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THE  
S P E E C H  
OF THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
JOHN, EARL OF CLARE,  
Es. Es. Es.

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Houses of the Oireachtas



Sixth Edition.

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THE  
S P E E C H

OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN, EARL OF CLARE,

*LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND,*

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS OF IRELAND,

ON A MOTION MADE BY HIM

ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1800.

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“ 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 Bri-  
“ tish Empire, it will be adviseable to concur in such Measures as may best  
“ tend to unite the two Kingdoms, in such Manner, and on such Terms and  
“ Conditions, as may be established by Acts of the respective Parliaments of  
“ Great Britain and Ireland.”

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By Authority.

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1800.

Houses of the Oireachtas



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LORD CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH,

IN THE

House of Lords of Ireland,

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1800.

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*The Order of the Day being read for taking his Majesty's Message into Consideration, relative to the proposed LEGISLATIVE UNION between Great Britain and Ireland, and the Articles for that Purpose,*

MY LORDS,

I RISE to call your Lordships attention to a subject, certainly the most momentous which has ever been submitted for decision to the Parliament

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of this Country ; a subject embracing the vital interests of Ireland, and intimately affecting the strength and prosperity of the British Empire. In this grave Assembly, I feel perfect confidence, it will receive a calm, and patient, and dispassionate investigation, I am sensible, nevertheless, that it falls to my lot to address your Lordships under great disadvantages. The best talents, the most enlightened minds of which the British Empire has ever had to boast, have been roused to exertion in contemplating an incorporation of these kingdoms ; and after the brilliant and ample discussion which the subject has received in both countries, it cannot well be expected of me to throw new light upon it. But when I recollect the criminal and unexampled efforts which have been made, from the moment when this measure was first proposed for discussion, to bear it down by noise, and faction, and intrigue, if not by recommendations of open rebellion, I should condemn myself for a gross dereliction of my duty, if I were to forbear to submit it to your Lordships most serious consideration, in all its various and important views and bearings ; more especially as I feel a strong conviction indeed, that nothing but Union can save this kingdom from annihilation, and eventually uphold the stability of the British Empire.

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My opinions on this subject have not been recently or lightly formed; early professional habits had taught me to investigate the foundation of Irish titles, and of necessity to look back into Irish history: it had been my fortune to be called into active and forward public service, perhaps during the most eventful period of it; and from a critical and attentive observation of what has passed in Ireland for the last twenty years, I am satisfied in my judgment and conscience, that the existence of her independent Parliament has gradually led to her recent complicated and bitter calamities, and that it has at length become desperate and impracticable. I did, more than once, when I sat in the House of Commons, state, without reserve, that the rapid growth of faction, and precipitate folly and passion of men, who from time to time were suffered to take a commanding lead in the Councils of that assembly, would inevitably reduce us to the alternative of Separation or Union. I have with as little reserve stated the same opinion since I have had the honour of a seat in this House, and I make no scruple to avow, that in every communication which I have had with the King's ministers on Irish affairs for the last seven years, I have uniformly and distinctly pressed upon them the urgent necessity of Union, as the last resource to preserve this Country to the British Crown. I pressed it without effect, until British



ministers and the British nation were roused to a sense of the common danger, by the late sanguinary and unprovoked rebellion.

It seems perfectly immaterial now to enquire what was the origin of that connexion which has subsisted for more than six centuries between this country and England, whether it originated in conquest, as English lawyers and historians have confidently advanced, or, as we assert with equal confidence, in a federal compact of some old Irish chiefs with the English king. Of the historical fact, however, no doubt can be entertained, that before that connexion, Ireland never enjoyed a state of domestic security, or a government or constitution capable of protecting her inhabitants from violation in their persons or property. If the conquest of Ireland was the object of the English king, his embarrassments on the continent seem to have disabled him from effecting it, the first English settlements here having been merely colonial, such as have since been made by the different nations of Europe, on the coasts of Asia, Africa or America. During several successive reigns the English colony was left to thrive by its own strength and resources, having received no other reinforcement than the occasional arrival of new British adventurers: The consequence was, that for centuries the English pale was not pushed beyond its original



ginal limits. So late as the reign of Henry the Eighth, it consisted of four Shires only, and Mr. Allen, then Master of the Rolls, reported to the king, that his laws were not obeyed twenty miles from the Capital. The common observation of the country was, that they who dwelt by west of the River Barrow, dwelt by west of the law.

The early policy of the English government certainly was, to discourage all connexion of the colony with the native Irish; the statute of Kilkenny, enacted by the provincial assembly of the pale in the reign of Edward III. having prohibited marriage or gossipred with the Irishry, or claiming the benefit of the Brehon law, by any person of English blood, under the penalties of treason. This statute has been much extolled by Sir John Davies, as eminently qualified to reform the degenerate English, as he calls them: it seems difficult, however, to reconcile it to any principle of sound policy; it was a declaration of perpetual war, not only against the native Irish, but against every person of English blood, who had settled beyond the limits of the pale, and from motives of personal interest or convenience, had formed connexions with the natives, or adopted their laws and customs; and it had the full effect which might have been expected, it drew closer the confederacy it was meant to dissolve, and implicated the colony of the pale in ceaseless warfare



fare and contention with each other, and with the inhabitants of the adjacent districts.

Such was the state of Ireland when the attempt was first made to promulgate the English statute law here; and it is not extraordinary that in the complicated quarrels and promiscuous warfare which had subsisted for centuries between the native Irish and degenerate English, and English of blood and English of birth within the pale, that the attempt proved altogether abortive. The taunting answer of Maguire Chief of Fermanagh, to the Lord Deputy, who applied to him to receive a Sheriff commissioned by Henry VIII. sufficiently explains the state of the country, and the authority of the King's government in it:—"Your Sheriff shall be welcome to me, but if he comes, send me his *eric*, (the price of his head) that if my people slay him, I may fine them accordingly."

In the same reign a formal treaty was made with the Earl of Desmond, for his permission that the English law should be executed, and the subsidies granted by the Parliament of the pale be levied in his country; and other chiefs treated for the admission of the King's Judges, or arbitrators as they called them, on condition only that they should observe the Irish law; and perhaps if these Judges, or any other officers commissioned by the Crown, had been authorized to act as arbitra-  
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tors to compose the feuds and animosities of the Irish tribes and powerful Lords of English blood, the habitual and licentious turbulence of the Irish nation might gradually have subsided, and acquiesced in the establishment of a rational and civilized government; but fatally at this time a new schism arose, which has been the bane and pestilence of Ireland. It has rendered her a blank amongst the nations of Europe, and will I fear long continue to retard her progress in the civilized world.

In every other nation of Europe where the reformed religion is established, it has been the result of enquiry and conviction.—It has kept pace with the progress of science, and the human mind, revolting from the impositions which had been practised upon it for ages, shook off the yoke of bigotry and superstition; but Ireland, cut off from all communication with the civilized world, and enveloped in dark and impenetrable ignorance, continued blindly devoted to the superstitious errors of the Popish faith; sunk as she was below the reach of curiosity or speculation, it was equally hopeless and impolitic to call upon the people at once to abjure the religion of their ancestors, and to subscribe to new doctrines which they were utterly incapable of understanding. In the reign of Henry VIII. no attempt was made to force the reformed liturgy upon them; he was satisfied with  
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a silent acquiescence in his claim of supremacy, but on his death this system of moderation was deserted; orders were issued by the Regency for enforcing the use of the English liturgy, and stripping the churches of their old ornaments in every district in which the English power was acknowledged. In the succeeding reign the tables were reversed:—The Protestant Churches were shut; the Popish liturgy and old ensigns of superstition were restored; and a Bull of Pope Paul the IV. for remission of past heresies, and receiving the penitent Irish into the bosom of the holy church, was accepted by both Houses of the Colonial Parliament, kneeling devoutly on their knees, and enacted and confirmed by statute. This extraordinary instrument with the detail of its legislative consecration, remains at this hour on your statute book. In the reign of Elizabeth a new reverse took place, without regard to the Bull of Paul, received and confirmed by the Irish Statute, the Popish churches were again stripped of their ornaments; the reformed liturgy was again enforced; and the English act of uniformity was enacted by the colonial parliament; and what seems to be a solecism in the history of legislation, in the body of this act, by which the use of the English liturgy, and a strict conformity to it, are enjoined under severe penalties, a clause is introduced, reciting, that English ministers cannot be found to serve in Irish churches; that the Irish people did  
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not understand the English language, that the church service cannot be celebrated in Irish, as well for difficulty to get it printed, as that few in the whole realm can read. And what is the remedy?—If the Minister of the Gospel cannot speak English, he may celebrate the church service in the Latin tongue; a language certainly as unintelligible to his congregation as the English tongue; and probably not very familiar to the Minister thus authorised to use it.

It seems difficult to conceive any more unjust or impolitic act of government, than an attempt thus to force new modes of religious faith and worship, by severe penalties upon a rude and superstitious and unlettered people. Persecution or attempts to force conscience will never produce conviction.—They are calculated only to make hypocrites or martyrs; and accordingly the violence committed by the regency of Edward, and continued by Elizabeth to force the reformed religion in Ireland, had no other effect than to foment a general disaffection to the English government; a disaffection so general as to induce Philip the II. of Spain to attempt partial descents on the southern coasts of this island, preparatory to his meditated attack upon England.—Elizabeth quickly saw her danger, and that it was necessary without delay to secure the possession of Ireland; she sent over a powerful and well appointed army, and after a difficult

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and bloody war of seven years, effected the complete reduction of the island, which to the period of this first conquest, had been divided into a number of licentious and independent tribes, under the rule of the ancient chiefs of the country, and powerful Lords of English blood, who had obtained profuse territorial grants from the crown. She did not however live to see this reduction completed; the capitulation with O'Neale was not signed till some time after her death; and therefore her successor must be considered as the first English Monarch who possessed the complete dominion of Ireland. The accession of James I. I consider as the æra of connexion between the sister islands. Then for the first time was the spirit of resistance to the English power broken down, and the English laws, universally acknowledged. Sir John Davies, in the quaint pedantry of his day, describes Justice, the sword having cleared her way, as taking the whole country in her progress as Virgo moves in the Zodiack, preceded by Leo.

The first object of the King seems to have been, to establish the reformation, but in pursuing it, unfortunately he adopted the same course by which his predecessors had been misled; but his measures were attended with much more serious and extensive consequences; their orders for religious reformation had extended only to the churches and districts



districts within the pale; but the orders sent by the Council of James I. extended to the whole island. The province of Ulster had been the principal theatre of the late civil war, and had been confiscated and seized into the hands of the crown. The old proprietors who had led the revolt were expelled, and replaced by a new set of adventurers from England and Scotland; all Protestants, who with a new religion, brought over with them a new source of contention with the inhabitants.

One of the modern arts of civil war in Ireland has been to stigmatize the memory of James I. as having sapped the liberties, and subverted the Parliamentary constitution of Ireland; and this revolutionary text from the moment it was given out has been enlarged upon with equal assiduity and success, by every avowed rebel and equivocal loyalist in the kingdom. But what is the fact which stands recorded and authenticated beyond doubt or controversy? That Ireland before the accession of James I. never had any thing like a regular government or Parliamentary constitution. In the reign of Edward II. the descendants of the first English settlers had a provincial assembly which was called the Parliament of the pale; the same sort of assembly was occasionally summoned during several successive reigns, and any man who will take the trouble to read the statute book



will find that the principal business of them all was to pass ordinances of outlawry against the native Irish, and inhabitants of English blood connected with them. But such was the contempt in which these assemblies were held, that even the colonists of the pale considered it an insult to be summoned to attend them. The Earl of Desmond claimed it as the right and privilege of the Lords of English blood, not to attend these assemblies, or to come into any walled town but at their will and pleasure. In the province of Connaught there is not the trace of any claim or exercise of any Parliamentary franchise till late in the reign of Elizabeth. In Ulster none till the reign of James I. Some few of the sea ports in Munster had been occasionally summoned to send deputies to the colonial Parliament, but such was the state of the country, that they could not make their way to the pale, insomuch that in the 33d Henry VIII. it was found necessary to repeal an ordinance by which the place of meeting of the colonial Parliament was restricted to Dublin or Drogheda. The cause assigned in the act of repeal is, that by reason of the distance of obedient Shires and Borough towns, and the perilous passage by the way from the King's rebels, these deputies could not attend. And it is quite true that James I. did sap the liberties of the Irish nation to murder obnoxious deputies on their passage to attend Parliament. It is equally true that modern asser-

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tors of Irish dignity and Independence have most laudably exerted themselves to revive these same liberties on a solid and permanent basis, and that the sovereign Irish people have been always extremely tenacious of them, as essential to their physical consequence. The crime for which the memory of James I. has been calumniated is, that he laid the foundation of a regular government in Ireland, and of the existing establishments in church and state. At his accession there were scarcely any protestants amongst the old inhabitants of English blood—amongst the native Irish none—For the last twenty years therefore of Elizabeth, she could not venture to call the colonial Parliament. The distinction of Englishry and Irishry had been nearly effaced in her time, and was succeeded by a new schism of protestant and papist, but from the first introduction of his protestant colony by James I. the old distinctions of native Irish and degenerate English, and English of blood and English of birth, were lost and forgotten; all rallied to the banner of the popish faith, and looked upon the new protestant settlers as the common aggressor and enemy; and it is a melancholy truth, that from that day all have clung to the popish religion as a common bond of union, and an hereditary pledge of animosity to British settlers and the British nation. What alternative then remained to the King for retaining this country under the dominion of his crown? In the modern



modern revolutionary phrase, the physical consequence of the country was arrayed against the English colony and the English government. He was therefore driven to the necessity of treating the old inhabitants as a conquered people, and governing their Country as an English Province, or of fortifying his Protestant colony by investing them exclusively with the artificial power of a separate government, which on every principle of self-interest, and self-preservation, they were bound to administer in concert with England. The Executive departments were under the immediate controul of the ordinary royal prerogative: but it was vain to hope that he could retain possession of Ireland under a separate government, unless a majority of the Irish Parliament stood well affected to the English crown, and English nation; and to obtain that majority, he resorted to the exercise of a prerogative which has always belonged to the English Crown, by erecting new counties and incorporating some of the principal towns, occupied by the new settlers, giving them the franchise of sending Representatives to the Irish Parliament: And I repeat, without incurring the hazard of contradiction, that Ireland never had any assembly which could be called a Parliament until the reign of James I. The Legislative assemblies before his accession, were composed only of the few persons who could be prevailed upon to attend from obedient shires and towns within  
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the pale, or immediately adjacent to it, and from a few scattered English settlements on the coasts of Munster: and with all the exertions made in support of the protestant colony, the majority in its favour at the first meeting was little more than Twenty. And it would seem that the debates of that day partook pretty largely of modern virulence, for a scuffle took place in the House of Commons, which might have ended in bloodshed, if the precaution had not been taken to disarm the combatants before they were suffered to meet in Parliament.

