the language of the British Minister. He has most frankly and liberally said that, until lately, the system of Britain to this country “had been harsh, and unjust; and as impolitic as it was oppressive.”—Will Britain renew the conduct from which she had departed, and which her government has so described? Will any Minister, though he was no partial friend to Ireland, resume a policy which Lord Grenville has acknowledged to have been “*absurd, as well as barbarous;*” and which “however it might have contributed” (says Mr. Pitt) “to the partial benefit of districts in Britain, *promoted not the real strength of the Empire?*”—Thus does not the policy which Britain has fully recognised,—or, if any man prefers a more jealous and invidious epithet,—does not British selfishness afford a guaranty for British kindness?—and need we fear an Union, with an adequate Irish Representation?—Why call our hundred Representatives a mockery?† Would their voices be more feeble than those of the Yorkshire members? Would their sentiments be less attended to? Would their local knowledge be more neglected? Why idly contrast the Irish with the British members,—when they are the indiscriminate representatives of a cemented Empire?—When the prosperity of Ireland is the aggrandizement of that Britain, over whose interests you suppose the 558 will so closely watch?—May not an Irish member share in, or even guide the councils of the Empire? I shall not dwell on such a man’s predilection for his country, for his duty undoubtedly would be impartially to consult the interests of the whole United State; but at least Ireland would not suffer under such an administration.

But admitting that articles might be devised to secure the Irish trade and purse,‡ (against those whose interest it is to protect both,) in the alledged omnipotence of Parliament you discern

* P. 94.

† P. 95.

‡ P. 95 and 96.

discern a power, to defeat or mutilate this compact. Excuse me, if I say, that such reasoning is unworthy of you. It soars *inter apices juris*, in order to perch on a supposition, subversive in its consequences, and refuted by experience. “The Imperial Legislature” (as I have on a former occasion stated,) “may be competent to disfranchise Wales, or Yorkshire, or “to violate the terms on which the Sister Countries shall have “been united ; but I see no moral possibility of their applying “their transcendant authority to such a purpose.”* If by a maxim of the constitution, the King can do no wrong, still less can that Legislature, of which he but constitutes a part ; and if we are to ramble into the boundless regions of abstract possibility, I will reply, that substantially to violate the articles of the Union, would be to subvert the Imperial Constitution, and be one of those extreme and not supposable cases, which might absolve the Irish subject from his allegiance, and justify an appeal from the Legislature to the sword.

But we are to look to Scotland,† in vindication of your fears. —I imagine myself to have been one of the first, to whose lot it fell to expose the absurdity of alledging the Malt Tax, as an infringement of the Scotch treaty of Union. The task was free from difficulty ; and was performed by a short quotation from the histories of that period.‡ But the violation on which you choose to rely, is not the tax on malt, but upon income. In urging this objection, you desert the spirit, in order to fasten on the letter of the treaty. I answer it by observing shortly, 1st, that all taxes must ultimately affect income of every kind ; and therefore, if your reasoning were well-founded, there would be but one way of avoiding a violation of the Scottish Union, viz. by abstaining from taxing Scotland altogether : 2dly, the very spirit and object of that provision in the treaty, which you notice—the very end which the Scotch nation must have proposed to itself in inserting it, was that which is accomplished by the Income Tax ; namely, the taxing Scotland in proportion to its means, and striking between the contribution of the two countries, the same ratio that

* An Address to the People of Ireland.

† P. 96.

‡ Address, p. 91.

that there was between their wealth and income. 3dly, the recent exigencies of that united kingdom, of which North Britain is an integral part, imperiously demanded of the Scots, as they tendered their existence, to contribute to its preservation.

I shall not follow you in your examination of the effects of Union upon Cork. That quarter of the kingdom is probably best acquainted with its own interests; and entertains an opinion different from yours. I shall content myself by answering the question, and the remarks, which you apply to this part of the discussion.

You ask “what could induce the establishment of a dock-yard, after a Union, more than before?”*—The abolition of all fears and jealousies, that were the creatures of our distinctness: the abrogation of all maxims of suspicious policy: the intimate blending and identification of the two countries: the taking away from Britain every question upon the subject of where she should establish a dock-yard,—except the single one of—which was the best naval station?

In order to console Cork, however, for the disappointment which you predict, you remark that no trade exists where great dock-yards are established.—I do not, for my part, know how the fact may be; but supposing it to be as you state it, I presume other adequate causes could be assigned for that want of trade, which I am unable to see how the establishment of a dock-yard should produce.

