SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

BARRY,

LORD YELVERTON.

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BARRY, LORD YELVERTON,

CHIEF BARON OF HIS MAJESTY'S

COURT OF EXCHEQUER,

IN THE

House of Lords of Ireland,

ON SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1800;

IN THE DEBATE ON THE

FOURTH ARTICLE OF A LEGISLATIVE

UNION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND

IRELAND.

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1800.

LORD YELVERTON's SPEECH,

IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS,

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1800.

The Houſe in a Committee for the further Conſideration of his Majeſty's Meſſage, relative to an UNION *between* Great Britain *and* Ireland.

MY LORDS,

IT is already determined that the two kingdoms ſhall be united into one; that the two crowns ſhall continue united; and that the united kingdom ſhall be repreſented in one and the ſame Parliament.

And for this purpoſe it is propoſed that the kingdom of Great Britain ſhall continue to be repreſented as it is at preſent; and that Ireland ſhall be repreſented by thirty-two peers and one hundred commoners.

But as the number of peers ought to bear a reaſonable proportion to the number of commoners, and that of the commoners be determined by ſome rule fairly deducible from the Conſtitution, I ſhall firſt inquire whether there be any ſuch rule, and then whether the number propoſed bears a reaſonable conformity to it.

And here give me leave to obſerve, that he muſt have taken a very ſuperficial view of our Conſtitution, and of its firſt elements, who could argue that it is the people, merely as ſuch, who are repreſented in Parliament, and that therefore the will of the Parliament ought to be determined by theirs, (for ſo it has been argued in another place, and I underſtand with great effect;) and further that there are certain

Acts

Acts of Parliament, which the people are not bound to obey, if they do not approve of them; a poſition ſo monſtrous in itſelf, and ſo dangerous in point of example, that it is aſtoniſhing how it could have found its way into an aſſembly of grave legiſlators, whoſe very office it is, to preſcribe rules of conduct to the people; and to which I ſhall not think it neceſſary to give any other anſwer, than merely to quote the words of Grotius upon the ſubject;—" *Omnia convelli neceſſe eſt, si id recipimus, jus regendi ſubditum eſſe eorum judicio ac voluntati, qui reguntur;*"—In other words that the whole machine of Government muſt be ſhaken to pieces, and mankind reduced again to a ſtate of nature, if we allow for a moment that dangerous doctrine, that the ſupreme power, which has a right to give the law, is liable to be controlled by the pleaſure of thoſe, whoſe duty it is to obey. But there cannot be a greater miſtake than to ſuppoſe, that our Conſtitution aroſe out of any truſt or compact between the people and the Parliament; or that the three eſtates of the realm took thoſe ſtations in the political ſyſtem,

which they occupy at this day, according to any previous concert or agreement: our Conſtitution has the appearance of being ſtruck out at a heat, if I may uſe the expreſſion; but it is in fact the offspring of divine wiſdom, acting upon human affairs, and by the ſlow and ſilent operation of remote cauſes, producing, almoſt miraculouſly, harmony out of diſcord and order out of confuſion. Nor would I be underſtood to ſay, that the voice of the people is wholly to be diſregarded, becauſe I admit that all Governments were framed to ſecure their proſperity and happineſs; but what I contend for is, that thoſe only are to be attended to, who are by the Conſtitution ſuppoſed to have a will of their own: and therefore I will appeal from the cry of the giddy multitude to the ſober and corrected ſenſe of the people: I will appeal from clamour, prejudice and paſſion, to the cool ſuggeſtions of reaſon; I will appeal from the multitude to the Parliament, from the many to the few, becauſe tho' the many have feeling, it is only the few that reflect.

My Lords, it is in the hiſtory of the feudal ſyſtem that we muſt look for the origin of our Conſtitution. The Conſtitution of Parliaments in particular, has ſprung out of that ſyſtem, has followed it thro' all its revolutions, and retains even in its preſent form features which ſtrongly mark its deſcent.

The immediate vaſſals of the crown, who held of the king—" *in capite*,"—were the firſt members of Parliament; and as that ſpecies of property could not be aliened without the royal licenſe, they were for ſome time its only members; for in the early ages of the feudal world the commons or burgeſſes were never heard of; and accordingly it is to the former and not to the latter that we owe the great charter of our liberties.