The steady government of Strafford kept down these animosities, which had continued with unabated rancour until his time. But at his removal the old inhabitants, taking advantage of the weakness and distraction of the English government broke out into open hostility and rebellion. The flame had long been smothered, and at length burst forth with a terrible explosion. The native Irish began the insurrection: but were soon joined by the old English colony, and the Lords of English blood, with few exceptions; and after a fierce and bloody contest of eleven years, in which the face of the whole island was desolated, and its population nearly extinguished by war, pestilence, and famine, the insurgents were subdued, and suffered all the calamities which could be inflicted on the vanquished party, in a long contested civil war;



war; this was a civil war of extermination.— The rebellion of 1798 would have been a war of extermination, if it had not been for the strong and merciful interposition of Great Britain; and I could wish that the befotted rebels of this day, who have been saved from extermination by a British Monarch, would look back at the blessings of republican liberty, dealt out to their ancestors by the usurper Cromwell.

His first act was to collect all the native Irish who had survived the general desolation, and remained in the country, and to transplant them into the province of Connaught, which had been completely depopulated, and laid waste in the progress of the rebellion. They were ordered to retire there by a certain day, and forbidden to repass the river Shannon on pain of death, and this sentence of deportation was rigidly enforced until the Restoration. Their ancient possessions were seized and given up to the conquerors, as were the possessions of every man who had taken part in the rebellion, or followed the fortunes of the King, after the murder of Charles I. And this whole fund was distributed amongst the officers and soldiers of Cromwell's army, in satisfaction of the arrears of their pay, and adventurers who had advanced money to defray the expences of the war. And thus a new Colony of new Settlers, composed of all the various sects which then infested England, Independents,



dents, Anabaptists, Seceders, Brownists, Socinians, Millenarians, and Dissenters of every description, many of them infected with the leaven of democracy, poured into Ireland, and were put into possession of the ancient inheritance of its inhabitants: And I speak with great personal respect of the men, when I state that a very considerable portion of the opulence and power of the kingdom of Ireland, centers at this day in the descendents of this motley collection of English adventurers.

It seems evident from the whole tenor of the declaration made by Charles II. at his restoration, that a private stipulation had been made by Monck, in favour of Cromwell's foldiers and adventurers, who had been put into possession of the confiscated lands in Ireland; and it would have been an act of gross injustice on the part of the king, to have overlooked their interests. The civil war of 1641, was a rebellion against the Crown of England, and the complete reduction of the Irish rebels by Cromwell, redounded essentially to the advantage of the British empire. But admitting the principle in its fullest extent, it is impossible to defend the Acts of Settlement and Explanation, by which it was carried into effect; and I could wish that the modern assertors of Irish dignity and independence would take the trouble to read and understand them.

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The Act of Settlement professes to have for its object the execution of his Majesty's gracious declaration for the settlement of his kingdom of Ireland, and satisfaction of the several interests of adventurers, soldiers, and other his subjects there, and after reciting the rebellion, the enormities committed in the progress of it, and the final reduction of the rebels by the king's English and Protestant subjects, by a general sweeping clause vests in the king, his heirs and successors, all estates real and personal of every kind whatsoever in the kingdom of Ireland; which at any time from the 21st of October 1641, were seized or sequestered into the hands, or to the use of Charles I. or the then king, or otherwise disposed of, set out or set apart by reason, or on account of the rebellion, or which were allotted, assigned, or distributed to any person or persons for adventures, arrears, reprisals, or otherwise, or whereof any soldier, adventurer, or other person were in possession for or on account of the rebellion: And having thus, in the first instance, vested three fourths of the lands and personal property of the inhabitants of this island in the king, commissioners are appointed with full and exclusive authority, to hear and determine all claims upon the general fund, whether of officers and soldiers for arrears of pay, of adventurers who had advanced money for carrying on the war, or of innocent papists, as they are called; in  
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other words, of the old inhabitants of the island, who had been dispossessed by Cromwell, not for having taken a part in the rebellion against the English crown, but for their attachment to the fortunes of Charles II. But with respect to this class of sufferers, who might naturally have expected a preference of claim, a clause is introduced, by which they are postponed after a decree of innocence by the Commissioners, until previous reprisal shall be made to Cromwell's soldiers and adventurers, who had obtained possession of their inheritance. I will not detain the House with a minute detail of the provisions of this act, thus passed for the settlement of Ireland; but I wish gentlemen, who call themselves the dignified and independent Irish nation, to know, that seven millions eight hundred thousand acres of land were set out under the authority of this act, to a motley crew of English adventurers, civil and military, nearly to the total exclusion of the old inhabitants of the island; many of whom who were innocent of the rebellion, lost their inheritance, as well for the difficulties imposed upon them by the court of claims in the proofs required of their innocence, as from a deficiency in the fund for reprisal to English adventurers, arising principally from a profuse grant made by the Crown to the Duke of York; and the Parliament of Ireland, having made this settlement of the island in effect on themselves, granted an hereditary revenue to the Crown, as an indemnity



indemnity for the forfeitures thus relinquished by Charles II.

After the expulsion of James from the throne of England, the old inhabitants made a final effort for recovery of their ancient power, in which they were once more defeated by an English army, and the slender reliques of Irish possessions became the subject of fresh confiscation. From the report made by the Commissioners appointed by the Parliament of England in 1698, it appears, that the Irish subjects outlawed for the rebellion of 1688, amounted to three thousand nine hundred and seventy-eight; and that their Irish possessions, so far as could be computed, were of the value annually of two hundred and eleven thousand six hundred and twenty-three pounds, comprising one million sixty thousand seven hundred and ninety-two acres. This fund was sold under the authority of an English act of parliament, to defray the expences incurred by England in reducing the rebels of 1688, and the sale introduced into Ireland, a new set of adventurers.

It is a subject of curious and important speculation to look back to the forfeitures of Ireland incurred in the last century. The superficial contents of the island are calculated at eleven millions and forty-two thousand six hundred and eighty-two



two acres. Let us now examine the state of forfeitures :

Confiscated in the reign of James I.			
the whole of the province of Ulster			
containing, Acres	-	-	2,836,837
Set out by the court of claims at the			
Restoration, Acres	-	-	7,800,000
Forfeitures of 1688, Acres	-	-	1,060,792
Total,			11,697,629

So that the whole of your island has been confiscated, with the exception of the estates of five or six old families of English blood, some of whom had been attainted in the reign of Henry VIII.; but recovered their possessions before Tyrone's Rebellion, and had the good fortune to escape the pillage of the English Republic inflicted by Cromwell; and no inconsiderable portion of the island has been confiscated twice or perhaps thrice in the course of a century. The situation therefore of the Irish nation at the Revolution stands unparalleled in the history of the inhabited world. If the wars of England carried on here, from the reign of Elizabeth had been waged against a foreign enemy, the inhabitants would have retained their possessions under the established law of civilized nations; and their country have been annexed as a province to the British empire. But the continued and persevering resistance of Ireland to the British crown during



during the whole of the last century, was mere rebellion, and the municipal law of England attached upon the crime. What then was the situation of Ireland at the Revolution, and what is it at this day? The whole power and property of the country has been conferred by successive Monarchs of England upon an English colony, composed of three sets of English adventurers, who poured into this country at the termination of three successive rebellions.—Confiscation is their common title; and from their first settlement they have been hemmed in on every side by the old inhabitants of the island, brooding over their discontents in sullen indignation. It is painful to me to go into this detail, but we have been for twenty years in a fever of intoxication, and must be stunned into sobriety.

What then was the security of the English settlers for their physical existence at the Revolution; and what is the security of their descendants at this day?—The powerful and commanding protection of Great Britain. If by any fatality it fails, you are at the mercy of the old inhabitants of the island; and I should have hoped, that the samples of mercy exhibited by them in the progress of the late rebellion, would have taught the gentlemen who call themselves the Irish nation, to reflect with sober attention on the dangers which surround them. Their ancestors were sensible of it



as became them; they saw the seeds of disunion in the connexion which then subsisted between this country and Great Britain; strong symptoms of political warfare had appeared so early as 1698, when heads of a bill were transmitted hence under the Great Seal of Ireland, re-enacting an English act of Parliament, made to bind Ireland.

The English House of Commons took up the gauntlet with a high hand, a committee was appointed to examine Mr. Molyneux's book, and to report such passages in it as they should find denying the authority of the Parliament of England, also what proceedings have been in Ireland, that might occasion the said pamphlet. On the 22nd of June 1698, the committee reported the obnoxious passages, and that on enquiry into the proceedings in Ireland which might occasion the pamphlet, they find in a bill transmitted under the great seal of Ireland, during the late Parliament there, entitled a bill for the better security of her Majesty's person and government, that the whole of an act passed in England for abrogating the oath of Supremacy in Ireland, and appointing other oaths is re-enacted with some alterations, and that in the same bill the crown of Ireland is stiled the imperial crown of Ireland. Upon this report, the House resolved, nemine contradicente, "that the book published by Mr. Molyneux, was of dangerous tendency to the crown and people of England,



land, by denying the authority of the King and Parliament of England to bind the kingdom and people of Ireland, and the subordination and dependence that Ireland hath and ought to have upon England, as being united and annexed to the imperial Crown of England. They resolved also that the bill lately transmitted from Ireland, whereby an act of Parliament made in England expressly to bind Ireland is pretended to be re-enacted, had given occasion and encouragement to forming and publishing the dangerous positions contained in the said book. The House in a body presented an address to the King, enlarging in terms of great indignation on the book and its pernicious assertions, and on the dangerous tendency of the proceedings of the Irish Parliament; beseeching his Majesty to exert his royal prudence to prevent their being drawn into example, and to take all necessary care that the laws which direct and restrain the Parliament of Ireland in their actions be not evaded; and concluding with an assurance of their ready concurrence and assistance in a parliamentary way, to preserve and maintain the dependence and subordination of Ireland to the imperial crown of England. The king answers, "that he will take care that what is complained of shall be prevented and redressed, as the Commons desire." Thus were the Parliaments of the two countries at issue so early as the 10th of King William. But the English



English colony, however fore they might have felt under the sharp rebuke of their countrymen, were too sensible of the dangers by which they were surrounded, and their imbecility to encounter them to push this political quarrel to a breach with the English Parliament; and at the next meeting of the Parliament of Ireland, which did not take place till the 2nd of Queen Anne, the House of Lords having taken into serious consideration the state of this nation, did on the 25th October 1703, resolve, \* that it was their opinion, upon due consideration of the present constitution of this kingdom, that such an humble representation be made to the Queen, of the state and condition thereof, as may best incline her Majesty by such proper means as to her Majesty should seem fit, to promote such an union with England, as may qualify the states of this kingdom, to be represented there.

