

SUBSTANCE OF
THE SPEECH
OF THE
RIGHT HON. HENRY DUNDAS,
IN
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
THURSDAY, FEB. 7, 1799,
ON THE SUBJECT OF THE
LEGISLATIVE UNION WITH IRELAND.

DUBLIN:

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1799.

Houses of the Oireachtas

COPY
OF
HIS MAJESTY'S MESSAGE
ON THE SUBJECT OF
THE LEGISLATIVE UNION WITH IRELAND,
PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES ON
JANUARY 22, 1799.

GEORGE REX.

“ His Majesty is persuaded that the unremitting industry with
“ which our enemies persevere in their avowed design of
“ effecting the Separation of Ireland from this Kingdom,
“ cannot fail to engage the particular attention of Parlia-
“ ment; and His Majesty recommends it to this House to
“ consider of the most effectual means of counteracting and
“ finally defeating this design; and he trusts that a review of
“ all the circumstances which have recently occurred (joined
“ to the sentiment of mutual affection and common interest)
“ will dispose the Parliament of both Kingdoms to provide,
“ for settling such a complete and final adjustment as may
“ best tend to improve and perpetuate a Connection essential
“ for their common security, and to augment and consoli-
“ date the Strength, Power, and Resources of the British
“ Empire.”

G. R.

Houses of the Oireachtas

S P E E C H

OF THE

RIGHT HON. HENRY DUNDAS.

MR. SPEAKER,

“ NOTWITHSTANDING the arguments so strenuously advanced on the other side of the House, I have no hesitation, Sir, in declaring that I rise with a considerable degree of satisfaction to refute the objections urged against the Union with Ireland. Having followed the last Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Grey) with the greatest attention, I flatter myself, that, from my knowledge of the subject, I am fully able to convince the House, that the reasons urged against the measure are totally groundless. The last Honourable Speaker has dwelt with much minuteness on the discussions of the year 1782, and on the commercial and political situation in which Ireland was then placed, and has since continued, in consequence of those discussions; but I beg

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leave

leave to observe, that every deduction from those circumstances, and every grant made to Ireland at that period, have nothing to do with the question now before the House. The present proposition contains in it no suggestion derogatory to the acknowledged independence of the Irish Parliament. It is a proposition for the incorporation of the two Legislatures into one, without infringing on the liberty or independence of either.

“ In addressing itself to the judgment and decision of the Irish Parliament, this country explicitly acknowledges its independence; and to put an end to all cavil on that part of the argument, I am ready to admit, that by the transactions of 1782, the Irish Parliament is placed on the same footing of independence, in relation to Great Britain, as Scotland was with regard to England before the Union of the two kingdoms; and certainly I have never heard that the proposal made in 1707 for the Union of England and Scotland has, at any period, been treated by the most captious opponents of the measure, as an attack on the independence of the Parliament of Scotland.

“ With regard to the measure itself, so far from operating injuriously on Ireland, I can prove,

prove, before I sit down, by a reference to the affairs of Scotland, at and after the Union, that a similar measure would be attended with similar benefits to Ireland, by improving and increasing the political and commercial advantages of the latter country in the same proportion as those of the former have been improved and increased; and that the latter country would experience an equal increase of commercial and political advantages.

“ I had entertained an opinion, that the question would have been argued in a different stage of the business, and that there would not arise any doubt on leaving the Chair.— Had the motion for the Committee been allowed to pass, Sir, both sides of the House would have had better opportunities of understanding each other by mutual explanations. That mode, however, meeting with opposition, I and my friends are reduced to the necessity of debating the measure on the particular point of your leaving the Chair. The discussion of the grand question, in this stage, is so far an inconvenience to me, as it leaves me less leisure to arrange and methodise the various statements I have collected on the subject. I am, however, ready to meet the opponents of the measure in any way they please, convinced

that I am armed with such authorities, and such arguments, as will overturn every objection that can be offered. Since the Union was first in contemplation, I have endeavoured to make myself as conversant with the subject as possible, by every research of history, and by a very careful examination of the documents on which were grounded the articles of the Union with Scotland. For this research I claim no particular praise, it being my duty, as well as that of every other Member of Parliament, to acquire as accurate a knowledge as possible of the subject under discussion.

“ In vindication of myself and friends, I have no hesitation in saying, that the affairs of Ireland demand at this period particular circumspection. I will assume, as a proposition, which I believe no man will have the boldness to deny, that there does exist at this time in Ireland a spirit of clamour and dissention, of treachery and treason, which menaces the overthrow of the present Government. Conspiracies are so widely extended, their influence is so deeply infused into the minds of the people of Ireland, and the connection between the two countries is thereby so much endangered, that without the active and immediate interference of the Government, the result, in the opinion of the most intelligent men,

men, might have been a total separation of Ireland from this kingdom. Viewing Ireland in this perilous situation, it was the duty of His Majesty's servants to extricate her from the intrigues of the common enemy, by preserving and improving the connection which has so long and so happily subsisted between that country and Great Britain.

“ Now the question is, Whether or not the political diseases alluded to were not likely to be removed by incorporating the two Parliaments into one ?

“ In the observations which naturally arise from the subject, I beg leave to assure the House, that I mean nothing disrespectful to the Parliament or People of Ireland, when I affirm, that the evil machinations of the enemies of both countries have been too successful in most instances, and that the check or controul of the English Government is absolutely necessary for the salvation of Ireland. In my animadversions, I am not about to throw out any reflections injurious to the Gentlemen who constitute the Legislature of the Sister Kingdom ; and I hope I shall not be accused of illiberal motives when I give it as my opinion, that a very great part of the people have been corrupted by the new doctrines,

trines, so dangerous to the existence of all regular Governments, consequently so dangerous to that of the Empire. Every good man, who had seen or heard of the influence of those destructive doctrines on the Continent, would wish well on the present occasion to the active exertions of the Government of Great Britain, endeavouring to preserve the liberty, the independence, and the happiness of Ireland. The picture which I draw of Ireland is of a gloomy and lamentable aspect; but in proportion as it is so, it becomes the duty of every well wisher to both countries to devise some remedy by which he may destroy the hopes of the enemy, and give new life and vigour to the Sister Kingdom.

“ If any political maxim can be held more generally true than another, it is, that in order to regulate well the affairs of any nation, it is necessary that there should subsist a mutual confidence between the governors and the governed. But it is a melancholy truth, that there does not exist in the great body of the people of Ireland; that confidence in the Parliament of Ireland which is essential to its utility. I need not go far to search for the reasons of this essential defect. It grew out of the frame and constitution of the Parliament of Ireland.

“ If

“ If the whole power of the country were vested in one-fourth of the people, and that fourth was separated from the other three-fourths by religious distinctions, heightened and envenomed by ancient and hereditary animosities, it was impossible that there could exist a mutual confidence between them. This, however, was certainly the situation of the Parliament and People of Ireland. If there were such dissensions and animosities in Ireland, the interference of a British Parliament was admirably calculated to restore peace and confidence, by granting to the people of Ireland a free participation of all the privileges enjoyed by their fellow subjects of Great Britain.

“ It is impossible to imagine a remedy more appropriate to the radical cause of the disease which poisons the peace and happiness of Ireland, than the measure of an incorporating Union of the Legislatures of the two kingdoms. The Protestants would, of course, lay aside their jealousies and distrust, being certain that against any attempt to endanger the Protestant establishment in Ireland, the whole strength of the united parliament must be exerted; and, on the other hand, every Catholic who is a friend to the connection with Great Britain, but is desirous to obtain every indulgence, and be admitted

mitted into a participation of every privilege and benefit consistent with that connection, would be confident that their cause would be candidly and impartially considered by an united parliament, the great body of which would be relieved from those apprehensions, jealousies, and inveterate animosities, interwoven into the frame and constitution of the separate parliament of Ireland.

