

*Thomas N. Ridington Esq.*  
*with the best respects and Compliments to*  
THE  
*Mr. Fulton*  
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITION

OF  
IRELAND,

FROM THE YEAR 1782,

WHEN ITS PARLIAMENT BECAME INDEPENDENT OF THE BRITISH LEGISLATURE,

UNTIL THE LEGISLATIVE UNION IN 1800,

AND

THE RESULTS TO BE ANTICIPATED FROM ITS

REPEAL,

EXAMINED IN A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO DANIEL O'CONNELL, ESQ. M.P.

BY

R. P. MACDONNELL, ESQ.

DUBLIN

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official documents, it cannot be alleged I did so in a garbled or deceitful manner, my principal object now being, to take a fair and impartial view of the actual state of this country during the period of that "*unexampled prosperity and happiness*," which we have been so often assured she enjoyed, under the legislation of her own independent parliament, from the year 1782 until the union, a return to this felicitous condition, being the grand and sublime object of repeal.

The authorities to which I purpose principally to refer in this review, shall be, The proceedings and resolutions of different public meetings, "THE ACTS" of our admired parliament of College-green, with the cotemporaneous statements and observations of the Dublin press; on which latter point I shall almost exclusively select the columns of *The Dublin Evening Post*, as being then, and at all times, a most respectable journal, of liberal principles, opposed besides, most strenuously, throughout that period to the proposed union; and if from these testimonies it shall appear, that instead of those halcyon days of peace, contentment, prosperity, and sound legislation, as so constantly asserted, it was almost one continued scene of decline in our manufactures, of want of employment and distress among our artizans and manufacturers, of misery and grievous destitution with our peasantry, of venality, corruption, oppression, and incapacity in our legislature—all producing unexampled turbulence, disorder, and nightly outrage, terminating in rebellion and a sanguinary civil war, may we not, I ask, be permitted to doubt the prudence of seeking to return to that system of legislation, under which such deplorable results appear to have been before experienced.

The date of the independence of the Irish parliament is taken, as it is to be supposed all your repeal votaries are aware, from the 20th of June, 1782, when a bill which



passed the British parliament for the repeal of the declaratory act of George I. received the royal assent, and from that period I shall take this review, each year consecutively.

In the *Dublin Evening Post* of the 23rd of June, 1783, the following editorial observation appears:—

“The slow progress made in the fisheries and woollen manufacture of Ireland, those great sources of national wealth, is without example in the commercial history of any one nation on the face of the globe.”

Again, in its publication of the 31st of July following, this statement may be found:—

“Letters from the woollers at the late fair of Mullingar give dismal accounts of their sales, and say there were but 300 bags sold, and them from 10s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. per stone. Some years ago there were five thousand bags sold at this fair.”

And from this Journal of the 14th of August, in the same year, the following extract is taken:—

“On Saturday the 9th of August, a petition was presented to the right hon. the lord mayor, by the silk-weavers of this city, describing the pressing calamities of these poor but useful members of the community. The daily increasing calamities of these poor artists, dependent on the silk manufacture, are not only painfully distressing to the tender feelings of humanity, but also highly alarming to the national welfare of Ireland.”

A notification from the lord mayor, dated Mansion-house, September 6th, 1783, subsequently appeared thus:

“The lord mayor acquaints the public, that he has disposed of the £100 his excellency the lord lieutenant was so humane as to give him to distribute among the poor distressed manufacturers, and is very sorry that, upon examining, he found some thousands, the greatest objects he ever beheld, and fears much, if something is not immediately done for their relief, that numbers of them must perish for want.”



The leading article of this paper gives, on the 25th of September, 1783, this *brilliant sketch* of the prosperity then dawning on this country under its legislative independence.

“This day exhibited a sight at which humanity shrinks back appalled—thousands of starving and industrious weavers in the woollen branch made a procession through all the principal streets of the capital, with the golden fleece, which formerly fed, clothed, and diffused happiness among millions, wrapped up in black, truly picturesque of the lamentable situation to which the sons of industry are now reduced by the deplorable state of the manufactures of Ireland. The fleece was carried by several of the children of want, in deep mourning, attended by an innumerable crowd of their brethren in distress, in mourning cloaks, hat-bands, and weepers.