In 1707, the House of Lords again took up the same subject, and in their address of congratulation to the Queen on the Scotch Union, † beseech her Majesty to go on, and extend her favour to all her subjects, till none are excluded *from so great a blessing*, but such as by their own frowardness or disaffection to the public good, bar themselves from the general advantages of Her Majesty's reign; and express their hope that Her Majesty's goodness and wisdom will conquer

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\* Journals of Lords, vol. 2. p. 29. † Ibid. p. 161.



quer even those, and make them sensible of their true interest. In the same year the Commons addressed the Queen to the same effect, and from the coldness with which she answers the addresses of both Houses on this subject, it is plain that her ministers would not listen to the proposition of an Union with Ireland; and in finding a substitute for it, there was a race of impolicy between the countries. The Parliament of England seem to have considered the permanent debility of Ireland, as their best security for her connexion with the British crown, and the Irish Parliament to have rested the security of the colony, upon maintaining a perpetual and impassable barrier against the ancient inhabitants of the country. The executive government was committed nominally to a Viceroy, but essentially to Lords Justices, selected from the principal State Officers of the country, who were entrusted with the conduct of what was called the King's business, but might with more propriety have been called the business of the Lords Justices. The Viceroy came to Ireland for a few months only in two years, and returned to England perfectly satisfied with his mission, if he did not leave the concerns of the English government worse than he found them: and the Lords Justices in his absence were entrusted implicitly with the means of consolidating an aristocratic influence, which made them the necessary



cessary instruments of the English government. After the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, the trade of this country had so increased, that the hereditary revenue was amply sufficient for every public service, and a considerable surplus remained in the Exchequer, after defraying every charge upon it, so that in effect the crown was little, if at all dependent on Parliament for support; and it is difficult to say how long this oligarchy might have kept its ground, if the intrigues of an ambitious ecclesiastic, then at the head of the Irish church, had not laid the foundation of party heat and animosities, which have long disturbed and degraded our parliamentary proceedings. The great trial of strength between the Primate and the then Speaker of the House of Commons was made in 1753, when a bill was proposed for applying the surplus then in the exchequer to pay a public debt which had been some time before contracted. The courtiers of that day, ranged under the ecclesiastical banner, contended that this surplus belonged to the Crown, and therefore, that the King's previous assent to its application, ought to be signified before the Commons could appropriate it. The patriots, ranged under the Speaker's banner, insisted that no such assent was necessary, and beat their political adversaries by a small majority. Heads of a bill for the appropriation passed the Commons without taking notice of the King's



previous assent to it. They were rejected by the Crown, and the surplus was applied by the royal authority, without the intervention of Parliament. But the Commons took effectual care that the question should not occur a second time, by appropriating every future surplus to their private use, under the specious pretence of local public improvements. Wind-mills and Water-mills, and Canals, and Bridges, and Spinning Jennies, were provided at the public expence, and the Parliamentary patrons of these great national objects, entrusted with full discretionary powers over the money granted to complete them. From this system of local improvement, a double advantage arose to the Irish aristocracy, it kept their followers steady in the ranks, and reducing the Crown to the necessity of calling for supplies, made the political services of the leaders necessary for the support of the King's Government; but the precedent was fatal, and a system has gradually been built upon it, which would bear down the most powerful nation of the earth. The government of England at length opened their eyes to the defect and dangers of it; they shook the power of the aristocracy, but were unable to break it down, and substituted a much more serious evil, by giving birth to a race of political adventurers, possessed of an inexhaustible stock of noise and indecorum, always at the disposal of the best and highest



highest bidder. Still, however, political ferment led to no serious conflict till the period of the American war, when we thought fit to avail ourselves of the hour of common danger and calamity, to press the claims of Ireland in terms of marked hostility to the British nation. The imbecility of Lord Buckinghamshire's government had arrayed the volunteer army, and the address to his Majesty, voted in 1779, by the Commons, demanding a free trade as the right of Ireland, was followed instantly by a resolution of thanks to that army for their array. On the old Irish volunteers I desire to be understood not to convey any thing like a censure. Their conduct will remain a problem in history; for without the shadow of military controul, to their immortal honour it is known, that from their first levy, till they disbanded themselves, no act of violence or outrage was charged against them; and they certainly did on every occasion where their services were required, exert themselves with effect to maintain the internal peace of the country. The gentlemen of Ireland were all in their ranks, and maintained a decided influence upon them. But I shall never cease to think that the appeals made to that army by the angry politicians of that day, were dangerous and ill-judged in the extreme; and that they established a precedent for rebellion, which has since been followed up with full success.

The



The concession of a free trade was succeeded by the demand of a free constitution; and the English colony was taught in an evil hour, to separate itself from the English nation. Inflammatory appeals to the volunteer army, which was held up as the armed majesty of the people, were made from day to day from the decisions of Parliament; and the public prints teemed with resolutions and addresses, of menacing violence in the name of different armed bodies, stating their determination to assert the freedom and independence of Ireland to the last drop of their blood. The Duke of Portland took upon him the government of Ireland in the midst of this outcry, very naturally under an impression, that the country was ripe for rebellion; in which however, I have no doubt, he was deceived. I can assert with perfect confidence, that no Gentleman of Ireland would at that day have drawn his sword against Great Britain, and it certainly was the duty of the King's servants, in whom his representative reposed a confidence, fully to have explained this to him.

It is the fashion now to assert, that what passed at that period was acknowledged in both countries to be a final adjustment of all political claims and controversies between them, and a full security for their constitutional connexion. If it be a final adjustment of political controversy, and a full security for their connexion, it was achieved with a rapidity unexampled, and by means the most extraordinary



extraordinary which have ever attended an adjustment of any kind between two independent countries. The history of this adjustment lately given in the name of the gentleman who is styled the Father of it, is—

“ That it emanated from the armed convention assembled at Dungannon, was approved at county meetings of the people armed and unarmed, and was sanctioned and registered by the Irish Parliament.”

If this history of our boasted constitution be well founded, I have no scruple to declare, that we cannot too soon get rid of it; we may very probably, if this be true, have a new armed convention, assembled at Wexford or at Naas, and a new constitutional emanation from it, of a government composed of a directory and two councils, or of a consulate and tribunate and conservative senate; which I doubt not some future House of Commons may sanction and register in either form. But what is the true history of this final adjustment?—The Duke of Portland arrived at the seat of his government in the evening of the 14th of April 1782, during a recess of Parliament. On the 16th Parliament met, and a message was sent down to both Houses, in the King's name,



name, to know the grounds of discontent and jealousy which then prevailed in Ireland, and recommending to Parliament to take them into consideration. In answer to this message, an address was moved in the Commons, by a very respectable country gentleman, such as became a sober and rational man,—“That in obedience to his Majesty’s most gracious recommendation, the Commons would without delay take into their consideration the discontents and jealousies which have arisen in this kingdom, the causes whereof they would investigate with all convenient dispatch, and humbly submit to his Majesty’s royal justice and wisdom.” But the ardour of a popular statesman could not brook the disgrace of reflection, and an amendment to the address was moved and voted by the Commons in the space of one half hour, containing the whole of this final adjustment on the part of Ireland. No man of common sense will believe that the King’s ministers in Great Britain or Ireland, could have been such dupes and drivellers as to rest the future connexion of the two countries upon such a proceeding. But this no longer remains a question of inference or opinion; the official correspondence of the Duke of Portland, laid before the British House of Commons in the last session of Parliament, clears up the point most completely. Our address was voted on the 16th of April—and on the 6th of May following the  
Duke



Duke of Portland writes to Lord Shelburne, " recommending to the British cabinet concession " of all the points demanded by the Irish addresses," but " stating his perfect confidence in the " readiness of the Irish Parliament to co-operate in " the most effectual measures either with the King's " confidential servants, or by commissioners to be " appointed, or through the medium of the Chief " Governor; to settle the precise limits of the " independence which is required, the consideration which should be given for the protection " expected, and the proportion which it would be " proper for them to contribute towards the general support of the empire; in pursuance of the " declaration contained in the concluding paragraph of their own address; the regulation of " the trade would make a very necessary article " of the treaty." This communication was made by the Duke of Portland before the claims of Ireland were brought into discussion in the British Parliament, and plainly on the faith of this representation made to the British cabinet, of the readiness on the part of Ireland to settle every question of imperial policy or regulation which might thereafter arise, the subject of our claims were brought on in the British Parliament, and on the 17th of May, resolutions of both Houses were agreed to, first, " That the act of 6 George I. for the better securing the dependency of the kingdom of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain



ought to be repealed." And secondly, " That it is indispensable to the interest and happiness of the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, that the connexion between them should be established by mutual consent on a solid and permanent basis ; and *for this purpose*, both Houses address his Majesty to desire that he will be graciously pleased to take such measures as his Majesty should in his royal wisdom think most conducive to the establishing by mutual consent, the connexion between this kingdom and the kingdom of Ireland, upon a solid and permanent basis."

The only act to be done on the part of the British Parliament in compliance with our address, was the repeal of the Statute of 6 George I. every other article of Irish grievance arose from Irish Statutes, and therefore if the two Houses of the British Parliament could have supposed that the repeal of these Statutes alone were to constitute a final adjustment, or establish any thing in the shape of security for the connexion between the two kingdoms, they would have stopped at their resolutions for a repeal of the act of George ; but in conformity with the representations of the Duke of Portland, they go on and address his Majesty. For what ?—To take such measures as to his royal wisdom shall seem meet, and may be most conducive to establish by mutual consent the connexion between the two kingdoms upon a solid and permanent basis. That is, " that the king would be



be pleased either by communications made to his confidential servants, or through the medium of the chief governor of Ireland, or by commissioners, set on foot a treaty between his kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, to settle the precise limits of the independence required, the consideration to be given for the protection expected, and the proportion which it would be proper for Ireland to contribute towards the general support of the empire: in pursuance of the declaration contained in the concluding paragraph of their own address."—A treaty which the Duke of Portland stated as essential to a final adjustment, and in itself so evidently necessary to establish peace and connexion between the two countries, that he had perfect confidence in the readiness of the Irish parliament to enter upon and conclude it on fair and honourable terms; a treaty held out to the British cabinet, as an inducement for concession of all the points demanded by the Irish addresses: And it is clear and plain that some members of the British cabinet did, without delay, apply themselves to draw out a plan of such a treaty. For in the same correspondence, we find a letter written on the 20th of May 1782, by the Duke of Portland to Mr. ———, in answer to a dispatch received from him—"I should be very glad  
 "to hear that Lord Charlemont was inclined to  
 "accede to any part, or even to the idea of such a  
 "plan as you have communicated to me; I should  
 "think



“ think it a material step to that situation in which  
 “ it is the clear interest of both kingdoms to be  
 “ placed, being convinced that what is most like  
 “ union is the most probable bond of con-  
 “ nexion to restore and perpetuate the harmony  
 “ and prosperity of the two countries.” Another  
 member of the cabinet, whose title to the repu-  
 tation of genuine English whiggism no man will de-  
 ny, the late Marquis of Rockingham, writes at the  
 same time to the same effect. His letter is  
 dated the 25th of May—“ The essential points  
 “ on the part of Ireland now acceded to,  
 “ will, I trust, establish a perfect cordiality be-  
 “ tween the two countries, and as there cannot  
 “ now exist any ground of contest or jealousy  
 “ between them on matters of right, the only  
 “ object left for both will be how finally to arrange,  
 “ settle, and adjust all matters, whereby the  
 “ union of power, strength, and mutual and  
 “ reciprocal advantage will be best permanently  
 “ fixed.—I observe in Lord Shelburne’s letter to  
 “ your Grace of the 18th of May, he states more  
 “ reluctance to the idea of commissioners than I  
 “ should judge to be the general opinion of his  
 “ Majesty’s servants; the measure may be doubt-  
 “ ful; but if approved by the leading gentlemen  
 “ of Ireland, might be productive of much good.”

Here



Here then is damning proof of the falsehood and folly of the assertion, that the transactions which passed in 1782, were considered as final between Great Britain and Ireland.—It is plain that they were looked upon by all parties as leading only to a future treaty for consolidating the strength, and establishing the connexion of both countries on a broad and permanent basis; and no honest and sensible Irishman could have looked to the concessions then made by Great Britain, in any other point of view, than the advantage which Ireland derived from them in enabling her to treat on equal terms;—and it was not until the Duke of Portland had every reason to believe that such treaty was in a fair train of settlement, that he announced the proceedings of the British parliament in a speech from the throne. This was done on the 27th of May—and on the 6th of June, the Duke of Portland writes to Lord Shelburne:—“I have the best reason to  
 “hope that I shall soon be enabled to transmit to  
 “you the sketch or outlines of an act of parliament to be adopted by the legislatures of the  
 “respective kingdoms, by which the superintending power and supremacy of Great Britain in  
 “all matters of state and general commerce, will  
 “be virtually and effectually acknowledged; that  
 “a share of the expence in carrying on a defensive or offensive war, either in support of  
 “our own dominions, or those of our allies, shall  
 “be



“ be borne by Ireland in proportion to the actual  
 “ state of her abilities, and that she will adopt  
 “ every such regulation as may be judged neces-  
 “ sary by Great Britain for the better ordering  
 “ and securing her trade and commerce with fo-  
 “ reign nations, or her own colonies and depen-  
 “ dencies, consideration being duly had to the  
 “ circumstances of Ireland.—I am flattered with  
 “ the most positive assurances from — — —  
 “ and — of their support in carrying such a bill  
 through both houses of parliament, and I think it  
 “ most adviseable to bring it to perfection at the  
 “ present moment.”—And I happen to know from  
 an unofficial quarter, that the sketch of such an  
 act of parliament was then drawn—I know the  
 gentleman who framed it, and I know from the  
 same quarter, that blank and blank, and blank  
 and blank did unequivocally signify their appro-  
 bation of it.

It may well be supposed that this communi-  
 cation was received with the satisfaction which it  
 demanded by the British cabinet. On the 9th of  
 June, Lord Shelburne writes to the Duke of Port-  
 land in answer to his last dispatch:—“ The con-  
 “ tents of your Grace’s letter of the 6th inst. are  
 “ too important to hesitate about detaining the mes-  
 “ senger, whilst I assure your Grace of the satis-  
 “ faction which I know your letter will give the  
 “ King—



“ King—I have lived in the most anxious ex-  
 “ pectation of some such measure offering itself:  
 “ nothing prevented my pressing it in this dis-  
 “ patch, except having repeatedly stated the just  
 “ expectations of this country, I was apprehen-  
 “ sive of giving that the air of demand, which  
 “ would be better left to a voluntary spirit of  
 “ justice and foresight. No matter who has the  
 “ merit, let the two kingdoms be one, which  
 “ can only be by Ireland now acknowledging,  
 “ the superintending power and supremacy to be  
 “ where nature has placed it, in precise and un-  
 “ ambiguous terms. I am sure I need not incul-  
 “ cate to your Grace, the importance of words  
 “ in an act which must decide on the happiness  
 “ of ages. particularly in what regards contri-  
 “ bution and trade, subjects most likely to come  
 “ into frequent question.”