“ When Gentlemen talk so much of the Parliament of Ireland, and insist that a consent to the present measure would totally destroy the liberty and independence of the Irish Parliament, I am certain they bewilder themselves in a misunderstanding of the terms which they use. How could it have that effect? Would not there be, by the incorporated Parliaments, the three estates of King, Lords, and Commons? And if there be a sufficiency of the aristocracy, and a sufficiency of the democracy of the different countries, how would either the independence of the Parliament, or the liberty of the people of Ireland suffer? I have no hesitation, Sir, in maintaining, that an incorporated Parliament, partly English, partly Scotch, and partly Irish, is much better calculated for the management of the affairs of the British Empire, than separate Parliaments in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The powers
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of a Parliament, so constituted, would be more extensive and effectual than when acting separately in different places. It ought also to be recollected, that with all the boasted independence of the Parliament of Ireland, it could not give vigour or effect to its acts, till approved by the third estate, whose residence was in England. The controlling power was properly vested in the Sovereign of this country, who was also the Sovereign of Scotland and Ireland. Then the Parliament of Ireland is not entirely independent. And if it be true, that the Parliament of Ireland, as now constituted, be dependent on the third estate of this country, it is evident that the Parliament of Ireland is not that independent state which this argument seems always to take for granted.

“ The more this part of the argument is probed, the more fallacious the reasoning of its authors will appear. One of the most valuable privileges which the British parliament enjoys, is, the right it claims to watch over and control the conduct of the Executive Government, even in the exercise of those powers which are justly considered as the clearest and most undoubted prerogatives of the Crown. There is not one of those prerogatives in the exercise of which the servants of the King are not responsible, and to

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the control of which, in that shape, the power of Parliament does not extend; and that power is bounded only by its own wisdom and discretion. The Parliament of Ireland, in its separate state, is debarred from this important privilege, which it would obtain by an incorporation with the Parliament of Great Britain. This observation is the more striking, when it is considered that this power of the British Parliament extends, in the manner I have stated, to the control of the Third Estate of the Irish Parliament, even in its legislative capacity, and that exclusively of the other branches of the Irish Legislature. It is impossible candidly and dispassionately to examine those considerations, and not feel how extensively the character and importance of the Irish Parliament would be exalted by the Union of the two Legislatures.

“ In support of these propositions, if they are disputed, I refer to the authority of Mr. Grattan, the champion of Irish independence, who says, “ the Parliament of Ireland cannot act independently; for in all questions of peace or war, it must implicitly follow the Parliament of Great Britain.” If the Parliament of Ireland were as independent as its advocates now insist, why should it be obliged to adopt the measures of the Parliament of Great Britain,
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on all occasions of peace and war? The Incorporated Parliament of Ireland would have all the privileges of the Incorporated Parliament of Scotland. To corroborate these facts, Sir, I, as one of the forty-five Scotch Members, can, in the face of the 513 English Members, freely discuss and watch the interests of Scotland. The Parliament, thus constituted by the Union, had not deprived Scotland of any of the privileges enjoyed previously to its incorporation with England. The Union had encreased the privilege of the Scottish Members: For, instead of confining their deliberations to the affairs of Scotland, they were empowered to take part in discussions respecting the affairs not only of England, but of the whole British Empire; and so far as regarded the third estate, had even an interference in the affairs of Ireland.

“ If the Parliament of Scotland, Sir, thus incorporated, has all the rights now described, the Parliament of Ireland, incorporated on similar principles, would have the same privileges. The deliberations of the Parliament of Ireland, thus constituted, would also operate successfully in all questions respecting the affairs not only of Ireland, Scotland, and England, but of the whole British dominions. It would enlarge its powers, and give greater vigour and effect to its operations.

tions. But now the Parliament of Ireland has no right to discuss questions in which Great Britain only is interested. It is a misstatement of terms to talk of destroying the Parliament of Ireland, for the Union would place the Irish Members in the same situation as the Members of the Parliament of Great Britain.—I condemn, Sir, the operations of personal vanity, which, in this instance at least, run riot against the principles of common sense. I wish Gentlemen would direct their pride and honour to acts of laudable ambition—I wish they would evince greater patriotism, by a due attention to the interests of both countries. If considerations of personal vanity and self independence are to be allowed to operate on this subject, let Gentlemen recollect, that if their genius be ever so acute, their talents ever so transcendent, their eloquence ever so splendid, all those wonderful powers are confined to one little island. All their genius is limited to their own internal regulations, and reduced to their own small territory. Independence and liberty are fine founding words; but can it be seriously maintained, that for the preservation of these, it is necessary to have a separate and local Legislature. The soil and spot where the Parliament sat do not constitute its value, but its adaptation to preserve the general interests of the community at large. This is the
only

only true and valuable object of independence. I address myself therefore to the true pride of Ireland, which ought not to be biased by false principles of honour. A mind thus actuated is governed by a childish, not a manly ambition. Let, however, the Irish Parliament accept of a participation of all the rights of the Parliament of Great Britain, and they would find, that their eloquence would not be confined to England, or to any other country, but their voices would extend to every corner of the world. They would be heard, not only in Europe, but in Asia, Africa, and America. The Parliament of Ireland would then become Members of the British Parliament, which had enabled this proud country to exalt its head amidst the wreck of surrounding nations; had given it energy and vigour to resist the pernicious doctrines of the French Republic; and held us up as a monument of admiration and envy to the remotest corners of the world. They would then be the advocates not only of Ireland and Great Britain, but advocates for the rights and liberties of the human race.

“ A Parliament thus constituted would be worthy of true ambition. It would be a more respectable body than what had been described by a gentleman who, in talking of the limitations
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of the Parliament of Ireland, compared it to a Great Vestry or Parish Meeting. I wish, Sir, to give efficiency to the Parliament of Ireland—to bring it from that narrow and confined situation, to act in a more enlarged sphere—to explore new sources of true greatness—to participate and enjoy all the benefits and advantages of the Parliament of Great Britain. Whether therefore I consider the state of the Irish Parliament in its collective or individual capacity, I am equally decided it will gain extensively by the success of the present measure.

“ An objection has been taken that we ought not to have proceeded on the business in this country till the propositions had been made to us by the Parliament and People of Ireland. I confess I do not understand the objection. In the progress of this important business, it was intended to follow, step by step, the manner of recommending and adopting the Union between Scotland and England. When the Queen of England sent a message to the Parliament of England on the subject of the Union, Her Majesty sent also a similar message to the Parliament of Scotland. But we have many records, by which we may direct our proceedings. The measure of an Union with Scotland had been so often in contemplation, that the general plan required

required little amendment. It had been proposed in the days of James I. in those of Charles I. in those of the Usurper Cromwell, afterwards by William, and lastly by Anne. It never was offered in the one Parliament, without at the same time recommending it to the other.

“ In considering the question of an incorporating Union of the two Legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland, it is impossible, in every view of the subject, not to turn one's eyes to the state of Scotland before and since the Union, and to contemplate the advantages which have resulted from it to that part of the United Kingdom. This part of the subject would lead into such a length of detail, it is impossible to pursue it fully, without wearing out the attention and patience of the House. I must, therefore, content myself with referring to a few general heads, which will strike more forcibly by putting them in a comparative view of what they were at the Union, and what they are now :—

COMPARATIVE VIEW.