But it was impoſſible that this rigid rule of tenure could reſiſt the natural propenſities and the neceſſities of mankind: with the progreſs of ſociety the affairs of men became complicated; the expenſes of military expeditions, too frequent in thoſe days of chivalry were to be

be defrayed; luxury in time found its way to the baronial table; debts were to be ſatisfied, younger children were to be advanced in life; and to create funds for thoſe various purpoſes, partitions were made of thoſe eſtates, partly by voluntary ſales, and partly by operation of law.

But to thoſe eſtates, however divided, the duty of attending in Parliament was incident; and before the trade of Parliament exiſted, this duty was conſidered as a burden; and accordingly we find charters of exemption from Parliament were frequently ſolicited and obtained.

But theſe being declared illegal, it grew by degrees into a law, to oblige the great Barons only to attend in perſon, and to permit the leſſer to attend by their repreſentatives; a law firſt introduced in eaſe of the ſubject, tho' ſince improved into a moſt valuable privilege.

Of any poſitive law enacted for this purpoſe, we find no trace in the Engliſh hiſtory; but happily

happily that of Scotland furniſhes the example of ſuch a law; for in the year 1427, it was there provided by ſtatute, that the ſmaller barons ſhould be excuſed from coming to Parliament, provided they ſent commiſſioners from the ſhires.

Here then we have the hiſtory of the firſt Knights of the ſhire; and as the Engliſh ſtatute law is ſilent as to their firſt introduction into Parliament, ſo it is equally ſilent as to the right of cities and boroughs to be repreſented in that body.

But the hiſtory of Scotland again ſteps in to our aid; for we find that no boroughs originally poſſeſſed this right, but ſuch as held in community that deſcription of property, to which the duty of parliamentary attendance was a neceſſary incident, as appears from theſe words in the preamble to the ſtatutes of Robert the third of Scotland,—" *Summonitis, pro more ſolito, burgenſibus qui de domino rege tenent in capite.*

And

And it ſeems probable that only ſuch boroughs originally poſſeſſed that right in England; and the exiſtence of thoſe burgage tenures, which to this day give a right of ſuffrage in ſome boroughs in England, in a great meaſure confirms this idea.

But it is further probable, or rather certain, that in England this right was not confined to ſuch boroughs alone; but that in proceſs of time as commerce increaſed, as new worlds were diſcovered, and new ſources of wealth laid open, it was communicated to many communities who poſſeſſed no ſuch property, but were enabled by their induſtry and opulence to adminiſter to the neceſſities of the Prince, or contribute to the common defence of the realm.

Anciently it is well known that the members who were thus admitted into Parliament ſat together in one Chamber; and in Scotland they continued to ſit together till the very period of the Union.

But

But in England the number of members was ſo increaſed by the liberality or policy of the Prince, in creating new boroughs, (of which the hiſtory of Ireland in the reign of James the firſt, furniſhes one memorable inſtance,) that the Commons at length ſeparated from the Lords, and for the firſt time took that ſtation in the political ſyſtem, which they have ever ſince maintained, and of which they have made ſuch notable uſe.

This circumſtance of the two Houſes ſitting together, I have touched upon merely to ſhew that both ſat in right of property, the Lords in right of the property which they poſſeſſed, and the Commons in right of that property which they repreſented.

And thus I hope I have proved that it is not the people, merely as ſuch, that are repreſented in Parliament, but only the property of the country, whether that property conſiſts in real or perſonal wealth, in corporeal inheritance, or incorporeal franchiſe.

And this we ſee exemplified in the experience of every day, at the election of members to ſerve in Parliament for the other Houſe. For if the elector voted from any right inherent in his perſon, he could only make one choice. But this is ſo far from being the caſe, that the law allows him as many ſuffrages, as he poſſeſſes freeholds or franchiſes in different counties or boroughs. And when he loſes, by judgment of law or otherwiſe, thoſe freeholds or franchiſes, he loſes his right of ſuffrage along with them: whence it neceſſarily follows, that it is to the property, and not to the perſon of the elector, that the right of ſuffrage is attached.