This bright prospect of peace and happiness  
 was, however, very soon clouded ; for on the 22nd  
 of June, the Duke of Portland writes to Lord  
 Shelburne :—“ The disappointment and mortifi-  
 “ cation I suffer by the unexpected change in  
 “ those dispositions which had authorized me to  
 “ entertain the hopes, I had perhaps too sangui-  
 “ nary expressed in my letter of the 6th, must  
 “ not prevent me from acquainting you, that for  
 “ the present these expectations must be given  
 “ up—I trust and am inclined to flatter myself  
 “ they



“they are only suspended, and that they will be  
 “revived when the temper of this country has  
 “recovered its tone, and acquired that degree  
 “of composure, which must give it the firmness  
 “necessary for effectuating so wise and salutary  
 “a measure. By the accounts of the events of  
 “these three or four days, and by the timidity  
 “and jealousy of the first people in this country,  
 “it is clear that any injudicious or offensive mea-  
 “sure may be prevented, but that any attempt to  
 “conciliate the minds of this nation to any such  
 “measure as I intimated the hope of, would at  
 “this moment be delusive and impossible.”

To us who were eye-witnesses of the transactions  
 of that day, this sudden change of disposition is  
 perfectly intelligible. Mr. Flood had started his  
 political curiosity of simple repeal, in the inter-  
 val between the time of promised support of a  
 treaty for final imperial adjustment, and this  
 sudden change of disposition of which the Duke of  
 Portland had so much reason to complain, he had  
 contrived to turn the tide of popular clamour  
 against his political rivals, and they were alarmed  
 left in the discussion of the treaty, he might play  
 the game against them, which they played in 1785  
 against the Irish nation; by mistating and misre-  
 presenting it, as a surrender of Irish dignity and  
 independence, and an insidious reclamation by the  
 British cabinet of the legislative authority of the  
 British



British Parliament; and thus were the peace and happiness of ages, the clear interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and their lasting connexion, sacrificed to the timidity and jealousy of the patriot statesmen of 1782, or rather to their corrupt love of a flimsy and precarious popularity. Let them have grace now to hide their heads, and not to talk of final adjustment.

But before I dismiss this adjustment of 1782, I shall take leave to advert to the description given by the gentleman who is called the father of it, of the sponsors of its finality; it is contained in his valedictory address to his constituents of the metropolis at the expiration of the last Parliament. “The greater part of the Irish  
 “Boroughs were creations by the House of Stewart, for the avowed purpose of modelling and  
 “subverting the Parliamentary constitution of  
 “Ireland: these are understated when they are  
 “called abuses in the constitution; they were  
 “gross and monstrous violations, recent and  
 “wicked innovations, and fatal usurpations in  
 “the constitution, by Kings whose family lost  
 “their kingdom for crimes less deadly to freedom,  
 “and who in their Star chamber tyranny, in their  
 “court of high commission, in their Ship money,  
 “or in their dispensing power, did not commit an  
 “act so diabolical in intention, so mortal in principle, or so radically subversive of the funda-  
 G “mental



“ mental rights of the realm, as the fabrication  
 “ of Boroughs; which is the fabrication of a  
 “ court Parliament, and the exclusion of a con-  
 “ stitutional commons, and which is a subversion  
 “ not of the fundamental laws but of the constitu-  
 “ tional law-giver; you banish that family for  
 “ other acts, but you retain that act by which  
 “ you have banished the commons. The birth  
 “ of the Borough inundation was the destruction  
 “ of liberty and property. James the I. who  
 “ made that inundation, by that means destroyed  
 “ the titles of his Irish subjects to their lands; the  
 “ robbery of his liberty was followed by the  
 “ robbery of his property. This King had an  
 “ instrument more subtle and more pliable than  
 “ the sword, and against the liberty of the sub-  
 “ ject more cold and deadly, a court instrument,  
 “ that palls itself in the covering of the constituti-  
 “ on, and in her own colours and in her name,  
 “ plants the dagger,—a *Borough Parliament*. This  
 “ fabric of Boroughs like a regal pandemonium,  
 “ constitutes a regal House of Commons.” It is  
 not a little singular that this Gentleman has ac-  
 cepted a gift of fifty thousand pounds from this  
 same regal pandemonium; and it is to be hoped  
 that if his benefactors have merited one tenth of  
 his maledictions, he will have the justice to bring  
 back the gift, principal and interest, into the Ex-  
 chequer. I am almost ashamed to dwell upon  
 this topic of final adjustment, and shall refer the  
 House



House only to the comment of one other of the parties to it. Mr. Fox, a leading member of the British cabinet in 1782, on the 22nd of June 1785, in one of his speeches against the commercial propositions, he declares, that no commercial regulation had been intended by the administration of 1782, in proposing the second resolution on the Irish address; “ there were, he said, “ at that time certainly some regulations wanting “ between the two countries, which were to extend “ to political objects alone, and not to commercial, “ they went to establish what was much wanted, “ something to replace that power, which in their “ struggles for independence, the Irish had imprudently insisted on having abolished, and “ which he had given up, in compliance with “ the strong current of prejudice of that nation, “ tho’ with a reluctance which nothing but irresistible necessity could have overcome; the “ power which he wished to have seen replaced, “ was that which had so often been of late under “ discussion in the Parliament, and which had “ been variously termed, sometimes called commercial, at other times external, and frequently imperial legislation. That power being precipitately abolished, some succedaneum should “ be found for it, for without one general superintending authority, to embrace and comprehend “ the whole system of the navigation of the empire, “ it



“ it must necessarily happen that much confusion  
 “ and great inconvenience will take place.”

But let me admit, in contradiction to these damning proofs, that this was considered by both countries as a final adjustment. If practice and experience have proved that it has sowed the seeds of ceaseless contention and periodical rebellion, is there a principle of sound policy or common sense to preclude a revision of it?

Waving for a moment the dignity and independence of imperial Ireland, let us see how her government in its present state of connexion with Great Britain must be administered. We admit the dependence of the Crown of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain, but there is a distinct Parliament in each country, exercising all legislative functions without restriction; the unity and dependence of our executive is unquestioned, but all Legislative authority in either country is denied to the other, not only in municipal regulations, but in every branch of imperial policy, whether of trade and navigation, of peace and war, of revenue, or of the executive government, when it may happen to be committed to a Regency. Between two countries equal in power, such a connexion could not subsist for one hour, and therefore, its existence must depend upon the admitted inferiority and masked subordination



subordination of one of them. Ireland is that inferior country, and call her constitution independent or dignified, or by any other high sounding title in the Irish Vocabulary, her's must be a provincial government, and of the worst description; a government maintained, not by the avowed exercise of legitimate authority, but by a permanent and commanding influence of the English executive in the councils of Ireland, as a necessary substitute for it. In the present state of connexion between Great Britain and Ireland there can be no other bond of their Union. If there be not an implicit concurrence by Ireland, in every imperial act of the Crown, which has the sanction of the British Parliament, and in every article of British Legislation upon imperial subjects, there is an end of your connexion with the British nation; and I repeat, that the only security which can by possibility exist for this national concurrence, is a permanent and commanding influence of the English executive or rather of the English cabinet, in the councils of Ireland. Such a connexion is formed, not for mutual strength and security, but for mutual debility,—it is a connexion of distinct minds and distinct interests, generating national discontent and jealousy, and perpetuating faction and misgovernment in the inferior country. The first obvious disadvantage to Ireland is, that in every department of the state, every other considera-  
 tion



tion must yield to Parliamentary power; let the misconduct of any public officer be what it may, if he is supported by a powerful Parliamentary interest he is too strong for the King's representative. A majority in the parliament of Great Britain, will defeat the minister of the day; but a majority in the parliament of Ireland against the king's government, goes directly to separate this kingdom from the British crown; if it continues, separation or war is the inevitable issue--and therefore it is, that the general executive of the empire, so far as is essential to retain Ireland as a member of it, is completely at the mercy of the Irish parliament: and it is vain to expect, so long as man continues to be a creature of passion and interest, that he will not avail himself of the critical and difficult situation, in which the executive government of this kingdom must ever remain, under its present constitution, to demand the favours of the Crown, not as the reward of loyalty and service, but as the stipulated price, to be paid in advance, for the discharge of a public duty.—Every unprincipled and noisy adventurer who can achieve the means of putting himself forward, commences his political career on an avowed speculation of profit and loss, and if he fails to negotiate his political job, will endeavour to extort it by faction and sedition, and with unblushing effrontery, to fasten his own corruption on the King's Ministers.—English influence is the inexhaustible theme for popular



popular irritation and distrust of every factious and discontented man who fails in the struggle to make himself the necessary instrument of it.—Am I then justified, in stating that our present connexion with Great Britain, is in its nature formed for mutual debility; that it must continue to generate national discontent and jealousy, and perpetuate faction and misgovernment in Ireland? I will now state with equal confidence that our present connexion is formed for periodical Irish rebellions, so often as Great Britain is engaged in a foreign war.

It is a fact of public notoriety that on the acknowledgment of Irish independence in 1782, the first step taken by some gentlemen of this country, who have been in the habit of considering the Irish nation as their political inheritance, was to make it a muniment of their title, by forming a political confederacy offensive and defensive in both countries. The basis of this alliance was, mutual engagement to play the independence of Ireland against their political antagonists whenever they happened to occupy the seat of power; and if I am to judge by the conduct of the parties principally concerned up to this hour, to foment turbulence and faction in Ireland even to open rebellion, if it should be found necessary to the removal of an obnoxious British administration.—In prosecution of this very laudable



able system, it became an essential object of the confederacy to guard against any settlement between Great Britain and Ireland, which might cut off the most obvious sources of mutual jealousy and discontent, and the address with which this was effected in 1785, will remain a memorable example of the virtues and talents of gentlemen, who had the merit of baffling the commercial treaty of that day. The principal articles of it had been first proposed in the Irish parliament, and sent over to Great Britain for the concurrence of the parliament of that country. The British merchants and manufacturers instantly took the alarm. They crowded to the bar of the British House of Commons with petitions against the Irish propositions, as calculated to transfer the wealth and industry and population of Great Britain to this country. Parliament however had wisdom and firmness to withstand this groundless clamour, and the propositions sent from Ireland, were in substance agreed to. One article of the treaty was, that the precarious grant to Ireland in 1779, of a right to trade with the British colonies and plantations should be confirmed and made perpetual. And in the course of debate it was objected, and with great reason, that Ireland being an independent kingdom, there was no security for her adopting the regulations made by Great Britain, of her trade and navigation



gation with these same colonies and plantations. To obviate this objection an article was proposed by Great Britain for our adoption, stipulating that so long as Ireland continued to trade with the British colonies and plantations, she would adopt the regulations of trade and navigation imposed by the British parliament on British subjects in carrying on the same trade, and that whenever Ireland did not chuse so to do, for so much the treaty should be at an end—instantly the members in the British parliament who had theretofore opposed the treaty as being exclusively beneficial to this country, shifted their ground, they became the loudest champions of Irish independence, and resisted this article, of which they were in effect the authors, as an infringement of our recently acquired free constitution, and an insidious attempt to reclaim the legislative supremacy of Great Britain.

I have been informed from authority which I cannot doubt, that this curiosity was struck out by a gentleman of distinguished ability, a native of this country, who has long been a member of the British House of Commons; and that when he first stated it to the party with whom he acted, they reprobated the deception as too gross even for Irish dupery. He told them, "I know my countrymen, and be assured they will swallow the bait."

H

The



The event has fully established his sagacity and intimate knowledge of his countrymen; the Irish gudgeon did swallow the bait, plain and palpable as it was.—Perish the Empire—live the Constitution! was the theme of Irish dignity of that day; a species of survivorship not altogether intelligible to a man of plain understanding; but the jargon was received with general and enthusiastic acclamation, as a sublime effusion of Irish eloquence, and unanswerable proof of British duplicity. Will any man be found at this day to believe, that the forward characters in this Irish farce were duped by their British connexions? No. The solid interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and the fair foundation of their permanent connexion were sacrificed on the altar of faction; and in less than three years from the period of boasted final adjustment, did imperial Ireland come to a breach with the British nation on the important imperial question of trade and navigation. Within the next four years a new imperial question arose, the most critical and important which could have come into discussion; a question of the identity of the executive power; and here again imperial Ireland came to a breach with the British nation, marked by virulent hostility. It had pleased God to afflict our good and beloved King with a malady, which induced a momentary disability in the personal exercise of his royal functions. The Parliament of Great Britain,  
to



to whom this great public calamity was announced almost immediately after it had been visited on the British empire, proceeded with becoming deliberation to provide for the exercise of the royal functions, during their suspension in the person of the Sovereign; and whilst their deliberations depended, the Parliament of Ireland met. I was then a member of the House of Commons, and speak now from my knowledge of their proceeding. On the 5th of February, 1789, this calamity was announced to the Lords and Commons, by the Marquis of Buckingham, in a speech from the throne; and on the next day many voluminous documents explaining the nature and extent of it, were by his command laid on the table of the House of Commons. It was proposed, that an interval of ten days should be allowed for consideration; and that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the 16th of February, to take into consideration the state of the nation. This proposition, however, was negatived by a majority nearly of fifty, and the committee was ordered to sit on the 11th. The documents on which they professed to ground their deliberations, were printed by order, and were delivered to the members wet from the press, as they entered the House of Commons on the 11th, the day on which the committee sat. I pressed in vain for an adjournment even of one day, that some appearance of decency might be kept up upon a subject



ject so serious and solemn ; and being overruled  
 I desired, that the printed documents might be  
 read by the clerk of the committee at the table.  
 This could not be refused, but such was the noise  
 and confusion that prevailed when he set about to  
 read the evidence on which the deliberations of  
 the British Parliament were at that moment en-  
 gaged, that I gave it up, and the committee pro-  
 ceeded to settle this momentous question, without  
 a tittle of evidence before them, on which they  
 could be supposed to found a parliamentary pro-  
 ceeding. Before their adjournment, however,  
 they came to two resolutions:—First, that the  
 personal exercise of the royal authority was inter-  
 rupted for the present, by his Majesty's indisposi-  
 tion : And second, that an humble address should  
 be presented to his Royal Highness the Prince of  
 Wales to request of him to take upon himself the  
 government of this kingdom, during his Majesty's  
 indisposition, under the stile and title of Prince  
 Regent of Ireland. The committee made their  
 report the same night ; and it was instantly re-  
 ceived and agreed to. The next day the address  
 was voted by the House of Commons, and sent  
 up to the Lords for their concurrence ; and thus  
 within six days from the time when this most mo-  
 mentous question was first submitted to the Com-  
 mons of Ireland, did they dispose of it, without  
 a semblance of decency or deliberation, and in  
 direct violation of the law. The address under-  
 went