“In the year 1738, there were upwards of seven hundred broad looms in the Earl of Meath’s liberty and its environs, besides large factories in the country parts of the kingdom; the whole number of broad looms now in the Earl of Meath’s liberty does not amount to three hundred and sixty, out of which there are one hundred and twenty-eight out of employ.”

At this time also a deputation of the corporation of weavers waited upon the Duchess of Leinster, and presented her with an address, signed by the master and wardens of the guild, from which I take these paragraphs.

“Sincerely feeling for the remarkable distress of the numerous unemployed poor dependent upon our manufactures, and anxious to procure for them and their families all the relief in our power, we have presumed to turn our thoughts to your grace in their behalf. Many are, with their helpless families, enduring unspeakable hardships, and experiencing a variety of wretchedness.”

An address to the ladies of Ireland from the silk-mercens of Dublin, signed by John Keogh and others, dated the 27th of September, 1783, commences thus:

“The very great distress which the working silk-weavers now labour under for want of employment, renders every effort neces-



sary to lessen the calamities that threaten them and their families in the approaching winter."

Such then is the testimony we have of the prosperity of Ireland and her manufactures during the first year subsequent to our boasted independence. We shall now proceed to the succeeding year.

On the 2nd of April, 1784, the order of the day in the House of Commons for receiving the report of the committee on the manufactures being read, Mr. Gardiner moved, "that it appeared to this house the working people of this kingdom, in the several branches of manufacture, are in extreme distress," when Alderman Warren, in support of the motion, said, "his situation had given him an opportunity, more perhaps than any other gentleman, of seeing the misery of the poor manufacturers, when he had often beheld eight or ten starving, naked, comfortless wretches in the corner of a cellar, a reproach to humanity." This motion, however, was lost by a majority of eighty-nine, and in our own precious House of Commons, sitting in College-green, one hundred and twenty-six members voted against entertaining the question for the relief of the then starving manufacturers.

The editorial article of *The General Evening Post* of the 8th of April, this year, states that—

"Fifty thousand starving manufacturers in the city of Dublin request that the administration will procure them passages to America, as they have refused the means of subsistence here; they would rather quit the country, than rise in insurrection, which must be the consequence if they receive no relief."

At a meeting of the freemen, freeholders, and inhabitants of the city of Dublin, held at the Tholsel, on the 22nd of April, 1784, the high sheriffs in the chair, it was, with other matters, resolved unanimously—



“ That the manufactures of the country being in a declining state, and the manufacturers in such extreme degree of distress as to demand the most zealous exertions and utmost attention of the people.”

And at a meeting of the Drogheda association, on the 10th of May, it was resolved unanimously—

“ That the want of employment for our manufacturers, and the large emigrations making from almost every seaport, are highly alarming, and fatally destructive to the strength and prosperity of Ireland.”

A requisition was made in the same month, by the freeholders of the county of Wicklow, to the high sheriff, to convene a meeting of that county, “ in order to adopt such measures as shall appear necessary to alleviate the distresses of the starving manufacturers of this kingdom.”

In June, this year, a petition from the working silk-weavers of the city and liberties of Dublin, to the Duchess of Rutland, states—

“ That petitioners have for the course of *the last two years* laboured under the most trying calamities, occasioned by repeated stagnation in their business, which is now almost totally suspended, as there are upwards of two thousand looms in their various branches unemployed, which reduces ten thousand souls to the want of bread, insomuch that petitioners and families are reduced to a state more exquisitely distressing than has been known at any former period.”

What unpatriotic scoundrels they must have been who thus presumed to fix the date of the commencement of this “ calamitous failure of their business and their unprecedented distress,” at the same time—nay, on the very day, that our College-green parliament became independent.

In the following month the grand jury of the county of Kerry, in an address to the high sheriff of that county, say, “ trade, manufactures, and wealth, those tender off-



springs of tranquillity and law, are blasted from our shores." It is much to be regretted, that this predilection for tranquillity among the Kerry folk then, has not been more *unanimously* cherished and acted on since.