But we should not address ourselves to Cork; we should speak to Ireland. You do so, when you ask, if we “want to be better than well?”† I protest if we be well, the symptoms of our political health are very strange ones. I speak not of that late rebellion, which you may tell me was but a crisis, that has operated to throw off impurities, and restore the vigour of our constitution. I speak of those military escorts which attend our judges round their circuits, to protect them

* P. 98.

† P. 100.

them from the rude and ramping health of our people: I speak of the number of troops which have come from England, to bear witness to the political sanity of Ireland: I speak of that regimen of martial law, which the Legislature has just prescribed, to check the imprudent frolicks of an over-vigorous people, and prevent their health from becoming too plethorick. I could enumerate other symptoms, but should tire my Reader, and myself; and therefore shall conclude, by doubting whether the physic which you are for rejecting, be quite so unnecessary as you think it.

In page 100, (as I follow in your winding course) I find you recurring to the example of Scotland, and denying all similarity between our situation and hers.

Scotland, you tell us,* “by the junction of the crowns, “became subject to English influence, in all her national “concerns:” their Darien settlement was destroyed by the jealous interference of England:† Scotch feelings were continually hurt, by the harassing proceedings of their “powerful and jealous rival,” who depressed their country in “her “trade, and in every thing of value in her state;”‡ and upon all these grounds, you conclude that Scotland had reason to accept an Union; and to expect in it, a remedy for the grievances above mentioned.

From Great Britain’s “partial conduct against this country,”§—from her having, “for forty years, harassed our “victualling trade, by embargoes,”|| and from the oppressive and jealous tenor of her entire conduct, you conclude that an Union must injure Ireland.

Are the above arguments consistent? or, by which of them will you abide? If your premises were admitted, your first

* P. 100. † P. 101. ‡ Ibid. § P. 93. || P. 97.

first reasoning would be the justest ; and would extend, to prove the utility of Union to this country.

But, in pointing out the dissimilarity of our situation to that of Scotland, you observe that she was connected with England, only by the *accidental* circumstance of the English Crown having descended upon her Monarch.* On this, allow me to observe, that as high-sounding phrases will not strengthen, neither can disparaging epithets diminish, the firmness of that connexion, by which two countries are held together. That connexion, which by styling it accidental, you imply to have been precarious, and unlikely to endure,—depended on a no less strong support, than those rules and maxims of hereditary descent, which in England and Scotland were the same, and which have lasted to the present day : and, if the Abdication of James II. and consequent Revolution, Act of Settlement, &c. had not operated on the British system a change as rare and violent, as it was useful,—(a change, against which, if they had happened to encounter, our sealing-wax and parchment would have made as ineffectual a stand, as the venerable rules of hereditary right,) I say, if this extraordinary change had not taken place, that Union of the English and Scottish Crowns, which had happened on the demise of Elizabeth, would have continued as long as there were heirs of the House of Stuart. And thus much for the durability of the Scotch and English connexion, (in the junction of their Crowns ;) as contrasted with that which holds these countries together ; accompanied with all its appendages—of Great Seal, Annexation Act, &c.

You deny that Scotland had a Constitution *like* Britain :† I might have controverted your position, though you had but denied her to have had substantially the same.—When a man asserts that an establishment, consisting of three estates,—a representative body,) particularly organized, but still representing the same class in the state, as our Commons do,) a chamber

* Page 100.

† Page 101.

chamber of hereditary nobility, graduated analogously to those of England, and holding their titles by like grants, and with similar limitations,—an hereditary King, the chief Executive Magistrate, and possessing a right of negative on the proceedings of the Legislature,—that this establishment is not like the British Constitution :—I cannot argue with such a man ; I can only express my surprise. The arrangement of 1706, however, has practically and successfully disputed your opinion ; and by blending the Scottish Lords and Commons with the English, has recorded them to have been respectively homogeneous classes.

“ We,” however, “ are not only united to the Crown,
“ but to the Empire : our friends, our enemies the same ;
“ and our interests, as well as laws, binding us in that
“ Union.”*

Why then, in the name of Heaven, if a single flaw can be discovered—on which to fix a doubt of the permanence of our connexion,—should we shrink from consolidating it, by the most intimate incorporation ?—We should thereby lose our free Constitution ! I deny it. Prove to me that we shall ; and I will vote against an Union. Meantime, you must allow me here to cite a passage from your Speech ;† accompanying it with some qualifying parentheses of my own.