And this is what Lord Chatham meant when he aſſerted, "That there was not a blade of graſs in England which was not repreſented."

And this is what Lord Somers had in contemplation when he wrote his work called, "Civil Polity," to prove, that in the hiſtory of England from the invaſion of Julius Cæſar to the Revolution, power has followed property

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in all its fluctuations from one order of the ſtate to the other, and that thoſe fluctuations have produced the events, out of which our Conſtitution has grown into its preſent form, and from which, tho' immediately operating to other ends, we derive that fixed and ſettled equilibrium of power, which like a weight at the centre of gravity is ſo equally attracted on all ſides that it cannot incline to any.

It is therefore a rule to be fairly inferred from this ſummary view of our Conſtitution, which is common to both nations, that ſince it is determined that they ſhould unite into one, the number of repreſentatives to be ſent from each to the common Parliament, ſhould be regulated by the property of each, or in other words, by the ability of each to contribute to the common defence of the whole.

Nor is this rule to be deduced from our Conſtitution only; it is the rule of reaſon and of juſtice. And accordingly hiſtory furniſhes more than one example of two or more nations uniting upon this principle.—Grotius, in

treating of the competency of nations to unite, inſtances two from Strabo.—One is the caſe of the ſtate of Cibyra, which agreed to incorporate herſelf with three ſtates in her neighbourhood upon theſe terms; that ſhe ſhould have three voices in the ſupreme council of the new community, and each of the others only one, becauſe ſhe contributed more to the common benefit than any of the reſt. The other is the caſe of Lycia, where twenty three ſtates or cities united; of which ſome had three voices, ſome two, and ſome only one, each in proportion, not to its extent or population, but to its ability to contribute to the common benefit of the whole.

Now in order to bring this rule to act upon the propoſed Union between Great Britain and Ireland, and to adjuſt the number of repreſentatives which each is entitled to have in the common Parliament, it will be neceſſary to form an eſtimate of the relative ability of each. And this I ſhall endeavour to do by referring to four ſeveral criterions; 1ſt, to the reſpective peace eſtabliſhments of the two countries at

a time

a time when the propoſed Union was not in contemplation. 2ndly, to the expenſes reſpectively incurred in the preſent war. 3rdly, to the annual charge and burden induced upon each country by thoſe expenſes. 4thly, to the probable peace eſtabliſhments of the two countries at the cloſe of the war. In purſuing this courſe of compariſon we find—firſt, that the peace expenditure of Great Britain was upon an average of 6 years about £.5,500,000 ſterling, and that of Ireland on a ſimilar average nearly one million ſterling: being about the proportion of five and one-half to one. Secondly, the total of money raiſed by Great Britain during the war from February 1793 to January 1801, may be eſtimated at 180 millions ſterling; and by Ireland for the ſame period £.21,780,000 ſterling, being in the proportion of eight one-fourth to one. Thirdly, the total burden induced upon Great Britain by the war, will have been £.7,200,000 ſterling annually; and the total annual charge incurred by Ireland in the ſame period, will have been about £.1,200,000 ſterling, (excluſive of the ſums ſet apart by each country reſpectively

tively for the gradual diminution of its national debt,) which will be in the proportion of 7 to 1. Fourthly, the ordinary expenditure of the united kingdom upon the return of peace may be eſtimated at £.8,200,000 ſterling per Annum; of which the ſhare to be borne by Ireland, if ſhe were to remain a ſeparate kingdom, and with no more than her old peace eſtabliſhment, would be £.1,200,000; and here the proportion would be rather more than 6 to 1. But there is alſo a further teſt of the relative ability of the two countries, to which I ſhall beg leave to appeal, and that is, the comparative amount of their commerce. And if this compariſon be taken on the reſpective exports of produce and manufacture for ſimilar averages, and valued by the current prices, the reſult will be in the proportion of about 6 to 1; that is, £.30,648,000 ſterling for Great Britain, and about £.5,100,000 ſterling for Ireland. Thus it appears that thoſe different eſtimates vary between the proportion of five and one-half to one, and the proportion of eight one-fourth to one; and therefore I think myſelf warranted to aſſume

7½ to

7½ to 1 or 15 to 2 as the fair and reaſonable medium; and the rather, as the Houſe of Commons, to whoſe province it ſeems peculiarly to belong, have already determined *that* to be the proportion according to which each country ought to contribute to the common ſupport of the empire. And hence it follows that according to the rule, which I have ſhown to be fairly deducible from our Conſtitution, and which has been obſerved by other nations in forming treaties of Union, the number of repreſentatives for Ireland ought to be to the number of repreſentatives for Great Britain as 2 to 15; which (rejecting fractions) would give for Ireland about 74 only, whereas the number propoſed is 100.