SHIPPING	in 1692	-	8,618 tons, value	- £.25,834
Ditto	- in 1792	-	162,274 tons, value	£.1,298,192
LEITH	- in 1692	-	1,702 tons,	
Ditto	- in 1792	-	18,468 tons,	
SCOTCH LINEN	1700		1,000,000 yards for sale	
Ditto	- in 1796		23,102,404	
CUSTOMS at the Union			£. 34,300	
Ditto	- in 1798	-	284,577	
EXCISE at the Union		-	33,500	
Ditto	- in 1798	-	851,775	
POPULATION in 1755		-	1,265,000	
Ditto	- in 1795	-	1,534,000	
GLASGOW Population }				
from 1701 to 1710 }			14,790	
Ditto	- in 1798		77,042	

“ From this statement the happy effects of the Union are evident. I wish particularly to impress upon the minds of those who oppose the measure, the wonderful increase of the Scots Linen Trade. This I am the more eager to notice, as the Linen is the present staple manufacture of Ireland; and a celebrated character in that country has thought himself warranted to descend so far as to endeavour to create an alarm on that subject. At the time of the Union, that trade in Scotland amounted to about one million yards; but by the fostering care of the United Parliaments, and from a benign consolidation of the interests of both kingdoms, it had increased to the quantity of

twenty.

twenty-three millions, manufactured in the year 1796.

“ These improvements and increase of trade were not confined to any particular part of Scotland. They were experienced in every corner of it; and there is not now an inhabitant of any spot in all Scotland who has not cause to rejoice at the event.

“ Many melancholy pictures, in the shape of prophecies, were presented to the public view on that memorable occasion. Among other false prophecies, permit me to make a few remarks on that celebrated speech of Lord Belhaven :

‘ I think I see,’ exclaimed his Lordship a national church voluntarily descending upon an equal level with Jews, Papists,’ &c.—Now to prove his Lordship a false prophet in this, I not only think I see, but I actually do see, that very National Church, founded upon a firm foundation, at the distance of ninety years from the passing of the Act of Union ; and that very National Church so firmly secured in all her privileges, that it is very likely she will continue to possess them, unimpaired, for ever ! In truth, her simplicity and her poverty, will remain to

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her an impregnable security against the plunder and rapine of all ruffian hands!

“ I think I see,” continues his Lordship, “ the Noble and Honourable Peerage of Scotland, now divested of their followers and vassalages, and put even on an equal footing with their own very vassals.” If the Union has had a tendency to break asunder the bands of feudal vassalage, which prevailed to too great an excess in that country, wise and virtuous men will not be disposed to consider this as one of the evil consequences to be lamented in the formation of a Legislative Union of the two kingdoms. As to the Peerage of Scotland, considered as a body in the State, it may be true they suffered some transitory mortifications in consequence of the Union; but I believe there is no candid or good man in that whole respectable body who would wish to change their present situation for all the pomp and poverty they enjoyed previous to the Union.

“ I think I see,” adds his Lordship, “ the Royal State of Boroughs walking their desolate streets,” &c. On the contrary, I see that the Boroughs, instead of being desolated, are most of them ten times improved in population, in industry,

dustry, and in wealth! To prove this, it is only necessary to mention the names of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Perth, Montrose, Dundee; and in short every other town of any name or consequence in that part of the United Kingdom.

‘ I think I see our learned Judges,’ continues Lord Belhaven, ‘ laying aside their practiques and decisions, studying the common law of ‘ England,’ &c. Now I see no such violation or alteration of the municipal law of Scotland, which is as purely administered now as it was before the Union took place. But although the Scotch Judges do not study the common law of England, by way of introducing it into their courts, I certainly must do my Lord Belhaven the justice to acknowledge, that at all times the Northern part of the island has produced some of the brightest luminaries of the law of England, who never would have emblazoned Westminster-hall with their transcendant talents, had not the Union taken place between England and Scotland.

‘ I think I see,’ adds his Lordship, ‘ the valiant and gallant foldiery of Scotland, all their ‘ old corps broke up, the common soldiers left

‘ to beg, and the youngest English corps kept
 ‘ standing.’ Now I do see, that the natives of
 Scotland, both in the army and the navy, and
 the common foldier, and the man before the
 mast, to the general in the field, and the admiral
 on the ocean, instead of being worse treated than
 the English, are put upon the most equitable
 footing with the soldiers and the sailors of this
 part of the united kingdom, according to their
 respective merits ! I do see nothing but the most
 liberal rewards and provisions made for the Scot-
 tish, as well as the English hero ; both of whom
 have consolidated their strength, by a politic and
 glorious Union, for the general benefit of every
 part of the British empire !

‘ I think I see,’ continues this noble false pro-
 phet, ‘ the honest industrious tradesman drinking
 ‘ water in place of ale ; eating his saltless pot-
 ‘ tage, and petitioning in vain for encouragement
 ‘ to his manufactories !’—The increase of excise,
 in Scotland, since the time of the Union, is cer-
 tainly no proof that this part of the prophecy
 has been fulfilled ; or that water has become the
 beverage of the people of Scotland. But I need
 not enlarge on this topic. The reverse of the
 prophecy is notoriously the truth, in every re-
 spect.

“ I think

‘ I think I see the laborious ploughman,’ adds this visionary, ‘ with his corn spoiling upon his hands, for want of sale, cursing the day of his birth,’ &c.—Now I do see, on the contrary, the mere ploughman enjoying treble wages, and treble comforts; while his master, the farmer, instead of his corn spoiling upon his hands, for want of sale, reaps such profits from its immediate sale, as enables him to live almost upon an equal footing, in point of every social enjoyment, with even the hereditary landed gentleman, the possessor of the soil itself!

‘ I think I see,’ continues his Lordship, ‘ the pretty daughters of our landed gentlemen, petitioning for want of husbands, and their sons for want of employment.’—Now I do see, and I believe every one in this House sees, that the pretty daughters of the Scotch nobility and gentry, so far from petitioning for husbands, bear, at the present moment, a very high premium in the hymeneal market of the English aristocracy!

“ I need not enlarge on a topic which is proved to every man’s observation, by the examples daily passing before them. In truth, nothing has tended more to accelerate the happy connection

nection which now subsists between the two parts of the island, than the intercourse of friendship, habits, and affection, arising from the union of the beauty, wealth, and talents, produced by the intermarriage of the inhabitants of the opposite sides of the Tweed. And as to their sons petitioning for want of employment, let me do justice to this liberal nation by declaring, that we need only look into every profession in life, from the Scotch gardener, baker, and hair-dresser; up to the Scotch merchant, the Scotch physician, the Scotch general, the Scotch admiral, and the Scotch lawyer; to prove, that, since the Union, merit has been equally rewarded throughout the whole island, whether its possessor was rocked in his cradle on the south, or on the north side of the Tweed!

“ The noble Lord concludes this prophetic reverie, with an allusion to the death of Julius Cæsar, which he compares to the murder of *Mother Caledonia*, by her own sons in the Scottish parliament. The comparison is so wild and inapt in all its parts, that it would be a waste of time to pursue it. If the Scotch parliament had been such a tyrant as the comparison would suppose, there was real patriotism in her instant annihilation. But in justice to the memory of my
ancestors,

ancestors, I disclaim any such charge, as imputable to the ancient Scottish Legislature. Whoever will take the trouble of perusing the acts and regulations of the Scotch parliament, will find a fund of much wisdom and good policy to admire. But the Union of the two kingdoms is ill understood, and ill defended, by those who conceive that it proceeded either from want of wisdom, or want of virtue in the Scotch parliament. It proceeded from a principle of rendering the exertions of its members more extensively useful, by enlarging its functions; and making them, as they now are, sharers in the deliberations of that Legislature, which is the only true exalted assembly, for the rational and practical freedom, for the security and the felicity of man, on the whole surface of the habitable globe!

“ Considering these historical facts, the people of Scotland sacrificed much more than what is now required from Ireland; and I believe the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Grey) will admit, that the people of *his* Northern neighbourhood had also experienced the happy effects of the Union. It was certainly within his recollection, as faithfully recorded in history, that the two Nations had thought it necessary to suffer a vast waste of territory

tory, near the River which separated England from Scotland, to serve as a boundary; and that all this desert, anciently a *land of neutrality*, was immediately cultivated and adorned, and, besides its excellent agricultural qualities, had produced men of talents, capable of taking a distinguished part in the debates of the British Parliament, and capable also of defending the liberties and privileges of *Northumberland*!—By the Union with Scotland, and the cultivation of this waste land, England got also the co-operation of a race of gallant men, who aided her in the most perilous situations, and were frequently the foremost to fight her battles!