The important and interesting discussions, on the propositions for the permanent regulation of the trade between England and Ireland, to which I shall again refer, continued in the parliaments of both countries during the greater portion of the year 1785, and appear to have occupied public attention so intensely, and the columns of the public press so fully, as to have excluded all other subjects from both. Of the state, however, of our peasantry, and of the country generally, in those times, the *Dublin Evening Post* of the following dates, during the year 1786, affords no very flattering testimony.

In the editorial article on the 16th of February, the following observations regarding Ireland occur:—

"Nothing is to be seen but poverty and desolation—mansions that once were an ornament now unheeded, save in the ineffectual lamentation of the helpless cottager, mouldering into decay—dreary wastes, devoted to pasturage for feeding cattle, of which her natives are never to taste—cultivation almost totally neglected—arts and manufactures languid or expiring, trade at a stand!"

Its publication of July 15th furnishes another short sketch, too applicable to the present time, thus:—

"No kingdom perhaps experiences the want of a yeomanry in the degree that Ireland does. To the traveller no ranks are distinguishable save that of the rabble and the gentry."

Again, on that of the 27th of July, this remark occurs—

"When we consider that Ireland is an independent nation, it must gall us to see our men of landed estates treat us like a petty province, and shun us as beneath their dignity to dwell



amongst us. Of all absentees, the absentee landlord is the most ruinous to a kingdom”

So it appears there were absentees *then*, notwithstanding the fascinating attraction of a domestic legislature. The fact is, that the mischievous grievance of absenteeism, has been a constant theme with the press during the whole of this period; and the definition of the word “*absentee*” in Johnston’s quarto edition of his dictionary, published in 1775, proves that this peculiarly Irish complaint is not of modern origin. He says it is “a word used commonly with regard to Irishmen living out of their country.”

Again, I take the following paragraph from the *Dublin Evening Post*, of September the 9th, 1786 :—

“Perhaps if the whole globe were searched, a set of beings more intrinsically wretched than the Irish peasantry could not be found. A plantation slave is protected by his master as private property, while an Irish peasant, naked and defenceless, is a fair mark for oppression and rapacity.”

And again, on the 12th September, thus :—

“That poverty and population go hand in hand in Ireland, need not be mentioned to any person who has made a tour of the kingdom. He must have seen swarms of naked children, who, like our first parents, in a state of innocence, unconscious of their situation, gazed on the stranger without a blush. He must have seen woe-worn, ragged peasants without number—he must have seen the mud-built hut, the sodded thatch, and wicker door—and, if curiosity induced him to venture into the hovel, he must have seen an epitome of human misery—a little straw for a bed—a few low stools and an iron pot composed the whole furniture, while a feeble matron in the corner, pinched for want, laments having seen better days.”

Surely those “better days” could not have been before the independence of our parliament.



A Christmas in Dublin, in 1786, is thus described by the *Dublin Evening Post*, of the 26th of December in that year :—

“A rigorous season—the extravagant price of provisions—the monstrous rate at which fuel is kept up—a dearth of employment, like a complication of disorders, any of which would be scarcely supportable by the human body, have combined for the destruction of the lower classes in this metropolis. Thousands are famishing, to whom bread and buttermilk would be a luxury; yet no public contributions have been made for their relief.”

But what signified all this, when they could boast of having their own parliament sitting in College-green, in the fourth year of its independence.

The *Dublin Evening Post* of January 15, 1788, makes this statement :—

“A great number of woollen weavers have been out of employment for a considerable time past, and, along with their families, have experienced all the miseries of want. The working manufacturers are reduced to a state of beggary and famine.”

And on that dated the 12th of March the next year, the following editorial paragraph appears :—

“By the laws of England, the pensions in that great and opulent kingdom do not exceed £80,000 a year; and yet this poor, neglected, and deserted country is loaded with pensions to the amount of *one hundred and three thousand pounds a year!* and now, when trade and industry are pining under the pressure of this unequal burden, and a variety of restrictions and discouragements, it is called disrespectful to the crown, and an encroachment on the prerogative, to limit it to the same sum, and in the same manner, that our more wise, more provident, and more opulent neighbours have thought it necessary to confine it.”