“ In preserving” (*the distinctness of*) “ this Constitution, we
“ retain all the means of trade ;” (*except capital, industry, internal quiet, and that stability of connexion, which may attract the capital of Britain :*) “ whereas, if we sacrifice it,” (*by blending our distinct establishment, with a system analogous in theory, and better administered in practice,*) “ wealth will vanish, when
“ freedom is banished,” (*by our obtaining those protections which secure it to Great Britain.*) “ We have more to lose than mere
“ wealth, or trade : we have to lose sound genuine liberty ;”
(*by participating in all the privileges of the British Constitution.*)

In

* Page 103.

† Page 104.

In page 104, waving those arguments which you had founded on the alledged difference of our present situation, from that of Scotland at the period of the Union, you (for a moment) admit their similarity; but contend “that every argument drawn from the arrangement of 1706, strongly urges us against a similar experiment.”

You doubt whether the encreasing prosperity of Scotland, since the Union, is properly attributable to that event. It is difficult to prove the affirmative or negative of such a question; and besides, requires evidence, which neither you nor I possess. A comparison of the rates of Scottish progress, for fifty years before, and fifty years following the Union, would prove something. If that progress appeared infinitely accelerated in the latter period, it might seem presumable that that event had contributed to advance it; and this presumption would become still more violent, if it appeared, on investigation, that the interval between Scotch and English prosperity, had been greater before the Union, than it was since. For, that “progressive state of the world, for the last century,”† to which, rather than to this measure, you impute the prosperity of Scotland, would have operated in equal degree upon both countries; and therefore the decrease of disparity between their greatness, would be fairly enough imputable to the Union. That arrangement would appear to have removed impediments to Scotch improvement; and by giving it the full use of whatever advantages it had from nature, to have enabled it to participate duly in the progress of the world.

“But has Scotland advanced in prosperity, since the Union, as much as Ireland?”* I presume not. Spite of whatever mischiefs were produced by Irish distinctness,—I presume not. This admission I concede not to your proof; but to my own conviction. *Your* demonstration is inadequate, and sophistical. You measure the relative progress of the two countries,

† Page 104.

* Ibid.

countries, by mere comparison of the advancement of their linen manufacture ; without ascertaining whether this has so predominated in Scotland, as with us : whether it has been equally the staple of both countries.

But I presume, the advancement of Ireland has been more considerable. I do not conceive Union to be a measure of sufficient efficacy, to efface the distinctions of natural advantage, and prevent the prosperity of a country from bearing some proportion to these. It is enough, if it removes all political obstacles to a country's greatness ; and thus renders it more prosperous, than disunited it could have been. Ireland may be blessed with natural capacities, which have so far outweighed her political disadvantages, as, after all, to let her outstrip the prosperity of Scotland. But if united, I am satisfied she will leave her still more behind ; and reap, at length, the full benefits of her soil and situation.

On the question, however, whence Scotch prosperity has arisen, I am content that we should make a compromise, if you think proper. I will abate somewhat of my certainty, that it has been produced by the Scottish Union, if you, on your part, will not so inexorably refer to the settlement of 1782, every advance which has been made by Ireland, since that period.* Suppose, that in fourteen years from 1782, Irish exports rose as much as they had done in eighty years before : we know, that in the case of individuals, and of nations, improvement does not proceed regularly, but *par secousses* : we know that the recent acceleration, of which you boast, may have arisen, not from the arrangements of 1782, but from that free trade of 1780, which an Union, instead of cramping, would practically promote : we *do not* know but a comparison in the case of Scotland, would furnish the same difference between her rates of progress, since, and previous to, 1782 : We *do* know, that latterly, the advances of England have been incomparably more rapid, than they were before,

1

and

* Page 107.

and that she may have hurried us along, as an Imperial Relative, in those strides. At all events you know (for you have stated) that “the argument is shallow, which attributes every “encrease of trade in Scotland, from that day to this, to the “Union ;”^{*} and the argument which is shallow, as to Scotland, cannot, as to Ireland, be more profound ; nor can the settlement of 1782 be entitled to a privilege, which you deny to the arrangement of 1706.

“The question between England and Scotland,” (you say) “was Union, or Separation?”[†] I doubt whether, in the present case, the question be widely different ; and found my doubts on events too melancholy, and too notorious, for enumeration : I might found them on the mere reports of our Secret Committees ; and they would stand. But the proposed Union “leads to Separation.”[‡] Prove this to its supporters, and I will answer for their conversion. Can you seriously imagine that the Minister, or the Legislature of Great Britain, would propose a measure which “leads to Separation?” What has brought the British Militia into Ireland ?—Would the government which sent those to fight, if necessary, for the connexion,—lend its hand to a measure which “leads to Separation?”—Nay, Sir, we should listen with distrust even to *arguments*, which were employed to prove any thing so incredible as this ; and so long as you confine yourself to mere paradoxical *assertion*,—spite of your merited weight, we cannot listen to you at all.