“ Against all the prophecies of Lord Belhaven, and the other opposers of the Union, I will take the liberty of bringing under the recollection of the House a passage in a letter from Queen Anne to the Scottish Parliament, recommending to them to take the articles which had been agreed upon at London under their consideration. It was in these words:—

‘ The Union has been long desired by both Nations, and
 ‘ we shall esteem it as the greatest glory of our reign to have
 ‘ it now perfected, being fully persuaded that it must prove the
 ‘ greatest happiness of our People. An entire and perfect
 ‘ Union will be the solid foundation of lasting peace; it will
 ‘ secure

' secure your Religion, Liberty, and Property, remove the
 ' animosities among yourselves, and the jealousies and differ-
 ' ences betwixt our two kingdoms; it must increase your
 ' strength, riches, and trade, and by this Union, the whole
 ' Island being joined in affection, and free from all apprehen-
 ' sions of different interests, will be enabled to resist all its ene-
 ' mies, support its interest every where, and maintain the li-
 ' berties of Europe."

" From this remarkable passage it was evident,
 that Her Majesty was a true Prophetess, for not
 one syllable of her prediction has failed.

" It has been asked, what right have we to
 impute all those advantages to the Union of the
 two kingdoms, and why is it not to be supposed
 that Scotland, like other nations, would have
 advanced in prosperity from the various causes
 which have contributed to the modern wealth of
 other states?

" There is a multitude of answers that might
 be given to this question, founded on the local
 situation of Scotland, her internal policy, and her
 relation to other nations, which must for ever
 have debarred that kingdom, in a separate state,
 from participating in that prosperity which has
 marked the progress of other states in Europe.
 But in place of consuming the time of the House
 by reasoning, to which it may justly be imputed
 that it is influenced by events that have since oc-
 curred,

curred, I think I shall give them more satisfaction by using the words of a contemporary statesman, who shews himself a master of the subject, who was one of the Commissioners for treating with England for an Union, and who, upon the first article being brought under the consideration of the Scotch Parliament, gave his sentiments in the following words :

‘ My Lord, this article is the foundation of the
 ‘ whole treaty, and the approving or rejecting of
 ‘ it must determine Union, or no Union, betwixt
 ‘ both kingdoms.

‘ How far the approving this article conduces
 ‘ to our happiness appears evidently, by considering the three different ways proposed for retrieving the languishing condition of this nation; which are, that we continue under the same Sovereign with England, with limitations on his prerogative, as King of Scotland; that the two kingdoms be incorporated into one, or that they be entirely separated.

‘ That the Union of Crowns, with limitations on the successor, is not sufficient to rectify the bad state of this nation, appears from these positions, founded on reason and experience.

‘ Two

‘ Two kingdoms, subject to one Sovereign,
 ‘ having different interests, the nearer these are
 ‘ one to another, the greater jealousy and emula-
 ‘ tion will be betwixt them.

‘ Every Monarch, having two or more king-
 ‘ doms, will be obliged to prefer the council and
 ‘ interest of the stronger to that of the weaker,
 ‘ and the greater disparity of power and riches
 ‘ there is betwixt these kingdoms, the greater
 ‘ influence the more powerful nation will have on
 ‘ the sovereign. Notwithstanding these positions,
 ‘ I shall suppose the Parliament of Scotland is
 ‘ vested with the power of making peace and
 ‘ war, of rewarding and punishing persons of all
 ‘ ranks, of levying troops, and of the negative
 ‘ itself.

‘ I could shew the inconveniencies that must
 ‘ attend such a state of government, in disposal of
 ‘ places, and managing public affairs. I could
 ‘ likewise show the improbability of attaining such
 ‘ conditions, or keeping them if attained. But
 ‘ laying aside such considerations, my humble
 ‘ opinion is, that we cannot reap any benefit from
 ‘ these conditions of government, without the
 ‘ assistance of England, and the people thereof
 ‘ will never be convinced, to promote the interest

‘ of Scotland, till both kingdoms are incorporated
 ‘ into one ; so that, I conceive, such a state of
 ‘ limitations to be no better for Scotland than if
 ‘ it were entirely separated from England ; in
 ‘ which state, there is little appearance of procur-
 ‘ ing any remedy to our present circumstances ;
 ‘ which appears from these uncontroverted posi-
 ‘ tions.

‘ The people and government of Scotland,
 ‘ must be richer or poorer, as they have plenty or
 ‘ scarcity of money, the common measure of
 ‘ trade.

‘ No money or things of value can be pur-
 ‘ chased in the course of commerce, but where
 ‘ there is a force to protect it.

‘ This nation is behind all other nations of
 ‘ Europe, for many years, with respect to the
 ‘ effects of an extended trade.

‘ This nation being poor, and without force to
 ‘ protect its commerce, cannot reap great advan-
 ‘ tages by it, till it partake of the trade and pro-
 ‘ tection of some powerful neighbour nation, that
 ‘ can communicate both these.

‘ To

‘ To illustrate this last position, I shall give a
 ‘ short view of the state of commerce we must
 ‘ needs be in, with respect to our neighbour na-
 ‘ tions, supposing an entire separation from Eng-
 ‘ land.

‘ The ordinary means whereby we can flourish
 ‘ in wealth, is that balance which arises from
 ‘ the exchange of our natural or artificial product
 ‘ with other places : but we have no valuable
 ‘ branch of export, which does not interfere with
 ‘ the like commodity, in some more powerful
 ‘ neighbour nation, whose interest it is to sup-
 ‘ press or discourage our commodity, for raising
 ‘ the value of its own ; so that there is no demon-
 ‘ strable security for the vent and encouragement
 ‘ of any branch of our export.

‘ Can it be expected, that Holland will suffer
 ‘ us to improve our fishery, which is to them a
 ‘ nursery for seamen, a livelihood to many fami-
 ‘ lies, and an immense treasure to the public.

‘ If we traffic with England, our linen cloth,
 ‘ cattle, and coals will be discouraged, at least
 ‘ after the same manner that we discourage ex-
 ‘ port from thence. If we traffic with Muscovy,
 ‘ Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Germany, France,
 ‘ Spain,

' Spain, Portugal, and Italy, the sale of our com-
 ' modities will be of small value in those places,
 ' seeing the Dutch or English, by their encrease
 ' of trade, are capable to serve them with most
 ' of the like goods, cheaper and better than we.

' Let us look to any other part of the world
 ' for vent to our product, and we will find other
 ' nations have prevented us.

' If we attempt the East India trade, that is
 ' already enhanced by the Dutch, English, French,
 ' Spaniards, or Portuguese, from whom we must
 ' expect opposition; they themselves opposing
 ' one another daily, and we of no force to de-
 ' bate the same with the most inconsiderable of
 ' them.

' The trade of Africa is for the most part of
 ' small value, and every province of America is
 ' claimed as property by some powerful European
 ' nation.

' If it be said, that Scotland may make alliance
 ' with one of its neighbour nations for protec-
 ' tion; that alliance must be with Holland,
 ' England, or France: other countries being so
 ' remote, or poor, that their friendships can be of
 ' little use to us.

' With

' With Holland we can have no advantageous
 ' alliance, because its chief branch of trade is the
 ' same with ours ; with the English we can expect
 ' no profitable friendship, for they being our near
 ' neighbours will be jealous of our encrease in
 ' power ; and from France few advantages can be
 ' reaped till the old offensive and defensive league
 ' be revived betwixt France and Scotland, which
 ' would give umbrage to the English, and occa-
 ' sion a war betwixt them and us. And allow-
 ' ing the Scots, in such a juncture, with the as-
 ' sistance of France, to conquer England, Scot-
 ' land, by that conquest, could not hope to better
 ' its present state ; for it is more than probable,
 ' the conqueror would make his residence in Eng-
 ' land, as formerly the northern people used to
 ' do in their southern expeditions.