went some slight alteration in this House, and was brought up to the King's Representative on the 18th of February by both Houses, for transmission to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. When Lord Buckingham informed them, "that under the impressions which he felt of public duty, and of the oath of office he had taken, he was obliged to decline transmitting their address into Great Britain, not conceiving himself warranted to lay before the Prince of Wales an address purporting to invest his Royal Highness with powers to take upon him the government of this realm, before he shall by law be enabled so to do," the Commons were pleased to take fire at this refusal, which they treated as an insult to their dignity, and proceeded to assert it, by selecting four very worthy gentlemen as parliamentary commissioners for presenting their address, who on their arrival at the city of London, found they were bearers of a fool's message, and by voting what they called a censure on the King's Representative; but what I shall always consider as a very honourable mark of distinction for not sacrificing his allegiance, and violating his oath of office in compliance to their passion and folly, they resolved "that in addressing his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to take upon him the government of this country, the Lords and Commons of Ireland have exercised an undoubted right, and discharged an indispensable duty, to which they  
only



only are competent." And further, that his Excellency's answer to both Houses of Parliament is ill-advised, contains an unwarranted and unconstitutional censure on the proceedings of both Houses of Parliament, and attempts to question the undoubted rights and privileges of the Lords and Commons of Ireland. It so happened, that the Lord Lieutenant's Secretary received his dispatches in the House of Commons, during the sensible and temperate debate upon these resolutions; and the King's convalescence was announced in the London Gazette, under the authority of Doctor Warren, who was not the most sanguine of his Majesty's physicians, as having taken place, on the 11th of February, the day on which the Irish House of Commons had voted the suspension of his royal functions; and when I shewed this Gazette to the gentlemen who then composed the Irish government, with a recommendation to them at least to suspend the mission of their commissioners, I have a perfect recollection, that some of them accused me of producing a forged Gazette.

Let me appeal to every sober member of the community, whether this country can ever recover this shock to her security, under the present form of her connexion. You have here recorded on the Journals of Parliament a broad precedent for separation. Nay, if the proceedings of the  
Irish



Irish Parliament can be supposed to have any thing of validity in them, you were for some weeks in a state of actual separation from Great Britain. I can assert with perfect confidence, that for several weeks the authority of the British crown was not acknowledged in Ireland.

The authors of this enormity assert, in extenuation of their conduct, that their choice fell upon the same personage whom it was known the British parliament, would of necessity, look to in the existing emergency; but if Ireland has a choice, the principle of separation is established, and the principle not only stands broadly asserted on the Journal of Parliament, but has been acted upon by two branches of the legislature. — If Ireland has a choice of her Regency during any fortuitous incapacity attached to the Crown, that choice may fall hereafter, on a French, or an Irish Consul; and when we look at the further extravagancies of the House of Commons in 1789, it is by no means an impossible event. The supplies for that year had been voted in committee for the ordinary period, to the 25th of March 1790; but before the report of the committees of supply and ways and means, his Majesty's recovery was announced; the Mutiny Bill had also been agreed to in the committee for the ordinary term of one year; and what was the offering



fering of duty by the Irish Commons to greet their Sovereign on his recovery? a stinted bill of supply, and a stinted mutiny bill. So long as the self-created government considered itself established, the chiefs who composed it were willing to accept the supplies and maintain the army; but the moment they found their sovereign restored to his people, they stinted the supply to two months, and stinted the mutiny bill to the same period; and this was done by the House of Commons, in consequence of the King's recovery; the resolutions of the committee of supply were altered, as was the mutiny bill, on the report, for the avowed purpose of controuling the Crown in the just exercise of its vital prerogatives. Let the people of Ireland who are taught to look with abhorrence on the parliament of Great Britain, contrast this proceeding with the conduct of the House of Commons, on the change which took place in the administration in 1783. The ministers, who had been just put out of office, had a decided majority in the House of Commons; was any man found in the British parliament, to make a proposition to withhold or stint the supplies? no—in the warmth of political animosity the Commons of Great Britain felt their paramount duty to the British nation. In Ireland the peace and honour of the kingdom were sacrificed without feeling or remorse to vindictive ambition and rapacity; and to the scandal and disgrace



grace of the Irish nation, the authors of these enormities long escaped public and general reprobation; but the influence of the Irish precedent on our connexion with the British Crown, never can be repaired, and when looked to in the full extent of its mischief, ought to make every sober man in the community shudder for his safety, under the existing constitution. The bond of Union, if it exists, arises from two Irish statutes—the Act of Annexation of Henry VIII. and the Act of Recognition of William and Mary—one an Act of the Colonial Parliament, the other an Act of the Borough Parliament, or in the phrase of Revolution, of the Regal Pandemonium. Is it even an improbable event, that in some future convulsion of party, the House of Commons may be persuaded to think, as the City of Dublin has been tutored, that the dependence of our executive on the British Crown is the worst condition of slavery?—"That in the legislative usurpation of the British parliament, the greatness of the tyrant qualified the condition of the slave, but that by their dependence on the British Crown, the people are prostrate to the legislative usurpation of another body, a British cabinet, a humiliated and a tame tyrant?" And is it an improbable event that, to shake off this tyranny, a Bill of Repeal of the Acts of Annexation and Recognition, making a distinct settlement of the Irish Crown on the House of Hanover, may come



up to this House in a future parliament, attended by a stinted Bill of Supply and a stinted Mutiny Bill? Every argument in favour of Irish dignity and independence which prevailed in the appointment of an Irish Regency in 1789, will apply with equal force to a distinct settlement of the Irish Crown, and the objection of separation will be answered by the Irish settlement of the Crown, upon the august and illustrious House of the British monarch. If I am told that the good sense and discretion of any future House of Commons, will afford full protection against such an extravagance, I will answer, the precedent of 1789 has taught me to appreciate the security. I make no scruple to avow, that when I look back to the events of the last twenty years, I should feel most happy to commit my country to the sober discretion of the British parliament, even though we had not a single representative in it. Let the people of Great Britain be taught to understand the solid interests of Ireland, and I have no fear that they will not attend to them.

It might reasonably have been expected that the gentlemen who took upon them the office of Ministers of the Irish people in 1782, and now assert the final adjustment of constitutional questions at that period, would have exercised their functions with fidelity, and definitively have settled the government of the country; but on the  
dismissal



dismissal of some of them from the King's service after his Majesty's recovery, a new constitutional budget was produced. When the confidence of the Crown was withdrawn from these gentlemen, their perception was sharpened, and a second constitutional project was brought forward, not composed of the present essentials of Liberty, Reform, and Emancipation, but what the party called the internal reform of the House of Commons, the perfect assimilation of the Irish to the English constitution. The means to attain this desirable end were specifically stated—a limitation of the pension list—an exclusion of pensioners from the House of Commons—a restriction of placemen who should sit there—a responsibility for the receipt and issue of the public treasure: and the better to effectuate these great national objects a Whig Club was announced in a manifesto signed and countersigned, charging the British government, as James I. has since been charged, with a deliberate and systematic intention of sapping the liberties and subverting the parliament of Ireland. All persons of congenial character and sentiment were invited to range under the Whig banner, for the establishment and protection of the Irish constitution on the model of the Revolution of 1688; and under this banner was ranged such a motley group of congenial characters, as never before were assembled for reformation of the state. Mr. Napper Tandy

was



was received by acclamation, as a statesman too important and illustrious to be committed to the hazard of a ballot. Mr. Hamilton Rowan also repaired to the Whig banner. Unfortunately the political career of these gentlemen has been arrested—Mr. Tandy's by an attainder of felony, and an attainder of treason; Mr. Hamilton Rowan's by an attainder of treason; The Whig Secretary, if he does not stand in the same predicament, is now a prisoner at the mercy of the Crown, on his own admission of his treasons; and if I do not mistake, the whole society of Irish Whigs have been admitted, *ad eundem*, by their Whig brethren of England. In the fury of political resentment, some noblemen and gentlemen of the first rank in this country, stooped to associate with the refuse of the community, men whose principles they then held in abhorrence, and whose manners and deportment must always have excited their disgust.

Unfortunately for the cause of discontent, the servants of the crown in both countries outbid the Whigs of 1789 in concession; a Place Bill and a Pension Bill were agreed to; the office of High Treasurer was put into commission; and the British Parliament repealed the act, by which British ports were shut against the importation of articles the growth or produce of the British plantations from Ireland; and perhaps a fresh supply of grievances might have been wanting to meet these concessions,



cessions, if an improvement had not been made on the Whig institution, by an avowed Jacobin society, who assumed the title of United Irishmen; and to this society we are indebted for the modern essentials of Liberty, Parliamentary Reform, and Catholic Emancipation; topics first invented for rebellion, and since warmly taken up by some gentlemen who have contrived to identify their principles with the cause, without exposing their persons to the dangers of treason.

With respect to the old code of the Popery Laws, there cannot be a doubt it ought to have been repealed. It was impossible that any country could continue to exist under a code, by which a majority of its inhabitants were cut off from the rights of property. But in the relaxation of these laws there was a fatal error. It should have been taken up systematically by the ministers of the crown, and not left in the hands of every individual who chose to take possession of it, as an engine of power or popularity. This, however, was done, and before the subject attracted the notice of the servants of the crown, the Popery Laws were unequivocally repealed so far as they affected the rights of property; were relaxed in every clause of intolerance which affected the Popish worship; and the profession of the law was opened to persons of the Popish religion without qualification or restriction. In 1792, a giddy young man, now



no more, was brought over here from England by the Catholic Committee as their avowed agent; who immediately after his arrival commenced a warm canvass of the members of both Houses of Parliament for the political interests of his clients; and in the course of this canvass I can state from my own knowledge his great argument was, an unequivocal offer of the services of his clients, to men whose stations naturally gave them some weight in the public councils, to establish their political power on a basis not to be shaken, if they would put themselves at the head of the Catholic body. At the same period their ultimatum was stated by their general Committee, in resolutions dated 4th February, 1792, signed Edward Byrne, and countersigned Richard M'Cormick, Secretary. I will state them as published by authority of the Catholic Committee; they are most material to illustrate some subsequent events.—“Resolved, that the Committee has been informed, that reports have been circulated, that the application of the Catholics for relief, extends to total and unlimited emancipation.”—“That therefore, we think it necessary to declare, that the whole of our late application, whether to his Majesty's Ministers, or to men in power, or to private members of the legislature, neither did, nor does contain any thing more, either in substance or in principle, than the four following objects:

First.



First. Admission to the profession and practice of the law.

Second. Capacity to serve on county magistracies.

Third. A right to be summoned and to serve on grand and petit juries.

Fourth. The right of voting in counties only for protestant members of parliament, in such a manner however, as that a Roman Catholic freeholder should not vote unless he either rents or cultivates a farm of twenty pounds per annum, in addition to his forty shillings freehold, or else shall be in possession of a freehold of twenty pounds a year.

In the session of that year two petitions were preferred to the House of Commons by the Catholic Committee, stating these as their ultimate claims of relief. The first was couched in terms of so much violence and indecorum, that the gentleman who presented it, asked as a personal favour to himself, that he might be allowed to withdraw it. The second petition was drawn in terms of decency and respect; but the great parliamentary declaimers had not then seen the new light of emancipation, and the petition was rejected by the



the Commons. On a division the numbers were two hundred and twenty-eight to twenty-five. I have been well informed, that a proposition had been made at that time by Mr. Hamilton Rowan to the Whig Institution, to adopt the cause of emancipation, and when he was informed it could not be, he declared he would present his Whig uniform to the waiter who stood behind him, as a person best fitted for it. In the next year, at the opening of the session, a recommendation was made to both Houses of Parliament from the throne, in his Majesty's name, to take into consideration the situation of his Catholic subjects—and a Bill was brought into the House of Commons by the Lord Lieutenant's Secretary, by which every privilege claimed for the Catholics by their committee, as containing in substance or principle their ultimate objects, was granted to them; the franchise of voting at elections was conferred without restriction, and in addition, they were enabled to hold every office civil and military under the Crown, with the exception of about forty, without taking the oaths, or subscribing the declaration, as required from every other class of the King's subjects.—This Bill passed into a law, and from that time there has not been a civil disability of any description by which a Papist or Roman Catholic in this kingdom is *eo nomine* affected, save a restriction in the use of fire arms, extending only to the lowest order of their body—a restriction which I should be happy to see extended to Protestants of the same class;



class; and the Test Laws, which remain in full force with respect to Protestants, have been very considerably relaxed in favour of the Catholic body.