You ask, why Mr. Dundas “has not told us the opinion of “his countryman, Mr. Adam Smith, on the effects of the “Scottish Union ?”[§]—I am sure I cannot tell.—He might, with perfect security, have resorted to his authority ; while, for you to quote it, appears rather indiscreet. Adam Smith has explicitly declared it as his opinion that, by an Union with Great Britain, Ireland would obtain not only commercial, but *other more important advantages* : that this measure would dry

up.

^{*} P. 104.

[†] P. 107.

[‡] Ibid.

[§] P. 106.

up a source of discord and oppression ; and that “ without it, “ the inhabitants of this country were not likely, for ages, to “ consider themselves as one people.”* A writer who holds these sentiments with respect to Union, is not exactly the authority, which an Anti-unionist should chuse to cite.

Having, in a Speech which I made in Parliament, in January last, and which has, since that time, appeared in print, discussed the question of Parliamentary Competence pretty fully, I shall, (without meaning to refer my reader to what has been said, or written, by so poor an authority as myself,) yet decline repeating here what I have thus already offered to the Publick ; —and shall content myself, in answer to what you urge upon this head, with observing briefly—that to dispute the competence of Parliament, is to deny the constitutional existence of the united kingdom of Great Britain, and shake to its foundations his Majesty’s (not hereditary) title to his Scottish Crown ; nay may go to impeach the right of the House of Hanover, (under the Act of Settlement) to the Throne of England :—that it is to contradict the express positions, as well as to subvert the consequential doctrines, of some of the ablest constitutional and legal writers ; including names no less respectable than those of Blackstone, Coke and Montesquieu ;—and operates to give inevitable admission to a Republican Principle, which will degrade Parliament from its high station, and deck a fierce and unwieldy multitude in the spoils of Legislative Supremacy.

The security of the subject against Parliamentary domination arises, not from the limited authority of the legislative, but from the frame and construction of Parliament itself ; in which the various and conflicting interests of the state are so well poised, as mutually to control the encroachments of each other : and if, spite of these precautions, a weak and wicked Parliament should yet abuse its vast authority,—it might thereby legitimate insurrection, and pull its own power about
its

* Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.
Book V. c. 3.

its ears;—but with that power, would perish the whole fabrick of the Constitution: whilst this endures, the theoretick power of Parliament being unbounded, we are relieved from all preliminary trouble, of enquiring into its right of accomplishing any measure which is before it, and may proceed at once to investigate the merits of the plan itself;—since, in demonstrating its utility, we shall bring it within the sphere of parliamentary competence to achieve. It is a glorious prerogative of the British Constitution, that there is no political blessing for the people, which lies beyond the reach of their Parliament to obtain.

The grounds I have thus laid, Sir, will furnish a refutation of your hypothesis,* that if the omnipotence of Parliament can consolidate two separate Legislatures, it may equally consolidate the three estates of each; or take the purse of the nation out of the custody of the Commons.

No, Sir: this consolidation would be no blessing,—but a curse: a manifest subversion of the liberties of the people: such a measure is, on the face of it, so mischievous, and deformed, so repugnant not only to the principles, but to the very existence of our Constitution, that its adoption by Parliament must not, even in the way of hypothesis, be supposed: “there are points” (as you truly observe) “where the powers of the Legislature end,—and “those of the people, at large, begin;”† and it may be added, that such extreme cases can never furnish illustration:—it may be added, that, under no possible circumstances, could a consolidation of the three estates of the legislature be beneficial. But can it be contended---will you contend,—that under no supposable circumstances, on no devisable terms, could an incorporation of these two parts of the empire be advantageous? And would our Parliament be then incompetent to obtain its benefits for the people?—Must we, as a preliminary step to its attainment, depose Parliament from its supremacy? and in doing so, dissolve the Government, and annihilate our whole establishment? You will not contend for so ruinous a doctrine; and, in abandoning it, will acknowledge Parliament to be competent to enact Union.

I have

* P. 108.

† Ibid.

I have now, Sir, (I hope, consistently with that respect, which is so justly due to you,) gone through your several arguments, *seriatim*; and given them such answers, as my small abilities could supply; but whether or not I have succeeded in refuting you, it is not for me, but for the Publick, to pronounce.