' From these considerations, I conceive, that
 ' this nation, by an entire separation from Eng-
 ' land, cannot extend its trade, so as to raise its
 ' power in proportion to other trafficking nations
 ' in Europe : but that hereby we may be in dan-
 ' ger of returning to that Gothic Constitution of
 ' government, wherein our forefathers were,
 ' which was frequently attended with feuds, mur-
 ' ders, depredations, and rebellions.

' My

' My Lord, I am sorry, that in place of things,
 ' we amuse ourselves with words: for my part, I
 ' comprehend no durable Union betwixt Scot-
 ' land and England but that expressed in this
 ' article by one kingdom; that is to say, one
 ' people, one civil government, and one in-
 ' terest.

' It is true the words Fæderal Union are
 ' become very fashionable, and may be hand-
 ' somely fitted to delude unthinking people; but
 ' if any Member of this House will give himself
 ' the trouble to examine what conditions or ar-
 ' ticles are understood by these words, and re-
 ' duce them into any kind of fæderal compact,
 ' whereby distinct nations have been united, I
 ' will presume to say, these will be found im-
 ' practicable, or of very little use to us.

' But to put that matter in a clear light, these
 ' queries ought to be duly examined, whether a
 ' fæderal union be practicable betwixt two na-
 ' tions accustomed to a monarchical government?
 ' Whether there can be any surè guaranty pro-
 ' jected, for the observance of the articles of a
 ' fæderal compact stipulated betwixt two nations,
 ' whereof the one is much superior to the other
 ' in riches, numbers of people, and an extended
 ' commerce?

‘ commerce? Whether the advantages of fæderal
 ‘ union do balance its disadvantages? Whether
 ‘ the English will accept a fæderal union, sup-
 ‘ posing it to be for the true interest of both na-
 ‘ tions? Whether any fæderal compact between
 ‘ Scotland and England, is sufficient to secure the
 ‘ peace of this island, to fortify it against the in-
 ‘ trigues and invasions of its foreign enemies?
 ‘ And whether England, in prudence, ought to
 ‘ communicate its trade and protection to this
 ‘ nation, till both kingdoms are incorporated
 ‘ into one?’

“ Thus spoke Mr. Seton, of Pitmedden, at the
 time when he had no resources, from which to
 draw his conclusions, but those of his own en-
 lightened understanding, and the view he could
 take of the existing state of the other nations of
 the world. But his reasoning was solid, and I
 would injure it by adding more to the particular
 points he has so ably treated of. I shall, how-
 ever, add one fact, which, in my conception,
 proves, beyond a doubt, that the rapid progress
 of prosperity of Scotland, arose from the Union
 of the two kingdoms. Where did the prosper-
 ity of Scotland make its first appearance, and
 its most early progress? It was in the western
 parts of the kingdom, owing clearly to the cir-

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cumstance

cumstance of those ports being locally best situated to take the benefit of the colonial trade, then opened to the enterprize of Scotland.

“ A question has been triumphantly asked by an Honourable Gentleman? ‘ Why not give ‘ all those advantages to Ireland without a ‘ Union?’ The best way I can answer this, is, by another question—If Great Britain should communicate these indulgences or opportunities to Ireland, could she, under her present Constitution or Government, take the advantage of them? I am convinced she could not, and that in her present situation such concessions would not be productive of advantage. Without an incorporated Union, they would be of no avail; for the strength and resources of both countries must be consolidated, in order to enable Ireland to reap the full advantage from such concessions.

“ It is from the confidence in the strength of Government, that a communication of capital and other advantages can alone arise. And this consideration recalls to my mind a proceeding, which took place before the Union with Scotland, which put the interests of that kingdom and Ireland in a sort of issue.—It happened early in the reign of Charles II. From the period of the crowns of both
kingdoms

kingdoms being united in the person of James I. Scotland enjoyed several important commercial advantages derived from England, until the reign of Charles II. when they were done away by the provisions of the Navigation Act: the Scots remonstrated against what they called an injustice, and Commissioners were appointed to take cognizance of the matter. In the course of these proceedings, the Scots, as already stated, loudly complained that they were treated with less indulgence than the Irish.

“ This complaint was answered by the English Commissioners as follows :—

‘ And whereas your lop’ps (lordships) doe in severall places
 ‘ give hints at Ireland, and seeme to make it a ground why this
 ‘ and other privileges should be granted to Scotland, because
 ‘ granted to Ireland, the answere is most cleare and obvious,
 ‘ (viz.) that Ireland is not onely under one king with us as
 ‘ Scotland, but belongs to, and is an appendix of the crown of
 ‘ England, and laws made in the Parliament of England doe
 ‘ bind them; and no law can be enacted by the Parliament of
 ‘ Ireland, but what passeth the Privy Councell of England, and
 ‘ orders of the Councell of England, and the Greate Seale of
 ‘ England, doe take place in Ireland; yea, the treasurer and
 ‘ other great officers of state in England, have jurisdiction and
 ‘ superintendency in Ireland; by all which it is absolutely in
 ‘ our power, when we grant privileges to them, to compell and
 ‘ keepe them up to the restrictions of them; all which is quite
 ‘ otherwise in relation to Scotland.

‘ These

“ These were assigned as reasons to the Scotch Commissioners, why Ireland, in its then existing connection with England, was considered as entitled to a degree of indulgence superior to that allowed to their nation; matters are now totally reversed, and in the present very much altered state of the relation between Great Britain and Ireland, a similar answer may be given to the question, “ Why not give these advantages to Ireland without a Union ? ”

“ In addition to this it might be observed, that the English Government, consistent with the duty they owe to their British Fellow-subjects, could not make such concessions to Ireland under its present Constitution and separate Legislature; so that the very circumstance of Ireland enjoying what is called an Independent Legislature is the means of depriving her of a participation in those commercial benefits. Concessions of such a nature, I contend, cannot be safely granted until the superintendence of an Imperial Parliament possesses the control over the resources of the Empire at large, and the power of applying them to Imperial Purposes. Indeed, the answer of the English Commissioners, as I have just recited, is one of the best that can be given to the repeated question I have already mentioned.

“ With

“ With respect, Sir, to the fate of the Propositions in 1785, so much spoken of, the Commercial benefits then tendered to Ireland were rejected on the same mistaken grounds that the House of Commons set their face against the present measure—They thought that the fourth Proposition encroached upon their Independence, and in consequence refused great commercial advantages. This consideration, I think, brings the question between the two countries to a fair issue. Is Ireland to be considered in a better situation with her present separate Legislature, and deprived of these manifold commercial advantages; or with her Legislature incorporated with that of Great Britain, with the full enjoyment of all those commercial benefits, and the various other advantages in a view of power, consequence, and respectability, as must result to Ireland, when thoroughly united with Great Britain?—This is the true question to be considered by the Irish: for my part, I have not a doubt upon the point—the latter situation would be decided to the advantage of Ireland.

“ Great stress, Sir, has also been laid, by an Hon. Gentleman on the Settlement in 1782, which has been called a Final Adjustment. I shall not cavil about words, but I contend that much of the argument founded upon that proceeding, as
used

used by the Hon. Gentleman, was thrown away, as inapplicable to the present question. Indeed, I might call it on his part as fighting with a shadow.—The question at issue, Sir, I must again repeat it, is between the benefits and advantages, take them all in all, derivable to Ireland from her present separate Legislature, or those from an incorporated Union; and I must again protest against the idea, that any thing in the present proceedings is any way hostile or derogatory to the acknowledged Independence of Ireland. The very mode of putting the present question to their Parliament, implies its Legislative Independence.