But perhaps I ſhall be told that I ought to take into the eſtimate the population of the two countries reſpectively. And altho' this is contrary to my notions of the Conſtitution, which ſuppoſe property and not population to be the ſubject of repreſentation, yet I am willing to receive it into the ſcale, and the rather, as I find it had its weight in adjuſting the

treaty

treaty of Union between England and Scotland; but with this expreſs qualification, that credit ought to be given not for the groſs but only the productive population of the two countries. And comparing the number of artiſts, manufacturers and labourers in Great Britain, (whoſe induſtry fixes itſelf in ſome permanent ſubject and adds to the wealth of the community,) with the number of a like deſcription here; and excepting from the calculation all idle-ſtrollers, vagabonds and beggars, with which Ireland unfortunately ſwarms; and we ſhall perhaps find that tho' the groſs population be commonly eſtimated as ten millions to three and a half, yet the productive population will be nearly as eight to two; and if I am right in this conjecture, (for not being very converſant in political arithmetic, I offer it only as a conjecture,) then it will appear that 558 will be to 100 nearly in a compound *ratio* of the wealth and productive population of the one country to the wealth and productive population of the other. Nor if the number of repreſentatives for Ireland fell ſhort of this proportion, do I think that circumſtance ought to weigh againſt

the

the advantages which Union is likely to produce. In the Parliament of Great Britain the number of members for the county of Cornwall is within one of the number for the whole of Scotland, which contains many counties, and twenty more than for the principality of Wales, which contains twelve counties; and in Ireland the number of members for the county of Cork is within four of the number for the whole province of Connaught; and yet we do not find that either Scotland, Wales, or Connaught have ever complained, or had reaſon to complain, of the diſproportion; and Why? becauſe in the Britiſh Parliament the intereſts of Scotland and Wales are identified with thoſe of England; and in the Iriſh Parliament the intereſts of Connaught are the ſame with thoſe of Cork. And the caſe will be the ſame when the two countries ſhall be united into one body; becauſe the intereſt of the whole is but an aggregate of the intereſts of its ſeveral parts.

But tho' we have a rule to aſcertain what is a competent number of commoners to repreſent the kingdom, it is not ſo eaſy to determine by

any rule known to the Conſtitution what ought to be the number of its peers. Anciently, Lord Coke tells us, a knight's fee conſiſted of land of the annual value of £20; thirteen and one-third of theſe fees went to make a barony, 20 an earldom, about 27 a marquiſate, and 40 a dukedom.

But ſince the peerage has ceaſed to be territorial, and is become merely honorary, (if we except the biſhops, who ſtill ſit *per baroniam*,) we can no longer look to property in that body, but to the pleaſure of the prince, which being wholly arbitrary, can furniſh no certain ſtandard for adjuſting the proportion.

It muſt be admitted therefore that the conſtitution, as at preſent arranged, furniſhes no rule of that kind; but the hiſtory of the Union with Scotland has happily ſuggeſted one; for the authors of that treaty thought that the number of peers ought to be to that of the commoners nearly as one to three.

And

And in this article of the Iriſh Union, we find that rule has been obſerved, tho' not exactly, yet in a reaſonable degree; and where it is departed from, the deviation is on the popular ſide. And conſidering the number of Iriſh Noblemen, who have alſo ſeats in the Britiſh houſe of peers, (about 40, excluſive of thoſe whoſe titles are merely honorary,) it makes amends, and more than amends, for the diſproportion, if any. It is double the number of the repreſentatives of the peerage of Scotland, and (what is very remarkable, tho' perhaps not adverted to by the framers of this article) one for every county in Ireland.