In February, 1790, the silk weavers of Dublin pre-



sented an address to the Countess of Westmoreland, praying her Excellency's encouragement and protection, particularly as numbers of them, according to their statement, were out of employ. The undivided attention of the public and the press appears to have been devoted this year to the general election, and to the political, rather than to the social state of the country. In the following year, however, the latter is thus noticed in the *Dublin Evening Post* of March 3, 1791 :—

“Never was there a more just picture exhibited of the state and sufferings of the Irish peasantry, than by the Lord Chancellor on Monday,” (alluding to his speech in the Irish House of Lords on that day.) “‘Suffering by the neglect or rapacity of absentee landlords or more severely oppressed by the unfeeling severity of residents, it was not matter of wonder if they should sometimes be guilty of irregularities to procure a necessary of life, and if they should sometimes prefer the gratification of a natural want, to the interest of a man to whom they owe no obligation.’ If to this severity of the landlord be added the oppression of the tithe-proctor, who will wonder why the peasantry of Ireland are the most wretched people on the face of the earth?”

The following is taken from its leading paragraph of the 18th of June that year :—

“Situated as Ireland is, happily, for commerce, and enjoying as she does climate and soil peculiarly adapted to agriculture, why is it that we annually see her sons migrate to a foreign country, to seek a precarious subsistence in gathering a foreign harvest? It is only because that, with all these advantages, she has been longer than any other nation on the earth subject to the unfeeling rapacity of absentee proprietors, whose sole object seems to be, depredation and plunder. To this it must be attributed that the great western road to the capital, is every year crowded for months with spectacles of woe, victims of rapacity, squalid beings, with famine in their countenances, despair in their eyes—without food, without raiment, without any of those



marks of superiority that distinguish man from brute. Such is the situation to which thousands of the Irish peasantry are annually reduced, and yet we hear that the people are prosperous and happy! Good God! how long will the sycophants of a court endeavour to convince us by assertions, in opposition to the evidence of our senses, and call on us to exult in the welfare of our country, while our hearts are agonizing at the sufferings of our countrymen."

Little did the honest and humane editor of the *Dublin Evening Post*, of that time, anticipate that the *patriots* of our day, would refer exultingly to the "prosperity and happiness of the people" then, and, like his "sycophants of the court," endeavour to convince us of it *by assertion only*.

The leading article of this journal, on the 26th of July, is as follows:—

"Sunday evening, a large body of worsted-weavers from the liberty, took their passage for Manchester and other parts of England. The total decline of several branches of that business, particularly those of double-stuff, calimancoes, camlets, &c. is the cause of this emigration. It is at first view rather an odd circumstance, that while the prosperity of the country, its progress in manufactures, &c., are the high-sounding themes of debauched prints and the venal supporters of administration, our most valuable workmen are compelled to seek employment on a foreign shore, or perish on their own."

What character are we to give of the prints of the present day, that are as loud in their high-sounding themes "of the prosperity" then of this country, as those "debauched prints" alluded to at the time?

I would recommend the following article to the special consideration of your repeal association, and the first paragraph particularly to those who share "the rent," headed thus, in the *Evening Post* of December, 29th, 1791:—

"PROSPERITY.

"If Ireland be a manufacturing country, the increase of her



manufactures is the best, if not the only criterion of her prosperity—that hackneyed theme of ministerial eulogium, that INVISIBLE existence, which is made the pretext for heaping on the most intolerable burdens, for the worst of purposes—for spreading still wider the influence of corruption, and rewarding the corrupt, with the wealth of the country they betray.

“Of the increase or decline of manufactures, the increase or diminution of their export is the most infallible standard. If we estimate the state of those capital branches of manufacture, old and new drapery, and the mixed manufactures of linen, silk, and cotton, it will be found that they are sunk to the lowest ebb, and that they have been in a state of regular and rapid decline since the year '85.