“ Much, if not the chief stress of the arguments urged by those who oppose this measure, has been laid on the opposition which has been made to it in the Parliament of Ireland. But when circumstances are attended to, I cannot refrain from stating, that this view of the subject is given in very erroneous colours. Two estates of the Parliament of Ireland, the King and the Lords, have pointedly expressed their desire that the subject should be entertained and considered; and the contrary opinion has been carried only by a very narrow majority in the House of Commons. Under such circumstances, it is idle to talk of this as a solemn decision of Parliament

liament. But if it had been entitled to that appellation, it would not have altered my opinion as to the propriety of this House considering the question, and taking the most effectual means of bringing it again and again under the consideration of the Irish nation. Sound reason and good sense will ultimately prevail; and I cannot help auguring well to the ultimate success of the measure, as essential to the happiness of Ireland, when I contemplate the clamour and violence by which the consideration of it has been resisted. These are not the weapons by which truth and solid reasoning maintain their empire over the hearts and understandings of men.—Cool consideration, and sober reasoning, are the arms by which the cause of truth is supported, and I have not a doubt that these weapons, properly used, will ultimately succeed against all the clamour and prejudice that can be adduced against them.

“ I believe there is no candid and rational man who is at present disposed to dispute, that a system of excise is the least expensive and most effectual mode by which a great revenue can be collected in any country. But it is in the memory of living men, and within the reading of us all, with what obloquy the first authors of that great system were loaded on its first introduction.

But

But the solid understanding of mankind at last prevailed.

“ In this, as in almost every other part of this subject, I must refer the recollection of the House to what passed in Scotland on occasion of the Union of that kingdom with England.

“ When Gentlemen pretended to think lightly of the sacrifices of Scotland compared with those of Ireland, let them recollect, that Ireland had not for many centuries been free or independent of England, but that Scotland *never* was completely subdued or under the control of England;—that Scotland gave up, what Ireland *cannot* give up, an independent Parliament of King, Lords, and Commons;—and that Scotland gave up, what Ireland *cannot* give up, an *independent and separate* CROWN!

“ The Scots undoubtedly surrendered these honours at the time with reluctance, and evinced the greatest hostility to the Union, until experience had made her acquainted with its blessings. I cannot, Sir, help noticing the vast unpopularity of the Duke of Queensberry and other Commissioners in favour of the Union, while the zeal and activity of the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Belhaven

Belhaven were the theme of every tongue. The Duke of Queensberry, the nobleman who took the most active part in carrying the measure into effect, and was Her Majesty's Commissioner for the purpose, narrowly escaped, in several instances, with his life. The Duke of Hamilton, the Patriot of that day, the most violent opposer of the measure, was applauded to the skies for his conduct by the populace—they regularly chaired him from his apartments in Holyrood House to the Parliament House, just as the Dublin mob lately did the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, exclaiming, in their mad career: "God bless your Grace!" But those who had been so much reviled, and had so nobly withstood the storms and tempests of the times, had the consolation to live and witness the popularity of that measure for which they were condemned. The Union soon became so popular, that the Pretender, having pledged himself to a repeal of the Act of Union, excited such a fermentation against him, that he was obliged to expunge this promise from his manifesto!

"This change of sentiment happened in the year 1715, eight years after the Union; and it ought to afford a salutary lesson to those false patriots who chuse to rest their characters and fame on the short-lived clamours of the day; and

it ought to afford a heartfelt consolation to those who have the magnanimity to disdain such mean and paltry arts, trusting that their real patriotism, founded on a consideration of the true interests of their country, will not fail ultimately to secure to them that solid and permanent fame which is alone worthy of possessing.

“ Another argument, Sir, I wish to submit to your consideration in favour of the Union. If it be true, as insisted upon by Mr. O’Connor, in his evidence, that the people of England, according to their present form of Government, have no cause of complaint, when compared with the state and sufferings of the people of Ireland, then it consequently follows, that an Union between the two nations, founded on principles of common freedom, and common interest, will at once remove every cause of grievance on the part of the people of Ireland. By the participation of the freedom of Britons, by the full enjoyment of all the privileges attached to a member of such an honourable community, the Government of this country endeavours to destroy the hopes of the enemy, and to strengthen and consolidate the interests of the empire. If it be true, as generally acknowledged, that the poor of Ireland experience all the miseries concomitant to a state of want and wretchedness, then
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it follows; that their participation of the privileges of Britons, will arouse and animate to laudable exertions that useful description of our fellow-subjects in the sister kingdom. That liberty which awakened the commercial enterprise of Scotland—that liberty which expanded its genius in the most honourable pursuits—that liberty which confirmed every sentiment which can dignify human nature, will, Sir, I am sure, have the same happy influence on the people of Ireland, connected with us by the dearest reciprocal obligations.

“ There are certain gentlemen, who had the hardihood to maintain, that the advocates for an Union were enemies to the peace of Ireland; but sure I am, Sir, that no arguments can be more futile or absurd. The introduction of that freedom into the various classes of Ireland, which was the admiration, and seemed the panegyric of all Europe, was no indication of the hostility of the Government of Great Britain. It would be a partnership, which would diffuse and extend its political and commercial advantages to the remotest corners of the globe—it would soon dissipate all idle and illiberal jealousies—it would allay the apprehensions of the real friends of both countries; and, by an equality of rights, infuse into the imperial spirit that noble emulation of mind which is the source of every excellence.

“ There

“ There are no sinister arts, as some malignantly insinuate, adopted for the attainment of the grand object of our discussion. There are no measures of compulsion, as the enemies of the measure affirm, in the contemplation of those in power. I wish, Sir, to convince, not to intimidate the people of Ireland. The system of terror, so often enforced by the common enemy, thank God, is no part of the policy of the British Government. Adopting expedients of lenity and persuasion, we address ourselves to the liberality and wisdom of the Irish nation. They know the sincerity of our friendship; they know also the bitter malignity of that foreign power, which, like the rattlesnake, first endeavours to charm and then destroy. But, Sir, I thought that the eyes of every British subject were at last opened to the treachery of the common enemy of mankind; and sorry am I to find, that the very enemy now so generally execrated, compliments the people of Ireland, by alledging, that there is a spirit of credulity in the Irish system, which will admit of the grossest deception from those who have sworn to overthrow any government founded in justice and humanity.

“ With regard to the final adjustment of the year 1782, it was a misapplication of terms to call it final. It was also to little purpose to re-
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cur to the opinion of Mr. Grattan, or the sentiments he expressed on the subject of that arrangement, and the debates that preceded it. Mr. Grattan, on that occasion, was known to have been only the mouth-piece of the Volunteers. The whole of the business was evidently done in a hurry, and could only be considered as a temporary expedient to serve the purposes and exigencies of the moment, not as a matter to which stability or permanency was likely to be attached. However that might be, the Parliament of Ireland had afterwards succeeded in obtaining every thing it desired; and he was so far from denying a particle of its independence, that he admitted it in its fullest extent, and even founded upon it no small part of his present arguments. Sir, had the adjustment in 1782, not taken place, the situation in which Ireland would then stand, might have afforded an argument against the present measure, because then the Sister Parliament could not, in strictness, be said to treat fairly; but its independence, at the present time, gave it the same competency to treat that was possessed by the Parliament of Great Britain.

“ If, however, upon reflection, the Irish Legislature should not be convinced of the utility and necessity of the projected Union, there was
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an end of the plan, and it must retain that degree of independence which it preferred to the numerous and important advantages which were held out to it. The division in Ireland, I admit, was hitherto so apparently hostile to the proposal, that it was nearly decided that it should not be even entertained or discussed. But Gentlemen seemed to insinuate an apprehension, that it was to be intimidated and bullied into it. The Administration of this Country, in the most full and unqualified manner, disclaimed the idea of any such intentions. Whatever might be the general opinion, or the prejudice against it, now in the heat and violence of the moment, arising from national pride, and a variety of other motives, I make no doubt but, were the measure adopted, in less than eight years that country, like Scotland, would be fully reconciled and convinced of its utility.