Beſides, it deſerves conſideration, that at the time of the Scotch Union the number of peers of that kingdom was about 144, which divided by 16, makes the quotient 9; but if we divide 217, the number of the Iriſh peers, excluſive of Archbiſhops and Biſhops, by 28, the quotient will be ſeven three-fourths; and if again we take from 217, forty who are alſo peers of Great Britain, the number will be reduced to 177; which divided by 28, gives only 6 and a frac-

tion; ſo that Ireland will ſend to the Imperial Parliament nearly a ſixth of her temporal peerage to repreſent the whole, whereas Scotland, of whoſe peers there were only four or five in the Engliſh houſe at the time of the Union, ſends only a ninth.

And thus the landed intereſt of Ireland will be repreſented in the Parliament of the Union by two commoners and one peer for every county in the kingdom; a number of what are called *rotten boroughs* will be disfranchiſed, and thoſe only repreſented, which enjoy a conſiderable ſhare of commerce, and whoſe conſtitutions are, for the moſt part, free; a reform of which the noble Earl who ſpoke laſt will hardly complain, ſince he propoſes that Great Britain ſhould alſo disfranchiſe a certain number of her boroughs; but to this propoſal there are two objections, one that if the premiſes which I have laid down are right, Great Britain has only her juſt proportion of repreſentatives at preſent; and that as ſhe has not dictated to us, it will not become us to dictate to her.

Thus

Thus far, my Lords, I have confined myſelf to the diſcuſſion of the article immediately under conſideration; but as I have not troubled your Lordſhips this ſeſſion upon the ſubject of Union in general, I ſhall entreat your indulgence for a few minutes, while I endeavour to give an anſwer to ſome of the popular objections which are commonly urged againſt this meaſure.

Great ſtreſs has been laid upon the recovery of our rights in the memorable æra of 1782. It is the boaſt, the pride, the pleaſure of my life, that I aſſiſted in forming that arrangement. But the great value of that arrangement is, that it puts us on a proud footing of legiſlative independence, and enables us to ſay, upon what terms we are willing to unite; whereas if that event had not taken place, we muſt, perhaps, before now, have yielded to an Union of ſubjection, not an Union of equality. It was then declared that no power on earth was competent to make laws of force to bind this country, but the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland. And it was ſo truly declared;

but

but are we called upon to give up that right? no! but we are called upon to perpetuate it by Union; not to annihilate our liberties, but to render them immortal, by placing them on the ſame broad baſe with thoſe of Great Britain. The very propoſition of an Union for our deliberation is a recognition of our right; for if any other power had been conſidered as competent to bind us, we ſhould, probably, have never been reſorted to.

But it is ſaid that the arrangement of 1782 was final and concluſive. And ſo I admit it to be as to the only ſubject to which it applied; which was the legiſlative independence of Ireland. The independence of our legiſlature was then finally eſtabliſhed, and has never ſince been violated.

But where is the article in that arrangement, which forbids an Union between the two Countries? It decides the only queſtion then in controverſy between them, and thereby impedes not, but rather facilitates an Union; juſt as the accommodation of a private diffe-

rence

rence between two individuals often lays the foundation for a lasting friendship in future.

It must be admitted that the independence of Ireland was not placed on a firmer basis in 1782 than that on which the independence of Scotland stood in 1707. The only difference between the two cases, is, that Ireland *newly* recovered in 1782, what Scotland had enjoyed for ages before 1707. And therefore the independence of Scotland might with more reason have been objected as a bar to her Union with England. And accordingly the objection was made by the patriots of those times; but the Scotch were too wise to give way to it.

I have heard it asserted that an act of Union will annihilate the Parliament of Ireland. And I admit that it will annihilate it in one sense of the word. It will annihilate it as a distinct Parliament; and in like manner will it annihilate the Parliament of Great Britain: but they will not therefore

cease

ceaſe to exiſt; for out of the two will ſpring a third, neither Britiſh nor Iriſh, but compounded of both, and for that reaſon more competent than either, to promote and ſecure the freedom, the proſperity and the happineſs of the whole.