This will appear clear beyond contradiction, from the following statement of the export of these manufactures for five years, commencing in '85:—

Exported in	New Drapery. Yards.	Old Drapery. Yards.	Linen, Cotton, and Silk Manufacture. Value.
1785,	770,031	34,249	£9,382 17 5
1786,	349,628	10,415	4,443 11 11
1787,	206,843	15,329	5,216 18 0
1788,	315,112	7,749	7,545 1 0
1789,	363,196	7,833	4,616 5 9

“By this sketch, which is authentic and accurate, it appears that the export of new drapery in '89 is less by more than one-half of what it was in the year '85; that the export of old drapery in '89 amounted to little more than one-fifth of the export of '85, and of the mixed manufactures of linen, cotton, and silk, the export in '85 was more than double of that in the year '89.

“These, however, are not the only manufactures which, from the diminished export, appear to be declining; cambric, which, in the year '85, was considered a thriving manufacture, has also fallen off, the export of '89 being less by one-fourth than the export of '85; nor can the friends of Irish prosperity console themselves with the reflection, that the staple manufacture has increased in proportion to that declension, for the total export of linen in '89 exceeds that of '85 by little more than one-twelfth—that of the latter having been 29,344,633 yards of plain linen, that of the former 26,677,647.

“As to coloured linen, that, like old and new drapery, has declined: in the last year of the term under consideration, the



quantity exported does not amount to near one-half that exported in '85.

“ The linen manufacture, and those of old and new drapery being the chief, or rather the whole of the manufactures of this kingdom, and the two latter having decreased in a much greater proportion than the former has increased, the truth of this interesting and important proposition is evident—THE MANUFACTURES OF IRELAND ARE RAPIDLY FALLING INTO DECAY.”

Such then is the statement and deliberate opinion of the leading and well-informed press of Ireland at that time, respecting our manufactures, after nine years' fostering legislation of our own pure and independent parliament—how different from our repeal statements.

On its publication of the 4th of April, 1793, the following observation will be met with:—

“ The distresses of the Earl of Meath's liberty, from the damp of manufactures, are growing daily to an alarming height—scarcely can it be conceived what misery is obvious in every street of it. Humanity cannot look forward, without shuddering at the consequences that must result, if the revival of credit or some other cause, does not speedily give new vigour to industry.”

And on that of the 7th of May, thus:—

“ Several of the manufactures of Ireland are at this moment in a deplorable state—her woollen manufacture nearly annihilated, and her manufacture of cotton, for some years back the most flourishing one in the country, unable to support the one-hundreth part of the usual number of people. Have the administration of Ireland, like that of England, devised any means to alleviate the evil? No.”

This concluding observation must, no doubt, appear very unpatriotic and impertinent to our repealers.

On the 10th of May, 1793, as appears by the public press at the time, a meeting of the nobility, gentlemen, and citizens of Dublin, was held at the Royal Exchange, pursuant to the requisition of the lord mayor, on the sub-



ject of the distressed manufacturers of Dublin, at which the Duke of Leinster, Lord Allen, Lord Cloncurry, Mr. Grattan, Mr. John C. Beresford, and several other members of parliament and respectable citizens attended, the lord mayor in the chair, when the report of the committee previously appointed to inquire into the present state of the manufacturers was read, stating—

“That of the number of persons usually employed in the wool clothing business in the liberty, from five to six thousand were then out of employment, and destitute of the means of subsistence; that of the number employed about twelve months since in the cotton manufacture, there were then *sixteen thousand* out of employment, including men, women, and children; that out of 4,000 looms employed in the calico branch only, in the liberty but 150 were then employed; and that the number of looms employed in the manufactures of velvets, corduroys, thick-sets, and other fabrics of cotton, were decreased in the same proportion, within twenty-five miles of Dublin; that out of 170 looms employed before by a Mr. Collins, a silk manufacturer, not more than thirty were then at work, and that twenty other persons, who each had employed an equal number of hands, were obliged to reduce them in a similar proportion.”

Here then we have, I think, a true, undeniable statement, publicly announced, of the condition of our manufactures in Dublin, seven years before the union, and of the *prosperity* of our manufactures, after eleven years independent and wise legislation of our College-green parliament; deserving, I should imagine, the serious reflection of our Dublin repealers.