In a resolution of the Catholics, published by order of their general committee, the 9th of Dec. 1792, signed Edward Shiel, and counter-signed Richard M'Cormick, complaint is made, "That the Catholics of Ireland, constituting  
"three fourths of the inhabitants of the country,  
"had not influence to induce any one member of  
"parliament to patronize their petition:" But when their claims were taken up by the King's ministers, their old persecutors instantly became apostles of emancipation; and in the race for popularity, would not be left behind on a popular question. The concessions made to the Catholic demands in 1793, were then, for the first time, supported by the Whigs of 1789; but in the course of debate nothing more than obscure hints and oracular ambiguity was thrown out on the subject of unqualified Emancipation; and the Catholic body remained quiet and contented with the favours conferred upon them; if they looked to farther indulgence, they were satisfied to try the effects of time, temper, and negociation, and would have continued contented and quiet, if they had not been brought forward as an engine of faction on a change of the Irish government



in 1795.—Of Lord Fitzwilliam I shall never speak or think with any feeling, but of a warm and unfeigned personal respect, and have only to lament, that he placed unbounded confidence in some gentlemen, of whom he falsely judged by his own pure and honourable mind. It is now ascertained that he came to Ireland with full instructions not to encourage the agitation of any further claims on the part of the Irish Catholics; perhaps I might be justified in stating that his instructions were to keep it back; but his name and authority were abused to force the Catholic body to come forward, as the engine of political intrigue, and in contradiction to their recent declaration by the organ of their general committee in 1792, to demand the repeal of every law by which they were excluded from political power. Lord Fitzwilliam took possession of his government on the 4th of Jan. 1795; and it is a fact of public notoriety, that at meetings held from the 15th to the 23d of December, with Mr. Edward Byrne and others of their leaders, the Catholic body were brought forward under plighted engagement of support from the new government. An address to Lord Fitzwilliam in the name of their body was voted, and at the front of the committee appointed to greet the King's Representative, under the auspices of his self avowed minister, stand the names of Dr. William James M'Neven, Mr. John Sweetman, and Mr. Richard M'Cormick, all of them self convicted traitors.



traitors. Mr. M'Neven has very candidly acknowledged that Catholic Emancipation was always a mere pretence, and that if he and the worthy gentlemen with whom he acted, had been enabled to succeed in their projects, they would as soon have established the Mahometan as the Popish religion. It was originally a pretence for rebellion, and is now a powerful engine of faction, wielded in both countries against the peace and happiness of Ireland; an engine which has already shaken your government to its foundation, and cannot fail to level it with the dust, if we are to continue in a state of separation from the British nation. It is the common topic of discontent and irritation to rally the old inhabitants of this island to the standard of faction in both countries—a topic which in its nature, will remain an inexhaustible source of popular ferment in Ireland.—Repeal your Test Laws, and Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, the rich establishments of the Protestant church remain a prominent object of attack to the apostles of Emancipation; make partition of your church establishments with the Popish clergy, and they will have to demand a formal recognition of the laws of their church; and when every other point has been yielded, an apostle of sedition will not be wanting in the fullness of human arrogance and presumption, to propose a repeal of God's holy commandments, and proclaim the worship  
of



of graven images in your streets and highways. — What is the lesson of peace and good-will inculcated by the successors of the worthy gentleman who first invented this revolutionary weapon? “ Let me advise you by no means to postpone the “ consideration of your fortunes until after the “ war—seize the opportunity of war for fraternal “ embraces, and great Emancipation—your physical consequence exists only in a state of separation from England—in a state of separation “ you are four to one—in a state of union but “ one to four—and therefore though your claims “ should be attended to after Union, you gain “ nothing ; you may as well be units in the street “ as units in parliament.” The whole of the interior mechanism of Emancipation, is here fairly exposed to view ; and I wish every honest member of the community, whether he be Protestant or Catholic, who regards the blessings of social order, and wishes to transmit them to his posterity, to view it with sober attention, and to decide for himself, whether in the hands of its Irish patrons, it points to any other object than Jacobinism and Revolution.—I wish every honest member of the community, Protestant or Catholic, to decide for himself whether Ireland can e verbe at peace until this firebrand is extinguished—and whether a hope exists that it can be extinguished in our present state of separation from England.—If the Catholics of Ireland are not satisfied with the indulgence which they have already experienced, and



and are determined to press their demands of an unqualified repeal of the Test Laws and Act of Supremacy, let them be discussed upon their solid merits in the Imperial Parliament, where the question will not be influenced by passion and prejudice, where no part of the consideration will be, that the Catholics of Ireland may retain their physical consequence for the establishment of a system of periodical rebellion, under the management and direction of Whigs or Tories, or United Irishmen, and where it will be gravely and dispassionately considered, whether a repeal of these laws may be yielded with safety to the British monarchy, or whether by adopting the French model, in abolishing all religious distinctions as connected with the state, we shall lay the cornerstone of Revolution and Democracy.—My unaltered opinion is that so long as Human Nature and the Popish Religion continue to be what I know they are, a conscientious Popish ecclesiastic never will become a well attached subject to a Protestant state, and that the Popish clergy must always have a commanding influence on every member of that communion. I put it as an abstract state-maxim, without regard to the peculiar situation of this country; and if experience were wanting, I have it abundantly to confirm me in the justice of it. In private life I never enquired into the religion of any man; if he be honest and a good Christian, it matters not to me that he may

subscribe



subscribe to articles of faith and discipline which my reason and understanding reject ; but when I am to frame laws for the safety of the state, I do not feel myself at liberty to act upon the virtues of individuals.—Laws must be framed to meet and counteract the vicious propensities of human nature.

Upon the second project of Irish Liberty, Parliamentary Reform, I shall say no more than barely to state the plan which was submitted to the House of Commons in the Session of 1797; it will speak for itself, and if I do not much mistake, was offered to that Assembly with an assurance that it met the full approbation of the popular leaders out of doors.—In stating this plan I cannot err, for I have an exact copy of the resolutions as they were moved in the House of Commons. They set out by asserting,

I. “ That it is indispensably necessary that all disability on account of religion shall cease, and for that purpose, and as a fundamental part of an adequate representation in parliament, so as to place the constitution on a solid and permanent basis, that Catholics should be admissible into both Houses of Parliament, as well as to all offices of state as Protestants now are, and that all Test Laws and oaths preventing the same shall be repealed and abolished for ever.

II. “ That it is an antient and undoubted right of the people of Ireland to be fully and fairly represented in parliament.



III. " That in order to enable the people freely  
 " to exercise that right, it is expedient that the  
 " privilege of returning members to parliament  
 " in the severall cities, counties of towns, and  
 " boroughs in the kingdom, shall be divided into  
 " districts, containing no less than            houses,  
 " and that each of the said districts shall return  
 " two members to serve in parliament, and that  
 " proper officers shall be appointed to make such  
 " divisions.

IV. " That each county shall continue to return  
 " representatives as at present.

V. " That all persons possessing a freehold of  
 " the clear yearly value of forty shillings, all  
 " persons having leases or terms for years to the  
 " amount of            all persons having a house of  
 " the value of            , for            years in the said  
 " cities and towns, and all freemen by birth,  
 " marriage or election, shall be entitled to vote  
 " in the severall districts in which they are regis-  
 " tered.

VI. " That no person holding any office of pro-  
 " fit or pension under the crown, shall be admis-  
 " sible to serve in parliament, except as hereafter  
 " is excepted.

VII. " That the duration of Parliaments shall  
 " not exceed            years."

Upon



Upon this plan of Reform, thus embracing the active citizens of Ireland, I shall only observe, that the members of the Rebel Irish Directory, Messrs. Arthur O'Connor, Wm. James M'Neven, and Thomas Emmett, who were examined before the last Secret Committee of this House, did declare on their oaths, the perfect satisfaction which it gave to them, and to the other leaders of the late Rebellion; and certainly most unreasonable traitors they must have been if it did not satisfy them to their heart's content; in truth, there is scarce a shade of difference between this plan of Reform and one which had been just before promulgated under the authority of the Rebel Union. See APPENDIX.

I pass by the rapid progress of that rebellious confederacy; the whole of their enormities has been amply detailed in the Reports of the committees of secrecy of both Houses of Parliament, and are fresh in the public recollection; but I state with perfect confidence, that the seditions and treasonable conspiracies which have brought this country to the verge of ruin, are the natural offspring of the adjustment of 1782: The convulsion in 1789, gave birth to the Whig institution, the Rebel confederacy of the Irish Union was an improvement upon it, and we now see the reliques of the Whig institution in the mask of liberty, inculcating the principles, and adopting the means originally devised by the rebel confederacy



confederacy of the Irish Union, to abolish the religion, and subvert the Monarchy of Ireland.—What was their conduct in the Summer 1796, when it was known with certainty, that a powerful French armament was in preparation at Brest, for the support of Irish rebellion?—When the whole of the northern province was regimented and armed, and the remainder of the country, by the account of Mr. O'Connor, the common and unreserved friend of the united Whig confederacy, was in a forward state of organization, at this critical period, a Whig report was published on the condition of the labouring poor, and circulated in every part of the country with uncommon industry, in which that class of men are informed, “that on a comparison of the price of labour with the price of provisions, it was impossible for them to exist; that it was impolicy in their employers to starve them, for that one labourer who was fed, would do the work of two who were starved; that the increase in the price of labour was necessary, not only from the increased price of provisions, but because within some years last past, the salaries of the servants of government have been increased not a little, and the pay of the common soldiers has been increased; and on the same principle on which his Majesty has been advised to attend to his forces, we should attend to our fellow subjects; and that it was most extraordinary that

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“the



“the only order of the people whose wages were  
 “not encreased, was that order by whose labour  
 “and industry these salaries and establishments  
 “were principally fed.” This was the incitement  
 to loyalty and good conduct, held out by the patrons of Irish Liberty, to the physical force of the country, then in array for rebellion, and anxiously expecting a formidable French armament to second their revolutionary projects. At the same alarming crisis, these same patrons of Irish Liberty, endeavoured to baffle the exertion of the King’s government in the array of a yeomanry force, by tutoring the old inhabitants of the island to hang back, unless the revolutionary system of Emancipation was first established; and if the arm of God, had not in his unbounded mercy, been stretched out to save us, Ireland must at that tremendous crisis, have fallen a sacrifice to her own madness, folly, and wickedness.

I will now appeal to every dispassionate man who hears me, whether I have in any thing misstated, or exaggerated the calamitous situation of my country, or the coalition of vice and folly which has long undermined her happiness, and at this hour loudly threatens her existence. It is gravely inculcated I know—“Let the British Minister leave us to ourselves, and we are very well as we are.” We are very well as we are—Gracious God! of what materials must the heart  
 of



of that man be composed, who knows the state of this country, and will coldly tell us we are very well as we are—we are very well as we are—we have not 3 years of redemption from bankruptcy or intolerable taxation, nor one hour's security against the renewal of exterminating civil war. We are very well as we are—look to your statute book—session after session have you been compelled to enact laws of unexampled rigour and novelty, to repress the horrible excesses of the mass of your people; and the fury of murder and pillage, and desolation have so outrun all legislative exertion, that you have been at length driven to the hard necessity of breaking down the pale of the municipal law, and putting your country under the ban of military government; and in every little circle of dignity and independence, we hear whispers of discontent at the temperate discretion with which it is administered.—We are very well as we are. Look at the old revolutionary government of the Irish Union, and the modern revolutionary government of the Irish consulate, canvassing the dregs of that rebel democracy, for a renewal of popular ferment and outrage, to overawe the deliberations of parliament.—We are very well as we are.—Look to your civil and religious dissensions—look to the fury of political faction, and the torrents of human blood that stain the face of your country, and of what materials is that man composed, who will not listen with



with patience and good will to any proposition that can be made to him, for composing the distractions, and healing the wounds, and alleviating the miseries of this devoted nation?—We are very well as we are.—Look to your finances, and I repeat you have not redemption for three years from public bankruptcy, or a burthen of taxation which will sink every gentleman of property in the country.

Perhaps it will occasion some surprise to hear that the debt of Ireland is now 25,662,640*l.* and that the annual interest and charges upon it amount to 1,393,753*l.* In stating the debt of Ireland, I speak of the capital created, not the money paid into the Exchequer by the public creditor. If I am compelled to borrow money on usurious terms, my debt is the sum which I contract to pay, not the sum which I may happen to have received; and therefore it is a gross deception in stating the public debt, to take it on any calculation but of the capital for which the nation must stand security. The increase of debt in the last seven years has been, principal - - - 23,222,250  
Interest and charges in the same period } 1,253,278  
increase

Of these twenty-three millions of increase in the capital of your debt during the last seven years, no less a sum than 18,580,000*l.* has accumulated in the years 1798, 1799, and 1800; the interest and charges



charges in the same three years amount to 878,000 ; and on recurring to the fluctuations in your debt for the last ten years, it will be seen to have kept exact pace with the exertions of the friends of Ireland in the cause of dignity and independence.

25th of March,		Principal	Interest and charges.
1791	the debt was	2,442,890	142,716
1792	- -	2,440,890	142,955
1793	- -	2,440,390	142,475
1794	- -	3,113,790	178,495
1795	- - - -	4,335,990	255,110
1796	- - - -	6,041,856	354,044
1797	- - - -	7,012,250	525,044
1798	- - - -	11,059,256	767,661
1799	- - - -	17,466,540	1040,120
1800	- - - -	25,662,640	1,395,735

In 1793, at the beginning of the war, the debt of Ireland was 2,440,390l.—and so long as we had none but a foreign enemy to contend with, our war expences were scarcely one million in the year. In 1795, the debt was 4,335,990l., so that during the first two years of the war, it did not encrease quite two millions; but the old Irish maxim of pressing forward political claims in times



times of common danger and calamity, was again inculcated in 1795, a period peculiarly fitted for it, for in that year the French had made themselves masters of Brabant, Flanders, and Holland; and the rebel government of United Irishmen was pretty well established. Mr. Oliver Bond, and Mr. Neilson stated before the Secret Committee of this House, that the military organization of the province of Ulster was completed on the first of May 1795, and had got into a state of forwardness in the other provinces before the end of that year; it was therefore found necessary to encrease the military force of the country for mere internal defence against a confederacy of foreign and domestic enemies; and accordingly in the year ended at Lady-day, 1796, our war expences were double what they had been in either of the preceding years; and at every subsequent period they have progressively encreased with the growth of faction and rebellion, until we were obliged in defence of our own existence, to encrease the public debt in the last year, nearly six millions and a half, and in this year above eight millions. And this expence must necessarily continue, not to enable Ireland to contribute to offensive war, but to keep down the brutal fury of the mass of the Irish people, who have been goaded to madness by every wicked artifice that disappointed faction can devise, and to protect the country from foreign



reign invasion openly, solicited by a gang of Irish traitors, who have connected themselves with the rulers of the French Republic; and if we are to continue this scale of expence for the next three years, a revenue of two millions, four hundred and thirty thousand pounds must be raised for payment of the interest of the public debt alone, or public bankruptcy will necessarily ensue.