For it is a miſtake to ſay, that when two nations unite, they annihilate or ſurrender their rights. They do not ſurrender but interchange and combine them. Nor do I aſſert this upon my own authority only; I aſſert it upon the authority of the learned Grotius, in whom you will find theſe words upon the ſubject:—" *Quod ſi quando uniantur duo populi, non amittantur jura, ſed communicabuntur. Sicut Sabinorum primo, & deinde Albanorum jus in Romanos transfuſum eſt; et una facta reſpublica, ut Livius loquitur.*"—The rights of two nations will not be loſt, but communicated by Union. And this was the caſe, when the Sabine nation firſt, and afterwards the Alban coaleſced with the Roman; and ſo, in the language of Livy, the whole became one commonwealth.

" *Idemque,*

"*Idemque*, continues Grotius,—*cenſendum eſt de regenis, quæ non fœdere, aut es duntaxat quod regem communem habeant, ſed verâ unitate jungantur. Grotius de jure belli & paeis.—Lib.* 11. *C.*9. *f.* 9."—And the ſame may be ſaid of two kingdoms, if they happen to be connected, not by a fœderal alliance, not by the tye only of being ſubject to one common Sovereign, (the very relation which ſubſiſts at preſent between Great Britain and Ireland,) but by a real, incorporating Union.

Much has been ſaid of national pride, of national independence. But if this ſilly argument had prevailed from the beginning, no political aſſociation could ever have been formed, and mankind muſt have remained in a ſtate of nature to this hour. The firſt two men, who united for mutual defence againſt the beaſts of the foreſt, would never have done ſo, if they had liſtened to the ſuggeſtions of pride, but would have nobly leſt their lives expoſed to preſerve their independence. The firſt two families who formed themſelves into one ſociety; the firſt two or

three ſocieties who formed themſelves into one nation, might with equal reaſon have ſpurned the idea of uniting, ſince it ſeems diſtinct independence is of more value than common ſecurity.

What was the condition of this country when divided into petty principalities? If we look into our hiſtory, we ſhall there find the pride of independence painted in its ſtrongeſt colours. The character of thoſe times cannot be better given than in the laconic correſpondence of two Chieftains.—The one writes to the other, "Send me my tribute, or if you don't"—— and the other with equal brevity and point, returns for anſwer, "I owe you no tribute, and if I did"——they then went to cutting the throats of each other, until the extirpation of one or both put an end to the quarrel.

Such are the fruits of divided independence; and ſuch fruits did this nation continue to reap, until exhauſted by inceſſant diſſenſions, and ſurfeited with blood, they agreed to ſubmit to the diſcipline of Engliſh laws, and

to

to acknowledge the King of England for their ſuperior Lord. And happy had it been for this country, if its inhabitants had ever ſince continued in that temper; but, unfortunately, the love of independence revived in their boſoms; they renounced their allegiance to their common ſovereign; and once more exhibited ſcenes of rapine and bloodſhed which are a diſgrace to human nature. Nor were the Engliſh coloniſts, at times, in a much better condition. The hiſtory of this country, during the contention of the Houſes of York and Lancaſter, furniſhes inſtances of two Parliaments ſitting at the ſame time, and each attainting and confiſcating the eſtates of the other. And in this ſtate of anarchy and confuſion did things continue, with little or no interruption, until the nation was once more united under James the firſt, who may be conſidered as the lawgiver of Ireland; and from whoſe reign we muſt date the commencement of a government regularly organized, and of Parliaments ſolemnly holden.

Nor is this ſtate of things peculiar to Ireland. It is the ſame in all countries which are divided into petty ſtates. It was ſo in ancient Greece, before the inſtitution of the Amphictionic Council gave it a common intereſt and principle of action. It was ſo in ancient Italy till the weight of the Roman power compreſſed it into one nation. It was ſo in Spain, France and England, until the petty ſovereignties into which thoſe kingdoms were anciently divided, ſeverally ſubmitted themſelves to one common ſovereign. And ſo it is, and will continue to be, among the ſavage tribes of America, until the light of philoſophy ſhall ſhine upon, and teach them the bleſſings of Union, civilization and ſocial order.