“ Among other arguments against the legislative Union, was an appeal to the national pride of Ireland. By those strenuous opponents of the measure, it was alledged, that the Parliament and People of Ireland would be degraded. Here, again, I must refer, Sir, to those stubborn facts recorded in the page of history. By a happy combination of wisdom and humanity, the Hierarchy was overturned, and an empire established
on

on principles of sound policy. The Prince who accomplished this grand object certainly merits the highest encomium for the operations of justice and humanity. But I wish, Sir, to put it to the conscience and feelings of those conversant with history, if they think that the various interests were injured or degraded by the appellation or privileges of Englishmen? The people of the Seven United States or Nations were neither debased nor enslaved by the consolidation of their interests under one imperial management or direction. The Welchman, a brave and generous character, neither feels himself enslaved nor degraded by a consolidation of interest and freedom; and sure I am, Sir, that the Scotchman is actuated by too noble and generous principles to entertain for a moment such an opinion. From these facts, I hope, therefore, I may assume, as a natural conclusion, that as former parts of the empire found neither injury nor inconvenience in an Union, that Ireland, as soon as prejudice and passion have subsided, will be equally harmonious to the happiness of the community. Such a state of Union would appear invincible to the common enemy, who, in the career of his conquests, not only robs individuals of their property, but perverts and destroys the salutary institutions of the nation with which he pretends to fraternise. A
 national

national mind, united according to the principles now recommended, and a public force thus concentrated, would be capable of repelling the attacks of the most formidable enemy, however strongly impelled by the new doctrines, and however animated by the fertile genius of innovation.

“ I have already had occasion to advert, in one point of view to the argument, that we should proceed no farther in the business after the House of Commons of Ireland had expressed its repugnance to it in so unequivocal a manner. I have only farther to say, that no decision of that House shall deter me, and the Government of Great Britain, from telling and explaining to the people and Parliament of Ireland, in as much detail as possible, what the proposals were which we were desirous to submit to their cool and dispassionate consideration.— The Irish House of Commons has expressed what they think of an Union : and it is our business to tell what we think of it also ; for this reason it is, that I strenuously contend for going into the Committee, that the whole people of both kingdoms may know what is the real basis on which we wish to treat. In this way only can we hope to baffle the various misrepresentations which are industriously propagated on this momentous business. I am the more desirous of it, because

cause I contend, the Hon. Gentleman, who lay so much stress on the decision of the Commons of Ireland, carry the conclusion from that circumstance much farther than they are warranted. Even the Irish House of Commons have not said that they will never agitate the business again. It would indeed have been strange if they had done so. After the decision in the House of Commons, an attempt was made to carry a resolution for setting the question aside altogether, by an Hon. Member (Mr. G. Ponsonby) whose motion the House thought proper to reject. [*It was here remarked across the table, that the motion was not rejected, but withdrawn.*] This difference in the term, Sir, makes but very little alteration in the state of the fact; for it is very well known, that gentlemen, warmly embarked in strong party questions, are not very likely to withdraw them, unless the disposition of the House indicates that, if pressed, they will be rejected—such, no doubt, is the case in the instance alluded to. The Honourable Gentleman succeeded in his opposition to the Address, but he failed in the Motion with which he attempted to follow it.

“All that is at present proposed, I again state, is to give the people and Parliament of Ireland time and opportunity to know and consider what

the English Parliament is willing to share with them, without attempting the smallest interference with their independence.

“ Many objections, Sir, have been made to the time of bringing forward these propositions, as if it were the worst and most unseasonable that could possibly be selected. It is however, agreed on all hands, that the situation of Ireland is truly alarming ; that it is threatened with the greatest dangers ; and that to avert them requires the fullest attention, and the utmost exertions of Government. The only difference of opinion, therefore, is, with respect to the means by which the evils can be remedied. The Administration of this Country proposes an Union, as the only sure and effectual means of affording it tranquillity at home and security from external attacks.—On the other side of the House, though an Union was objected to, no other remedy has been offered. For my part, I conceive that there is a peculiar propriety in bringing forward the proposal at this very critical time, when the reports of both Houses of Parliament in Ireland afforded irrefragable demonstration, that there still exists amongst them a deep and formidable conspiracy to separate that kingdom from Great Britain, and totally destroy all friendly connection between them.

What

What then are the best means to meet and defeat the ends of this conspiracy, and disappoint the hopes of those by whom it is supported and fomented? I know of no mode so effectually doing so, but to cement and consolidate, into one powerful and irresistible body, the strength of the whole Empire, by an Union of the two Legislatures.

“ The similarity of the circumstances induces me again to recur to the opposition, so frequently and strenuously given, to the proposal of an Union with Scotland. In various periods of our History attempts had been made to effectuate this favourite object, and as frequently frustrated. I shall shortly glance over the history of these attempts, beginning with that of Henry VIII. who offered his daughter Mary to James V. of Scotland, holding out such inducements as the Scottish King was inclined to listen to; but the plan was defeated by the intrigues of the French and the Popish faction. Edward VI. of England, in pursuance of his father’s design, offered himself to Mary Queen of Scotland; and though it was agreed to by the Parliament of that country, the interference of the same faction rendered this treaty as fruitless as the former. The plan was again renewed in the reign of James I. and though Articles of Union were agreed to by

Commissioners of both countries assembled at Westminster, and ratified conditionally by the Scotch Parliament, yet the jealousy of the High Churchmen at that time caused them to be rejected in England. The plan was again brought forward in the reign of Charles I. but ended in some unavailing conferences amongst the Commissioners appointed to manage it. In the reign of William and Mary, the proposition for an Union came from the Scotch Convention, and, on a recommendation from the Crown, the English House of Peers passed a Bill for appointing Commissioners for treating of an Union of the two Kingdoms, which Bill was thrown out by the Commons. Thus the matter rested till the reign of Queen Anne, at whose accession the project also failed, through the High Church influence. But some reverses in the progress of the war, and some events which took place in Scotland, made England take the alarm, and be as anxious for the accomplishment of the Union, as it was before forward in rejecting it. And here I wish it to be recollected, than when propositions to this effect failed in Scotland, it always happened through French influence and French intrigue. I remember a curious simile, which was urged as an argument against the Union in the Reign of James I. to shew that Scotland must be the sufferer, "If a rich field,"

said

said one of the Commissioners, "lie next to a poor field, the latter must be the loser, as all the cattle would not fail to go into the richer pasture."—After the Union was effected, many, no doubt, did from time to time come into the richer field, without, however, any injury being sustained by the fields from which they departed. It appeared then, that what first induced the people of England to become zealous for, and to urge an Union with Scotland, was to prevent the bad effects of party and French intrigue in that country.

"What was then the situation of Scotland, now became, by various accidents, that of Ireland. France labours by every means to form a connection in that country, and has in a great measure succeeded, as recent and unfortunate events testify: an Union is proposed by Great Britain, as the surest way to put an end to this dangerous conspiracy, by a consolidation of the whole powers of the Empire.

"Those who most admire the transactions which took place in 1782, must admit, that no arrangement has yet taken place adequate to the cure of those diseases which threaten the destruction of Ireland; and those who were particularly concerned in the settlement of that degree
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of Irish independence alluded to, had uniformly avowed, that something further was necessary, for the reciprocity of interests between the two countries so ardently wished for by the friends of both. If this deficiency of social compact between Great Britain and Ireland be acknowledged, as a recurrence to the proceedings of the times will verify, then it follows, that it was in the contemplation of those in power at that time, to advance, as soon as convenient, to the completion of this grand principle. It is needless to state reasons, or conjectures, for the delay of this final adjustment of amity: a variety of circumstances contributed to it; but I have no hesitation, Sir, in saying, that if such a plan as that intended had been discussed and confirmed by the Parliaments of both countries, it is more than probable, that we would not now have to lament the acts of outrage and rebellion which have so recently convulsed and despoiled our sister kingdom. It was this lamentable defect in the compact that excited the turbulent and obnoxious of Ireland—it was this lamentable defect that gave rise to the most dangerous passions and animosities—it in fact presented Ireland with more resentments to satiate, and less authority to controul. While, then, we deplore the late abominable excesses, it is our duty to prevent the return of the sanguinary scenes, by an Union of national interest,

likely

likely to renounce and command the affections of the people.