In a leading article of the *Dublin Evening Post* of the 14th of May, the following observation occurs:—

“Not only the subordinate manufactures of cotton, wool, &c., but the staple manufacture of the kingdom, linen, is sunk to a most deplorable ebb.”

Again, on the 20th of June, it is stated thus:—



“ But the present stagnation of our trade, does not affect the linen branch alone, all our other exports have been these three months in a gradual decline, and the printed entries of yesterday *have not a single entry ! ! !*”

And again on the 5th of September thus :—

“ The linen trade, is the boasted staple of Ireland, how wretched indeed, then, must this country be, when even its principal manufacture is incapable of affording bread to the workmen ! Yet are we prosperous and happy.”

There certainly appears to have been some great desire then, as well as now, to persuade the world, contrary to the facts, that this country was in a state of prosperity and happiness at that period.

The leading article of this journal, of the 16th of January, 1794, commences thus :—

“ The late distresses in trade, and the starving condition of multitudes of poor manufacturers, have been of the greatest utility to the recruiting service, both by land and sea. It was natural to suppose, when men were without work, and consequently without the means of procuring food, that they would eagerly embrace any means of subsistence.”

Referring to the state of distress in Dublin, in its publication of the 29th of March following, it says :—

“ Be it remembered, that in three streets only, of the parish of St. Catherine, on a recent examination by a committee of respectable citizens, not less than two thousand souls were found in a starving condition.”

The *Dublin Evening Post*, of September 17th, 1759, makes the following remark :—

“ Trade was never at a lower ebb than at present, externally or internally ; the entries made at the Custom-house daily, are few, when compared with any period within the last ten years, and, of course, there must be a proportionate falling off in the



revenue. In the city, several branches of manufacture, which gave bread to hundreds of industrious people, have totally declined ; others have fallen into decay, and the wretched people, whose sole dependence they were, may be seen begging in the streets, while their miserable families at home exhibit dreadful spectacles of want and nakedness, and all the diseases which they induce on the human frame."

We have, again, the sketch of another Christmas in Dublin, in the *Dublin Evening Post*, of December 26th, the same year, thus :—

"The streets yesterday and this day, made a dismal appearance, groups of wretched manufacturers, in ragged apparel, and with emaciated countenances, intercepted the public way, in soliciting charity from passengers."

In 1796, this journal returning to the subject of the state of our peasantry, on the 9th of June, thus notices it :—

"In the world there is not completer misery, than the hovel of an Irish cottager affords, his only furniture an iron pot, a blanket, and cobwebs ; he has no chimney, and the smoke japanning the roof and walls, contributes to the horrid deformity ; his door composed of wicker work, his scanty means, being insufficient to compass timber for the purpose ; the parents are in rags, and the children without even rags to cover them ; potatoes, from January to December, is their unvaried meal."

How very different is this picture from the state of comfort and abundance which our poor deluded people have been so constantly assured had existed previous to the union, and to which "repeal" is alone to restore them—with what shame and remorse, should those on whom they confidently relied, for good and sound advice, reflect on their having so cruelly aided in swindling so many out of their last, and only shilling.

The same distress and misery of our manufacturers and working people, appears to have continued in 1797 ; and



a general meeting of the nobility, gentry, and citizens of Dublin was held at the Mansion house on the 31st of March, "for the purpose," as then published, "of taking the distressed state of the manufacturers and working people into consideration, with a view to collect a charitable fund for their relief," when a committee was appointed, from whose report, dated April the 8th, the following extract is taken:—

"Whatever may be the extent of the intended subscription, which the committee have no doubt will do honour to the humanity of the metropolis, yet when the magnitude of the present calamity is considered, involving many thousands of the working people, of both sexes, in the deepest misery, the committee cannot hope that it will enable them to extend relief, beyond the melancholy limits of perhaps adding a few days to their miserable existence."