It is ſaid that the propoſed Union is unneceſſary, becauſe we are already united to Great Britain by a fœderal alliance. But the hiſtory of the World proves the imbecility of fœderal connexion; ſince the jealouſy of the weak ſtate will always prompt it to ſeparate itſelf from the ſtrong. It was thus in the caſe of Spain and Portugal: the latter, being the

the weaker ſtate, renounced her connexion with the former, and placed the Portugueſe crown on the head of the Duke of Braganza. A ſimilar conſequence reſulted from the connexion between Denmark and Sweden; Sweden, feeling the inferiority of her ſituation, took the firſt opportunity of ſeparating herſelf from Denmark, and elected Guſtavus Vaſa for her Sovereign. Look to the example of Holland; if her ſeven provinces had been incorporated into one nation, inſtead of each poſſeſſing a negative upon the general will of the confederacy, would France have been able to over-run the whole country in a few weeks? If in Germany there had not exiſted a multiplication of intereſts and ſeparation of ſtates, each endeavouring to ſhift for itſelf, inſtead of uniting for the common defence, could the French arms have reduced the left bank of the Rhine in one or two campaigns? In Italy we ſee the ſame effects proceeding from the ſame cauſes: had ſhe been united under one Senate, or one powerful Prince, could the conqueſts of Bonaparte have been ſo rapidly accompliſhed? But allies have never been known to co-operate cordially;

dially: *Dum ſinguli pugnant univerſi vincuntur.* Switzerland is now ruing the feebleneſs and inſtability of fœderal alliance; and Poland, where every member of the Diet was independent of the other, and by his ſingle *liberum veto* could controul the general will—Poland has been blotted out of the catalogue of nations, and exiſts only in the fragments of a diſmembered province. Caſt your eye over the chart of the World, and if you would form an eſtimate of the political proſperity of any given portion of it, you have only to inquire whether it is united under one head like China, or divided into petty hordes, like thoſe of the Tartars and Arabs. To an Union of ſtates there can be no objection but that the machine may become unwieldy from its magnitude: but no Empire can be too great, where the arm of the Sovereign can reach to every part of it, and his will command all its motions.

It has been argued that we were never deſtined to unite, becauſe a phyſical barrier has been placed between us; becauſe the ſea flows between the two Iſlands: as if the interpoſition of that element, upon which commerce is exerciſed,

erciſed, did not furniſh the ſtrongeſt argument for an Union between two commercial nations. From Zimmerman's ſurvey it appears that the line of ſea coaſt of Great Britain and Ireland, taken together, amounts to upwards of 3,800 miles, while that of France is not more than 1,000; and to this cauſe we may trace the extinction of the French trade and the depreſſion of its naval ſtrength; to this cauſe we may aſcribe the inexhauſtible treaſures of Britiſh commerce, and the multiplied glories of the Britiſh Flag! But if to remove this ſuppoſed impediment, nature had united the eaſtern ſide of Ireland to the weſtern of Great Britain, five hundred miles of ſea coaſt would have been deſtroyed, and a proportional ſource of opulence and power loſt to the empire.

Dr. Adam Smith has dwelt upon the advantages of a country being interſected, naturally or artificially, by navigable waters. He computes that a broad wheeled waggon, attended by two men, and drawn by eight horſes, in about ſix weeks time, carries and brings back between London and Edinburgh near four ton weight of goods

goods: and that in about the ſame time, a ſhip navigated by ſix or eight men, and ſailing between the ports of London and Leith, frequently carries and brings back two hundred ton weight of goods. Six or eight men therefore, by the help of water carriage can carry and bring back, in the ſame time, the ſame quantity of goods between London and Edinburgh, as fifty broad wheeled waggons attended by a hundred men and drawn by four hundred horſes.

So ſenſible is Great Britain of the benefit of ſuch aqueous diviſions, that ſhe is daily expending thouſands on the conſtruction of navigable Canals; has actually formed herſelf into two iſlands by the junction of the frith of Forth and Clyde; and is meditating another great work which will ſtill further divide the iſland. "It is upon the ſea coaſt," ſays the author of the wealth of nations "and upon the banks of navigable rivers, that induſtry of every kind begins to ſubdivide and improve itſelf; and it is frequently not till a long time after, that thoſe improvements extend themſelves to the inland parts of the country." When Great Britain wiſhed to confine the

trade

trade of the American colonies to the mother country, and to check their mutual intercourſe; ſhe paſſed a law to prevent certain goods from being water borne between one province and another. The riches of Indoſtan may be typified by the waters of the Ganges; and the barrenneſs and deſolation of Africa accounted for by her want of navigable ſtreams. The divine Author of our nature introduced four great rivers into Paradiſe, as if to point out to mankind what parts of that earth, which he had given them, they ought to cultivate the firſt.