Let us now see what is the present state of our revenue. In the last year the net revenue of Ireland, including the loan fund, was £ 1,861,471 only; if it had continued at the same amount in this year, the surplus, after defraying the interest and charges of the debt, would have been under £ 466,000, for the support of all your other establishments; but if the current quarter keeps up to the produce of the last three, your net revenue in this year, will be somewhat about £ 2,700,000. A considerable portion, however, of the great encrease in the revenues of this year has been adventitious. During the rebellion importation was checked, the deficiency has of course come into this year's account, and there has been an unusual importation of Portugal wines, in consequence of the apprehensions of invasion entertained in that country, and therefore I consider it to be a sanguine calculation, that the produce of our present revenues is to continue at £ 2,500,000.

The



The capital created by the loan }  
 of last year, is - - - - £ 8,226,100

Interest and charges - - - - £ 345,000

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1801 Capital - - 8,226,100

Interest and charges £ 345,000

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1802 Capital - - 8,226,100

Interest and charges £ 345,000

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1803 Capital - - 8,226,100

Interest and charges £ 345,000

---

Capital 3 years - - 24,678,300

Interest and charges £ 1,035,000

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Present debt - - - - 25,662,640

Present Interest and charges £ 1,395,753

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Total capital 1803 - - 50,340,940

Total Interest 1803 - - £ 2,430,753

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So that calculating the produce of your present revenues to continue at £ 2,500,000, there will remain at the end of three years, on your present scale of expence, a surplus short of £ 70,000 for the whole of the establishments civil and military.—

Let



Let me ask, if we remain as we are, how is this enormous deficit to be made up?—Can you raise an additional revenue in Ireland of more than one million, in the present state of our resources, without recurring to a land-tax, or an income-tax, or both? And if recourse be had to land or income, the incumbrance in them must be considerably more than the actual deficit, I should say it could not be much less than two millions. For either tax would inevitably diminish in a great proportion your customs and excise. If we make up the deficit by annual loans, bankruptcy is inevitable. By misapplying the sinking fund, you may postpone the period of insolvency for a year or two, at the expence of a breach of faith with the public creditors; but bankruptcy is the ultimate issue.—I know it is the fashion to say that England has our war expences to answer for—and that our financial difficulties arise from a French war—and a Dutch war—and a Spanish war.—No, our present difficulties arise from an Irish war—a war of faction—a Whig war—and an United Irishman's war—the fluctuation of your debt for the last ten years proves the fact, and if England was at peace at this hour with all the powers of Europe, your establishments would be a melancholy proof of the fact; you would be compelled to maintain a war establishment for defence against your own people. It has been demanded triumphantly how we are to be relieved by Union? I answer first,

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we



we are to be relieved from British and Irish faction, which is the prime source of all our calamities. Next, if we become one people with England, the army of the empire will be employed where it is most wanted for general service; and so long as it is found necessary to garrison every district in Ireland, for the internal safety of the country, the necessary force may be stationed here, without incurring additional expence in either country. And therefore in time of war, we may hope to be relieved from the separate expence entailed upon Ireland by domestic factions; and in peace, it matters not to the general service of the empire, where the army may be quartered. Again—by Union the resources of Ireland must necessarily encrease;—if we have but grace to remain in a state of tranquility for a few years, I have no doubt, our resources would augment most rapidly; if we have but grace to abjure faction, I feel sanguine hope on the restoration of peace, that Ireland will participate in British capital and British industry; and until we can find employment for the poor, and teach them to feel and value the comforts of life, it is vain to expect that they will be reclaimed from barbarism. If you do not qualify the mass of your people for the enjoyment of sober Liberty, you will never teach them to appreciate the blessings of it;—every man who feels for human misery, must lament the hard necessity imposed upon the Irish government, of  
meeting



meeting popular excess, by laws of exemplary severity, and will contribute his best exertions, to rescue the unfortunate victims of delusion, from the depth of misfortune to which they will ever be condemned so long as they are made the instruments of faction, and stimulated to acts of outrage by wicked and inflammatory appeals to their ignorance and incivilization. But we are told by giving up a separate government, and separate parliament, we sacrifice national dignity and independence. If gentlemen who enlarge on this theme, will talk of their personal dignity and aggrandizement, I can understand them; but when I look at the squalid misery, and profound ignorance, and barbarous manners, and brutal ferocity of the mass of the Irish people, I am sickened with this rant of Irish dignity and independence. Is the dignity and independence of Ireland, to consist in the continued depression and unredeemed barbarism of the great majority of the people, and the factious contentions of a puny and rapacious oligarchy, who consider the Irish nation as their political inheritance, and are ready to sacrifice the public peace and happiness to their insatiate love of patronage and power? I hope I feel as becomes a true Irishman, for the dignity and independence of my country, and therefore I would elevate her to her proper station, in the rank of civilized nations. I wish to advance her from the degraded post of a mercenary



mercenary province, to the proud station of an integral and governing member of the greatest empire in the world. I wish to withdraw the higher orders of my countrymen from the narrow and corrupted sphere of Irish politics, and to direct their attention to objects of national importance, to teach them to improve the natural energies, and extend the resources of their country, to encourage manufacturing, skill, and ingenuity, and open useful channels for commercial enterprise ; and above all, seriously to exert their best endeavours to tame and civilize the lower orders of the people, to inculcate in them habits of religion and morality, and industry, and due subordination, to relieve their wants, and correct their excesses ; unless you will civilize your people, it is vain to look for national tranquillity or contentment.

Another ground of objection to the measure of Union is :—This is not a time for it. Are we then to await the period of actual bankruptcy, or the issue of a new rebellion, that Great Britain may be enabled to dictate to us the terms on which she will listen to the proposition ? This is a period of all others the most auspicious for Ireland to set on foot such a treaty. The late rebellion has been so far put down, as to enable us to treat on fair and equal terms ; the recollection of general peril arising from Irish treasons is fresh in the memory of



of the British nation, and has taught that sober people the necessity of yielding their ancient prejudices to the general security of the empire.

Another ground of objection is:—That by a Legislative Union Ireland is to be extinguished.—This is a species of political arithmetic of the peculiar growth of Ireland. It is a singular arithmetic which assumes, that if two and three make up the gross number five, that two are extinguished. I should suppose that a captious English man might with equal reason object, that England was extinguished. If two Irish gentlemen should agree to become partners in a commercial speculation on a capital of 500l.—two hundred subscribed by one partner, and three by the other, what would the proprietor of the lesser share say to his partner at the end of the year, when he demanded his proportion of the profits, if he told him gravely, Sir, you have nothing to do with the house—your two hundred are extinguished in the gross capital of five hundred, and you may go about your business—you are nobody in the house. How is Ireland extinguished in this national partnership?—The advantage clearly lies with the weaker partner, who will feel every benefit arising from the superior wealth, skill, and power of the great political house, and share her full dividend of the joint profits. I know it is the fashion of the day to assert, that however weak Ireland may be,



be, Great Britain must for her own sake support her in every circumstance of difficulty and danger: That the government of Great Britain never can suffer this country to separate itself from the British crown, much less to form a connexion with France, I feel perfect conviction. The British islands are formed by nature for mutual security or mutual destruction; and if we are to pursue the course we have thought fit to run for the last twenty years, it may become a question of doubtful issue, whether at a crisis of difficulty and danger, Great Britain will be enabled to support us, or we shall sink Great Britain. If the French armament, encouraged by Irish faction, and solicited by Irish traitors in 1796, had made a descent on your coasts at that period; is it an improbable conjecture, that at this day Ireland might have been the theatre of war, and the power and resources of Great Britain have been expended to redeem this country from a foreign yoke? and if we are to pursue the beaten course of faction and folly, I have no scruple to say, it were better for Great Britain that this island should sink into the sea, than to continue connected with the British crown on the terms of our present Union. We claim a right to trade with the British colonies and plantations, and we claim the protection of the British navy, without contributing to the necessary expence of either establishment. We claim a  
right



right to retain the monopoly of the British market for our linens at the expence of an enormous tax imposed by England on her own consumption, and a revenue relinquished in the same proportion on foreign linens.

The annual average value for three years, ending 5th January, 1799, of products and manufactures of Ireland imported into Great Britain, was £.5,510,835

The annual average value of products and manufactures of Great Britain exported to Ireland during the same period, was - 2,087,672

On this essential branch of trade, the balance in favour of Ireland, is 3,425,153

And take the whole of the trade of import and export, native and foreign, during the same period, the balance in favour of Ireland is - 2,056,844

The whole annual value of imports from Ireland into Great Britain, native and foreign, was - - 5,612,697

And of exports from Great Britain to Ireland, - - 3,555,845

We



We raise a revenue of more than 230,000*l.* on British goods imported into Ireland; and in return the revenue raised by England on the importation of Irish produce is little more than 10,000*l.* And what are the offerings of gratitude and duty on our part in return for these benefits and advantages?—A declaration of war by any foreign power against the British nation, is the signal for faction and rebellion in Ireland. The received maxim is, not to forego the opportunity of foreign war to press forward Irish claims, and ripen every difference and discontent with the British government, into a ground of permanent and rancorous national hostility; insomuch that in times of difficulty and danger, Great Britain, so far from deriving support or security from her connexion with Ireland, feels it as a mill-stone hung upon her neck. And for what object is it expected on our part that all this is to continue?—To support and maintain a few individuals in the exclusive possession of the patronage and power of the kingdom of Ireland, who claim a right on their part whenever they may think fit to quarrel with a British minister, to excite insurrection and rebellion, by representing the British nation to the people of Ireland, as their natural and instinctive enemy. Is it to be expected that all this can continue, or if it should continue long, that it must not involve both countries in common ruin?

Another



Another argument against a Legislative Union is, that it will drive your nobility and gentry from their own country; and particularly impoverish the metropolis. With respect to emigration, look to the number of Irish emigrants who now crowd every village in Great Britain, and have been driven to seek an asylum there from the brutal fury of the Irish people, and the cold-blooded treachery of their own domestics, palpably fomented and encouraged by Irish faction and Irish treason: And let any dispassionate man say, whether the evil of emigration can ever be greater than it is at this day. If we are to live in a perpetual storm here; if it is to remain at the discretion of every adventurer, of feeble and ostentatious talents, ungoverned by a particle of judgment or discretion, to dress up fictitious grievances for popular delusion and let loose a savage and barbarous people upon the property and respect of the Irish nation, what gentleman who has the means of living out of this country, will be induced to remain in it? I do most solemnly declare, that no earthly consideration short of a strong sense of duty should have induced me to remain an eye-witness of the scenes of folly and madness, and horrors of every description in which I have lived for some years back; and that I had rather give up every prospect which remains to me in this country, and begin a new course in my old age, than submit to the same misery and disgust for the



remnant of my life. If you wish to stop emigration, you must enable sober and rational men to live at peace at home. And if they are allowed to return in security, I have no apprehension that the want of an annual procession from College-Green to Dublin-Castle, and a failure in the daily supply of venom and scurrility in the metropolis, will drive your nobility and gentry from their native country.—And as to the local interests of the city of Dublin; is it not extreme folly to suppose, if there be an influx of wealth into the country, that its fair proportion will not find its way to the capital? The same fears alarmed the citizens of Edinburgh; and it is notorious, that the wealth and population of that city have increased most rapidly since the Scotch Union. But if the apprehensions entertained for the local prosperity of Dublin were palpably well founded, are we to sacrifice the peace and happiness of the kingdom of Ireland, and the strength of the British empire, to the narrow and interested objects of the merchants and traders of the metropolis?

If an argument were wanting in favour of Irish Union, let every sober Irishman look to what has passed in this country since the measure was first proposed for discussion.—It was proposed at a crisis peculiarly interesting and awful; when we had scarcely recovered breath from the convulsion of a formidable and bloody rebellion; when we

were



were threatened with foreign invasion, concerted with the common enemy of mankind, by a numerous and connected gang of domestic traitors ; when Great Britain paid a force of ten thousand troops sent by her to our assistance ; and the Irish seas were covered by her fleets for our protection ; when a formidable French force destined to the assistance of Irish rebels had been intercepted by a British squadron, and was led captive through your country ; and when more than whispers of indignation were vented against a veteran soldier, who was startled at the project of inflicting exterminating vengeance on a prostrate enemy. Such was our situation when it was first known that England was ready to open her arms to receive us into the communion of her liberty, and wealth, and industry, and happiness ; and in that awful and perilous situation, the offer was treated in the name, and on behalf of the Irish nation, by some gentlemen, who call themselves Friends of Liberty and the Irish Constitution, with a degree of intemperance, which I can compare only, to the fury of wild beasts alarmed at an attack upon their prey. I take shame to acknowledge, that an evil example was set by some gentlemen of the honourable profession to which I belong. The flame spread with rapidity, and appeals of the most virulent and inflammatory tendency were made by these same Friends of Liberty to the deluded barbarians, who had been so recently consigned by them

to



to indiscriminate extirpation. When the measure was proposed for discussion, the Friends of Liberty and the Constitution would not suffer it to be discussed; and when the measure was relinquished, the Friends of Liberty and the Constitution endeavoured to force the premature discussion of it, in the hope of precluding a fair review of its merits.