Let me here, while I am hastening to my conclusion, be allowed to introduce one or two observations, though not *directly* in answer to any thing which has fallen from you.

You have more than once contrasted the 100 Irish, with the 558 British representatives. Let us pursue this idea, by examining those contrasts, which the Parliament of this country will internally afford. The members for counties, cities, and commercial towns, will be found to form a small portion of the 300,—compared with those who sit for what we call *close* boroughs. The meaning of this epithet “close” it is not my business to determine; but I believe it is neither untrue, nor unparliamentary, to suggest, that this majority of our House of Commons does not more truly represent the landed and commercial interests of this country, than they are represented by the 64 county, and the city members. Now I have heard it said, and I believe with truth, that if an Union should take place, the system of Irish representation was likely to be modified in this respect,—that the entire number of country members remaining, and the principal commercial towns also returning representatives, the number of those who sit for boroughs would be materially abridged. Indeed it is plain they must be so; if the number of representatives secured to Ireland, by the terms of Union, be a hundred. For when from this sum we deduct 64 county members, and some representatives for cities, and commercial towns, the number remaining for borough members (by an arrangement resembling the Scotch, perhaps,) to make up, will be extremely limited. Thus the Irish portion of the Imperial Parliament would be composed wholly of the genuine representatives of our landed and commercial interests: of men whose own welfare was closely allied to the prosperity of their country. If seats in Parliament were venal,
the

the benefit resulting to this country from such an organization, would be the more signal; for this abridgment of the comparative number of boroughs would prevent British money from gaining a seat amongst our Legislators; and would secure us a thoroughly Irish representation.

If this be so,—it seems to me that Union affords the only probable or secure path to those grand popular measures, of which for some years back we have heard so much. It might give Catholick Emancipation; and must produce Parliamentary Reform.

I imitate your example,* in declining those discussions, which regard the state of our religion in this kingdom; both, because I have on a former occasion† published my opinions on this subject, and because I concur with you, in considering it to be a delicate topick. Thus much however, may without impropriety be said;—that this country is not a scene of the most perfect religious concord: that Adam Smith has supposed Union would mitigate religious prejudice; and make the inhabitants of Ireland consider themselves as one people; a consummation, which must be most devoutly wished, by every friend to the connexion, to the empire, to his country: that the temper and genius of the times are not such as to render this the properest moment, for upholding an irritating system, with a strong hand: that the situation is arduous and perplexing,—in which, while it may perhaps be dangerous to grant, it is not liberal, if perfectly safe policy, to withhold; that Union would extricate us from so embarrassing a dilemma,—by making the religion of the people, the religion of the state.

The tendencies of Union in other respects, I have, in the foregoing pages, had occasion to discuss. If these were such as you describe, I should heartily join with you to cry, No Union!‡ but, persuaded as I am, that its tendencies would be to baffle all attempts at separation: that by giving vigour to the Empire, it would give security to Ireland; that it might remove

* P. III.

† From p. 65 to 74, of an Address to the People of Ireland. ‡ P. 107.

some of the risks, and difficulties, which obstruct sound and moderate religious, or political reform : that it would bring an orderly rank of persons in contact with the mass of our people ; and fill up, as it were, the chasms of our incoherent community : that it would, by their example, improve the morals of our lower ranks ; initiating them in industry, and communicating to them a taste for the decencies of life ;—in a word, that it would raise and civilize our barbarous and degraded people ; and fit them to enjoy the freedom it conferred : that it would bury, in a complete identification of interest, whatever jealousies may have subsisted between the kingdoms ; would assuage that internal discord, of which we have so long been the victims,—and permanently enrich and tranquilize our country :—satisfied as I am, that such would be the effects of Union, I say to my Countrymen “ accept the offer ; and “ adhere to the Constitution of 1782.”*—Preserve the Constitution, which you then acquired : it must be invaluable ; for it is that of Britain : but abolish a distinctness, which impedes the practical enjoyment of its blessings ; and is at variance with a connexion, on which your happiness depends.

I have the honour to be,

&c. &c. &c.

WILLIAM SMITH.

DUBLIN,

April 27th, 1799.

* “ Reject the offer ; and adhere to the Constitution of 1782.”

Speaker's Speech—p. 107.

THE END.

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A D D R E S S

TO THE

PEOPLE OF IRELAND;

BEING THE

S U B S T A N C E

OF

MR. WILLIAM SMITH'S SPEECH

ON THE SUBJECT OF A

LEGISLATIVE UNION

BETWEEN

THIS COUNTRY

AND

G R E A T B R I T A I N;

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON THURSDAY,
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