In a former ſeſſion I troubled your Lordſhips with ſome remarks on the competence of Parliament to paſs an act of Union—I am unwilling to return to the ſubject, but I feel myſelf provoked, by what has been ſaid in another Houſe, if I may credit the public prints, to offer a few additional obſervations. An act of Union is a law incorporating one ſtate with another for their mutual benefit and protection. It is a ſolemn compact, by which two ſtates, hitherto diſtinct, agree to become one, and to be governed in future by one common will. But to call this political ſuicide is, in my apprehenſion, rank nonſenſe; unleſs it can be proved that when two ſtates unite

they ceaſe to exiſt. Union is only a law common to two ſtates; and to ſay that the Parliaments of both are incompetent to frame ſuch a law, is to ſay that they are incompetent to anſwer the ends of their inſtitution. For a diſtinction is to be made between the phyſical and moral power of Parliaments. They *can* do any act, but there are certain acts which they *ought* not to do; and therefore every queſtion of *competence* ultimately reſolves itſelf into a queſtion of *expediency*. And ſurely it will not be argued, that tho' Great Britain and Ireland ſhould ſtand on the precipice of deſtruction; that tho' their diſtinctneſs muſt be productive of miſery in the extreme, and Union be ever ſo neceſſary to their happineſs; that they muſt continue diſtinct for want of power to unite: in other words, that tho' the meaſure ſhould be ever ſo *expedient*, the Parliaments of the two countries are yet *incompetent* to enact it. It is a wretched argument, and ſuch as no man in his ſenſes can contend for. "*The "bare idea of a ſtate,*" ſays Judge Blackſtone, "*without a power ſomewhere veſted to alter every "part of its laws,*" (and it is the laws of every country which make its conſtitution,) "*is the "height of political abſurdity.*"

My

My Lords, I am ſorry to hear it ſaid that the arrangement of 1782 is conſidered as part of a plan of ſeparation; I was concerned in that arrangement, and was at that time, as I ſtill am, a decided friend to Union; and had any ſcheme for that purpoſe been then deviſed, I ſhould have given it my ſupport. But tho' I had the honour of being admitted into the councils of that day, I have not upon my memory any trace of ſuch a ſcheme having been propoſed, much leſs reduced into form. And ſure I am, that had it been propoſed, I ſhould not have ſhrunk from it thro' any apprehenſion of loſing *a ſilly and precarious popularity.* I have long learned to deſpiſe popularity, and have had examples enough before my eyes, to convince me how unworthy it is of the purſuit of any man of common ſenſe. I have ſeen an honourable and reſpectable friend of mine, now no more, at one time led half-way to the gallows to be hanged, and in a ſhort time after carried into the Houſe of Commons, (and for aught I know by the ſame mob,) in triumph, as one of the repreſentatives of the city. I have lived to ſee an illuſtrious friend of mine at one time idolized as a deity, and at another disfranchiſed as a traitor; the act of an intemperate corporation, whoſe cenſure could

could no more depreciate, than their applauſe could enhance, the value of a character which will always ſuſtain itſelf. I have lived, and am proud to ſay it, in habits of intimacy with him; and know him to be as incapable of engaging in any plan for ſeparating this country from Great Britain, as the moſt ſtrenuous advocate for the preſent meaſure. If there be any young man within hearing, who feels himſelf enamoured of popularity, I ſhall beg leave to give him a ſhort leſſon of inſtruction. Let him keep himſelf for ever engaged in the purſuit of ſome unattainable object; let him make the impracticability of his meaſures the foundation of his fame: but let him beware how he follows any ſolid or poſſible good; for as ſure as he ſucceeds his fame is damned for ever. Succeſs will only call up ſome envious ſwaggerer, who will undertake to go a bar's length beyond him, and ſnatch away from him the worthleſs prize of popular eſtimation.

FINIS.