When this first burst of noise and clamour had subsided, the sober part of the community ventured to look at the Propositions of Union made on the part of Great Britain, and saw nothing to excite alarm. They ventured to examine and found that much good might be expected from them, and in the course of a few months, when their avocations did not allow the friends of Liberty and the Constitution, to devote their time and exertions to popular delusion, the sober and rational part of the Irish nation saw in the measure of an Union, a fair prospect of peace and wealth, and happiness for their country;—and the bulk of the people professing not to understand the subject were perfectly indifferent to it. Such was the state of the public mind upon this question, when the late recess of parliament took place; and to their eternal reproach and dishonour be it spoken, some persons of high rank and consequence in the kingdom, availed themselves of that opportunity to become emissaries of sedition; and to canvas popular clamour against the measure, by the most shameless



shameless impositions in the ignorance and credulity of every man who would listen to them. The zealous Protestant was told, "This is an insidious scheme of the British Minister, to deliver you up to the Papists bound hand and foot."—The Catholics were told, "If you suffer this, there is an end of your Emancipation."—The industrious farmer was told, "If this takes place, there is an end of your lease. Or if it should escape the grasp of your landlord, Mr. Pitt will take from you one half of the profits of your farm. How will you like if you have a profit of fifty pounds yearly on your farm, to pay twenty-five pounds to Mr. Pitt?" I have been told that this latter argument was pressed with success, in a part of the county of Tipperary, not far from my house, by a noble lord, who I know made his circuit in that county during the recess, whom I do not here see in his place. I will not believe it, and shall be glad to hear from him that he has been falsely accused. But the active exertions of itinerant Lords and Commoners, were not deemed sufficient for the occasion, and we have seen a consular authority assumed by two noble lords, and a right honourable Commoner, who have issued their letter missive to every part of the kingdom, commanding the people in the name of a number of gentlemen of both Houses of Parliament, to come forward with petitions condemning in terms of violence and indignation the measure

sure



ture of Union, prior to its discussion in parliament. One of these letters missive, and the petition enclosed with it, has been transmitted to me by a man to whom it was addressed, who it seems has the care of an estate in ward to the Court of Chancery, and in his simplicity desired the further order of the Chancellor upon it. It is unnecessary for me to state that he did not receive further directions from the Court of Chancery, but the letter missive, and the petition annexed to it, will sufficiently explain the sense of the people, and the means which have been adopted to overawe the deliberations of parliament. I will state the letter and petition faithfully as they have been transmitted to me.

DUBLIN, *January 20, 1800.*

SIR,

“ A NUMBER of gentlemen of both Houses  
 “ of Parliament, of whom thirty-eight represent  
 “ counties, have authorised us to acquaint you,  
 “ that it is their opinion, that petitions to Parlia-  
 “ ment, declaring the real sense of the freeholders  
 “ of the kingdom, on the subject of a legislative  
 “ Union, would at this time be highly expedient,  
 “ and if such a proceeding should have your ap-  
 “ probation, we are to request you will use your  
 “ influence to have such a petition from your  
 “ county without delay.

“ We have the honour to be, &c.

Signed, &c. &c. &c.

P. S. The



P. S. "The enclosed petitions are to be signed  
 "on one side only, in order that they may be col-  
 "lected and passed together—and you are re-  
 "quested to transmit them when signed to Lord  
 "——, in order that they may be presented to  
 "the House of Commons."

Such is the letter missive for taking the real sense of the people. Let us now look at the petition attending the letter missive, which is to convey the consular sense to the House of Commons, backed by popular outcry thus solicited by the letter missive.

"TO the Knights, Citizens, and Burgeſſes, in  
 "Parliament aſſembled—the humble petition of  
 "the underſigned freeholders of the county of  
 "—— ſheweth, that at this awful and alarming  
 "crisis, we feel ourſelves called upon to declare  
 "our opinion, that a legislative Union with Great-  
 "Britain, to be a dangerous innovation, fraught  
 "with ruin to the conſtitutional independence,  
 "commercial intereſts, and general proſperity of  
 "the kingdom. That this meaſure, by depriving  
 "us of a reſident and proteſting legiſlature, un-  
 "der which our country has hitherto proſpered  
 "beyond example, by encreaſing the number of  
 "abſentees, and the conſequent drain of our  
 "wealth, muſt augment the diſcontents of the  
 "kingdom, and thereby endanger the connexion  
 "between Great Britain and Ireland, which we  
 "are



“are determined to support with our lives and  
 “fortunes. That we rely therefore with un-  
 “shaken confidence on the wisdom and justice of  
 “this honourable House, that it will maintain to  
 “us and our posterity unimpaired, that sacred  
 “constitution which is our birth-right, which has  
 “been the source of every blessing to this island,  
 “and the enjoyment of which we deem insepar-  
 “able from our existence as free people.”

Let me ask the two noble lords who have thus put  
 themselves forward, what are the exclusive pre-  
 tensions of them and their Rt. Hon. colleague  
 to guide the public opinion?—Let me ask  
 them by what authority they have issued their letter  
 missive to every corner of the kingdom, command-  
 ing the people to subscribe an instrument fraught  
 with foul and virulent misrepresentation? And let  
 me ask them, is there salvation for this country  
 under her present government and constitution,  
 when men of their rank and situation can stoop to  
 so shabby and wicked an artifice to excite popu-  
 lar outcry against the declared sense of both Houses  
 of Parliament? But this is not all, if loud and confi-  
 dent report is to have credit, a consular exchequer  
 has been opened for foul and undisguised bribery. I  
 know that subscriptions are openly solicited in the  
 streets of the metropolis, to a fund for defeating the  
 measure of Union. I will not believe that the per-  
 sons to whom I have been obliged to allude can  
 be privy to it. One of them, a noble Earl, I see in  
 his



his place; he is a very young man, and I call upon him as he fears to have his entry into public life marked with dishonour; I call upon him as he fears to live with the broad mark of infamy on his forehead, and to transmit it indelibly to his posterity, to stand up in his place, and acquit himself before his Peers of this foul imputation. I call upon him publicly to disavow all knowledge of the existence of such a fund; and if he cannot disavow it, to state explicitly any honest purpose to which it can be applied? If it can exist, I trust there is still sense and honour left in the Irish nation, to cut off the corrupted source of these vile abominations.

I am truly ashamed at the length of time for which I have trespassed on the House; the nature of the subject will I hope plead my apology; but I cannot dismiss it without adverting to the situation and circumstances of Scotland, when the Union of the two British kingdoms took place, which I shall do very shortly. Before the Union of the Scotch and English crowns in the person of James the first, the two nations were involved in perpetual warfare; during his reign, their struggles were different. The Scotch complained of English influence and national degradation; the English were jealous of the partiality of the King to his own countrymen, and were jealous of their trade; the English Parliament refused to natura-

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lize the Scotch; they reproached their English neighbours with selfish illiberality, who returned the compliment by reflections on the poverty of Scotland, so that at the first period of their connexion, the intercourse of these sister kingdoms consisted in the mutual interchange of contumely and reproach. In the succeeding reign they did unite, but it was against their common Sovereign. He took refuge from his English subjects in the Scotch army at Newark, who very honourably gave him up to their confederates in iniquity. At the Restoration the spirit of antient rivalry and opposition was renewed, but after the convulsion of the former reign, it contributed in some degree to secure the royal authority, as each kingdom supplied the means of keeping the mal-contents of the other in awe. At the Revolution both nations were ready to sacrifice national jealousy to their hatred of popery, and both concurred in accepting King William for their common Sovereign. But in the reign of Queen Anne, the spirit of national antipathy broke out with vehemence and inveteracy; and the gentlemen of Ireland who are sincere in their love of British connexion would do well to look to the principal events that led to the incorporation of the two kingdoms at that period, and see whether singular grounds of jealousy and disunion between Great Britain and Ireland, have not broken out within the short period which has elapsed since our separation from the British nation.

The



The first act of hostility on the part of Scotland was to establish a company for forming a settlement on the Spanish Main, avowedly to enable the Scots nation to share the wealth, and rival the trade of England. This project miscarried, after hazarding a war between England and Spain, and producing much anger and controversy between the sister kingdoms. On failure of the Queen's issue, a new settlement of the Crown by the Scotch parliament became necessary, and of this crisis full advantage was taken by the Scotch patriots. Bishop Burnet's account of them is a perfect description of the Whigs of Ireland in the year 1789—and at this day. “ A national humour  
 “ of rendering themselves a free and independent  
 “ kingdom, did so inflame them, that as there was  
 “ a majority in parliament of seventy on their side,  
 “ they seemed capable of the most extravagant  
 “ things that could be suggested to them. All  
 “ was carried with heat, and much vehemence,  
 “ for a national humour of being independent  
 “ on England, fermented so strongly amongst all  
 “ sorts of people without doors, that such as went  
 “ not into every hot motion that was made were  
 “ looked on as betrayers of their country, and  
 “ they were so exposed to popular fury, that some  
 “ who studied to stop this tide, were brought  
 “ in danger of their lives. The Presbyterians  
 “ were so overawed with this, that although they  
 “ wished well to the succession, they durst not  
 “ openly,



“openly declare it, The Dukes of Hamilton  
 “and Athol led all these violent motions, and  
 “the people were frangely inflamed.”

And the national humour of rendering themselves independent of England, led the Scotch parliament to the violent and desperate step of resolving that until essential provision was made for settling the rights and liberties of the Scottish nation, independent of English interests, and English councils, the successor to the Scotch crown should not be the same person that was possessed of the crown of England. To this resolution succeeded an order for arming and training the subjects of Scotland. The parliament of England addressed the Queen, to give orders for fortifying the towns on the northern frontiers, for arming the Militia of the northern counties, and for stationing regular forces there, and in the north of Ireland. An Act was passed declaring the natives of Scotland aliens until they should settle the Crown on the House of Hanover. The Scots had passed an Act for allowing a trade with France, then at war with England; and English ships of war were ordered to seize the ships of Scotland trading with the enemies of England; and thus were the two countries at the point of going to war, when in despite of the violence of party and false pride of Scotch dignity and independence, the good sense of that nation laid the only  
 solid



solid and lasting foundation of peace and security for their religion, laws, liberty and prosperity, by an entire and perfect Union with England. And it is with cordial sincerity, and a full conviction that it will give to this my native country, lasting peace and security for her religion, her laws, her liberty, and her property, an increase of strength, riches and trade, and the final extinction of national jealousy and animosity, that I now propose to this grave assembly for their adoption, an entire and perfect Union of the kingdom of Ireland with Great Britain. If I live to see it completed, to my latest hour I shall feel an honourable pride in reflecting on the little share which I may have had in contributing to effect it.

## APPENDIX.







## A P P E N D I X.

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A Plan for an Equal Representation of the People of Ireland in the House of Commons, prepared for their Consideration by the Society of United Irishmen of Dublin.

I. THAT the Nation, for the Purpose of Representation solely, should be divided into 330 Electorates, formed by Combination of Parishes, and as nearly as possible equal in Point of Population.

II. THAT each Electorate should return one Representative to Parliament.

III. THAT each Electorate should, for the Convenience of carrying on the Elections at the same Time, be subdivided into a sufficient Number of Parts.

IV. THAT there should be a returning Officer for each Subdivision, to be respectively elected.

V. THAT the Electors of the Electorate should vote, each in the Subdivision in which he is registered, and has resided as herein after specified.

VI. THAT the returning Officers of the Subdivisions should severally return their respective Polls to the returning Officer of the Electorate. who should tot up the Whole, and return the Person having a Majority of Votes, as the Representative in Parliament.

VII. THAT every Man possessing the Right of Suffrage for a Representative in Parliament, should exercise it in his own Person only.

VIII. THAT no Person should have a Right to vote in more than one Electorate at the same Election.

IX. THAT every Male of sound Mind, who has attained the full Age of 21 Years, and actually dwelt, or maintained a Family



a Family Establishment in any Electorate for six Months of the Twelve immediately previous to the Commencement of the Election, (provided his Residence, or maintaining a Family Establishment be duly registered) should be intitled to vote for the Representation of the Electorate.

X. THAT there should be a Registering Officer, and a Registry of Residence in every Subdivision of each Electorate; and that in all Questions concerning Residence, the Registry should be considered as conclusive Evidence.

XI. THAT all Elections in the Nation should commence and close on the same Day.

XII. THAT the Votes of all Electors should be given by Voice, and not by Ballot.

XIII. THAT no Oath of any Kind should be taken by any Elector.

XIV. THAT the full Age of 25 Years should be a necessary Qualification to intitle any Man to be a Representative.

XV. THAT Residence within the Electorate should not, but that Residence within the Kingdom should be a necessary Qualification for a Representative.

XVI. THAT no Property Qualification should be necessary to intitle any Man to be a Representative.

XVII. THAT any Person having a Pension, or holding a Place in the Executive or Judicial Departments, should be thereby disqualified from being a Representative.

XVIII. THAT Representatives should receive a reasonable Stipend for their Services.

XIX. THAT every Representative should, on taking his Seat, swear that neither he, nor any Person to promote his Interest, with his Privy, gave or was to give any Bribe for the Suffrage of any Voter.

XX. THAT any Representative convicted by a Jury, of having acted contrary to the Substance of the above Oath, should be for ever disqualified from sitting or voting in Parliament.

XXI. THAT Parliaments should be Annual.

XXII. THAT a Representative should be at Liberty to resign his Delegation upon giving sufficient Notice to his Constituents.

XXIII. THAT Absence from Duty for                      should vacate the Seat of a Representative.