“ I again, Sir, affirm, that in any thing which has fallen from me for the purpose of elucidating my arguments, I mean to cast no imputation on the Parliament of Ireland. I maintain, that with respect to the Catholics, they are under the influence of prejudice ; I know, at the same time, that it is a prejudice inseparable from the nature of their situation. Attempts were made to shew, that the exclusions under which the Catholics of this country laboured, did not augur well for the Catholics of Ireland, when they should come under our Legislation. Here again I am at issue with gentlemen who advance this hypothesis ; and I do most sincerely maintain, that an Union is likely to prove advantageous to the Catholics of both countries, as under the same Legislature there is every probability, that after some time the same measure of indulgence will be equally distributed to both, The Irish will stand a chance of being soon put upon the same footing with the English ; and should it ever be found prudent wholly to improve the condition of the great majority of the Irish nation, the English Catholics might expect to be no longer under any restraints. But after all, I am of opinion, there is no comparison between the state of the Catholics in

in the two kingdoms; for if in England considerations of policy have hitherto imposed some restrictions on the Catholics, I am fully persuaded that they do not think their interests neglected, or that any sentiments of animosity, jealousy, or discord, are entertained against them. They may, and naturally do regret the exclusions to which they are subjected; but they never, for a moment, entertain a thought that there exists against them a hostile spirit, either in the legislative or executive government of this country. Nobody will venture to assert, that such is the feeling of the Catholics of Ireland.

“ If any Irishman should unfortunately prefer French fraternity to British liberty, I would most earnestly impress upon his mind the horrors and devastations of the Continent. Should he entertain a doubt of French rapine and murder, let him cast his eyes on Brabant, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, and Egypt.—In these miserable countries, he would find the unparalleled effects of the fertile genius of innovation and reform—he would there find innumerable examples of a violation of faith—he might there trace the agents of villainy starting from one extreme of iniquity to another, scoffing and scorning justice and humanity, and, in the very face of heaven, defying
divine

divine vengeance. These are the bitter effects of French fraternity, and by which its miserable victims have been sunk in agonies of confusion and despair.

“ I beg pardon, Sir, for having troubled the House at so great length (two hours and twenty minutes) ; but the observations advanced on the other side, and the circumstances of the case, require that I should take a comprehensive view of the whole subject ; and from every consideration I am induced, Sir, to vote for your leaving the Chair.”

*COPY of the RESOLUTIONS, as amended
and passed by the HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Feb. 14, 1799.*

Mr. Douglas (according to order) reported from the Committee of the whole House, to whom it was referred to consider further of his Majesty's most gracious Message of the 22d day of January last, the Resolutions which the Committee had directed him to report to the House; which he read in his place.

RESOLVED,

That the said Report be now brought up.

Mr. Douglas accordingly delivered the Resolutions in at the table, where the same were read, and are as followeth, viz.

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That in order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power, and resources of the British empire, it will be advisable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, in such manner, and on such terms and conditions, as may be established by acts of the respective parliaments of his Majesty's said kingdoms.

RESOLVED,

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That it would be fit to propose, as the first article, to serve as a basis of the said Union, that the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, upon a day to be agreed upon, be united into one kingdom, by the name of "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,"

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That, for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose, that the succession to the monarchy and the Imperial crown of the said United Kingdom shall continue limited and settled in the same manner as the Imperial crown of the said kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing laws, and to the terms of the Union between England and Scotland.

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That, for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose, that the said United Kingdom be represented in one and the same Parliament, to be stiled, "The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;" and that such a number of Lords spiritual and temporal, and such a number of members in the House of Commons, as shall be hereafter agreed upon by acts of the respective Parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said Parliament on the part of Ireland, and shall be summoned, chosen, and returned, in such manner as shall be fixed by an act of Parliament of Ireland previous to the said Union; and that every member, hereafter to sit and vote in the said Parliament of the United Kingdom, shall, until the said Parlia-

ment shall otherwise provide, take and subscribe the same oaths, and make the same declarations, as are by law required to be taken, subscribed, and made, by the Members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That, for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose, that the churches of England and Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, shall be preserved as now by law established.

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That, for the same purpose it would be fit to propose, that his Majesty's subjects in Ireland shall, at all times hereafter, be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing, in respect of trade and navigation, in all ports and places belonging to Great Britain, and in all cases with respect to which treaties shall be made by his Majesty, his heirs or successors, with any foreign power, as his Majesty's subjects in Great Britain.—That no duty shall be imposed on the import or export between Great Britain and Ireland of any articles now duty-free; and that on other articles there shall be established, for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal duties as shall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon, and approved by, the respective Parliaments; subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both kingdoms, but in no case to be increased:—That all articles, which may at any time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from foreign parts, shall be importable through either kingdom into the other, subject to the like duties

duties and regulations as if the same were imported directly from foreign parts :—That where any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture, of either kingdom, are subject to any internal duty in one kingdom, such countervailing duties (over and above any duties on import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect :—And that all other matters of trade and commerce, other than the foregoing, and than such others as may, before the Union, be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the agriculture and manufactures of the respective kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the United Parliament.

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That, for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose, that the Charge arising from the Payment of the Interest, or Sinking Fund for the reduction of the Principal, of the Debt incurred in either kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively :—That, for a number of years to be limited, the future ordinary expences of the United Kingdom, in peace or war, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective parliaments previous to the Union : and that, after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the proportion shall not be liable to be varied, except according to such rules and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the Union.

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That, for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose, That all laws in force,

force, at the time of the Union, and all the Courts of Civil or Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, within the respective kingdoms, shall remain, as now by law established, within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations, from time to time, as circumstances may appear, to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, to require.

The First Resolution of the Committee, being read a second time, was agreed to by the House.

The Second Resolution of the Committee, being read a second time;

A motion was made, and the question being put, That the further consideration of the said Report be adjourned to this day three months;

It passed in the negative.

Then the said Resolution was agreed to by the House.

The Third and Fourth Resolutions of the Committee, being read a second time, were agreed to by the House.

The Fifth Resolution of the Committee, being read a second time, was, with several amendments thereunto, agreed to by the House, and is as followeth, *viz.*

RESOLVED,

That, for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose, That the Churches of that part of Great Britain called England, and of that part of Great Britain called Scotland, and of Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government

government thereof, shall be preserved as now by law established.

The Sixth Resolution of the Committee, being read a second time, was agreed to by the House.

The Seventh Resolution of the Committee, being read a second time, was, with several amendments thereunto, agreed to by the House, and is as followeth, *viz.*

RESOLVED,

That, for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose, That the charge arising from the payment of the interest, or sinking fund for the reduction of the principal, of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively:—That, for a number of years to be limited, the future expences of the United Kingdom, in peace or war, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective parliaments previous to the Union; and that, after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the mode of jointly defraying such expences shall be regulated according to such rules and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the Union, for the purpose of establishing gradually an uniform system of taxation through every part of the United Kingdom.

The subsequent Resolution of the Committee, being read a second time, was agreed to by the House, and

ORDERED,

That the said Resolutions be communicated to the Lords at a conference, and their concurrence desired thereto.

ORDERED,

ORDERED,

That a conference be desired with the Lords, respecting the means of improving and perpetuating the connection between Great Britain and Ireland, and of augmenting and consolidating the strength, power, and resources of the British Empire.

ORDERED,

That the Earl Temple do go to the Lords, and desire the said conference.