The distress at this time, was not, it appears, confined to the manufacturers and working classes of Dublin, for a meeting of the inhabitants of the city of Cork, was held at the Council Chamber, on the 14th of April 1797, the mayor presiding, for the purpose, as was stated by the advertisement calling it, "of taking into consideration the present calamitous situation of the working manufacturers of said city and county," which was continued by several adjournments on the 19th, 20th, 21st, to the 22nd, when a variety of resolutions were adopted, recommending bounties, charitable subscriptions, the exclusive use of Irish manufacture, and other expedients of no permanent avail or advantage.

The following announcement appeared in the *Dublin Evening Post* of the 17th of June 1797:—

"To-morrow, charity sermons are to be preached in the several Roman Catholic chapels, in relief of the famishing manufacturers now out of employ, of whose melancholy situation it is



not necessary to say much, as they are to be found begging and dying in our public streets."

And a meeting of the committee for the relief of the poor unemployed manufacturers, was held on the 20th of this month in the Royal Exchange, A. Guinness, Esq. in the chair, when they stated in their report :—

"That the funds of the committee for the further support of more than TWENTY THOUSAND HUMAN CREATURES being much reduced, they request the attendance of the public, at the charity sermons about to be preached at the different places of worship throughout the city."

The observation following, is taken from the *Dublin Evening Post*, of September the 21st, that year.

"It is a melancholy consideration, that of one thousand and six cotton-looms in this city and its vicinities, not more than one hundred and twenty are now employed. Of five hundred and two silk-looms, in this city and its liberties, not one hundred are employed."

From this statement respecting the number of looms for these manufactures, then in Dublin, compared with those publicly made on the former occasions, there appears to have been a rapid and wonderful decrease.

Several persons, are no doubt, still living, some even of those very manufacturers, who may have a perfect recollection of those melancholy and frequent returns of distress, and of those public meetings and proceedings to procure temporary relief; will *they* advocate repeal? You were called to the bar sir, it appears, early in 1798, and must, I presume, have been in Dublin the previous year, when those public meetings, charity sermons, and awful public statements of distress, to which I have referred, took place, and were yourself, most probably, a contributor to those charitable funds.



If, then, we may be permitted to refer to the proceedings and resolutions of these several public meetings, and to the published statements of the public press, as any authority, surely we have ample testimony, that during these fifteen years of the independent legislation of our parliament in College-green, our manufactures, instead of being thriving and prosperous, as has been so constantly and so perseveringly asserted, were in an almost continuous state of embarrassment and decline, and the manufacturers and artizans so impoverished and distressed, as to require, on frequent occasions, public subscriptions, charity sermons, and alms, to prevent their actual starvation, while the pitiable condition of our poor, miserable peasantry, unparalleled as it was, in any civilized country on the face of the earth, continued unchanged despite the just and constant rebukes of the public press, and the strong expression of public feeling; how far such a deplorable state of things may be justly attributable to our domestic, and then independent legislature, shall be my next point for consideration; and if the reiterated voice and collected opinion of the people, the constant censure of the liberal public press, and their own acts, be accepted as evidence, there cannot be a doubt left, of the utter impossibility of any other result, from their tutelage, but embarrassment and failure in our manufactures, decline in the natural products of the country—distress and destitution among the operatives and working classes—continued debasement in the condition of our peasantry, with consequent outrage, and habitual disregard of all law.

During the years 1798, 1799, and 1800, the French invasion, the insurrection, martial law, threatened famine, and the question of the legislative union, so fully and entirely engrossed public attention, that the state of our manufacturers and peasantry, during that period, appear to have been alto-



gether lost sight of, although their condition, under such circumstances must have been particularly unhappy and deplorable. Previous, however, to returning to the year 1782, for this portion of my review, I may be permitted a brief digression, to notice how this so-called independence of our Irish parliament arose.

Early in the last century, various controversies having occurred between the legislatures of both countries, in which the Irish parliament sought to shake off that supremacy and control, which the British legislature had, in some matters, long assumed and exercised, when "the declaratory act," the 6th of George I. was passed in England, of which the following is an abstract:—

"Whereas, attempts have been lately made to shake off the subjection of Ireland unto the imperial crown of this realm, and whereas, the House of Lords in Ireland, have of late assumed against law, a power to examine and amend the judgments of the courts of justice in Ireland. Therefore be it enacted, that the said kingdom of Ireland is subordinate unto and dependent upon the imperial crown of Great Britain, and that the king's majesty, by and with the consent of the lords and commons of Great Britain, has full power and authority to make laws and statutes, to bind the people and the kingdom of Ireland; and be it further enacted, that the House of Lords in Ireland, have not any jurisdiction, to judge of, affirm, or reverse any judgment or decree, given in any court within said kingdom."

This proceeding naturally led to much dissatisfaction, which a variety of collateral circumstances tended to increase, and had nearly brought to an open rupture, when in June, 1782, this declaratory act was repealed, and the Irish parliament proceeded to legislate, quite independently of that of Great Britain; how far purely, wisely, or advantageously for the country, may well be doubted, on a cool, dispassionate view of their acts, as well as their omissions, and the general feeling manifested towards them



from the day of their independence, to their final dissolution by the union.

Scarcely had they commenced their independent career, when their corrupt and jobbing propensities became manifest, and reform necessary. So early as the 9th of November, 1783, Mr. Flood moved to bring in a bill for that purpose, which was negatived by a large majority, and the following resolution put and carried in its stead :—

“That it was now necessary to declare, that the house would support the rights and privileges of parliament against all encroachments.”

Early in the following year, however, petitions for parliamentary reform were presented from twenty-six counties, and a bill introduced for that object; but, on the 20th of March, on the motion in the Commons for going into committee, it was lost by a majority of 74, the ayes having been 85, the noes 159. Public disgust and indignation at their general conduct had then arisen to such a height that, on the 5th of April, the populace forced their way into the House of Commons—aye, indeed, into that very house in College-green, with the view of giving *summary and decided proofs* of the estimation and respect they entertained for the “*honourable house*.”

On the 7th of June, 1784, a meeting of the freemen, freeholders, and inhabitants of the city of Dublin was held at the Tholsel, the high sheriffs in the chair, and the following, with other resolutions, unanimously agreed to :—

“That the venality and corruption of the present House of Commons, evinced by the many arbitrary acts passed in the last session,” (the session immediately succeeding their independence,) “and the contempt and indignity with which they treated



the applications and petitions of the constituent body, oblige us now to request the people at large to unite with us in the attainment of a more adequate representation, and in petitions to the throne, for a dissolution of the present parliament."

Agreeably with this *highly complimentary* resolution, a meeting of the same body took place on the 21st of June, and an address to the people of Ireland agreed to, of which the following formed a part:—

"Instead of being a shield against unnecessary taxation, the Commons are rendered the hired instrument to pillage an already impoverished and distressed people. Enjoying the advantages lately held out to us by our sister kingdom, who with equal justice and magnanimity unequivocally acknowledged and restored to us our right of exclusive legislation, and to maintain a strict amity with whom is not less our inclination than our interest; we have to regret, that internal situation of our country—that venality and corruption which pervades our senate—and those defects already pointed out in our legislature, which prevent our pursuing means that under the free enjoyment of our constitution, and with the prudent direction of virtuous rulers, might render us a prosperous, happy, and united kingdom."

In every line, and in every sentence, of the foregoing resolution and address, is a lesson for the people of Ireland of this day—such of them, at least, as may be disposed to exercise their own reasoning faculties and judgment. They were fully responded to throughout the kingdom at the time.

The citizens of Dublin having again assembled at the Tholsel on the 20th of September, for the purpose of agitating this earnestly and justly-sought-for measure of parliamentary reform, the sheriff, Mr. Kirkpatrick, read a letter addressed to him by the attorney-general, threatening him with a prosecution should he preside at the proposed meeting, on which the assembly broke up.



The high sheriff of the county of Dublin, Mr. Reilly, was, however, proceeded against in the King's Bench, for having convened his county for this purpose; and on the 29th of November, 1784, brought up, and sentenced to fine and imprisonment; so that there does not appear to have been all that latitude allowed to political agitations and meetings in those lauded times, that the generality of our repealers may suppose, or that state prosecutions are not without ample precedent, during that so much admired period of our history.

Not only was parliamentary reform, so eagerly and so justly solicited, at all times repudiated by our independent parliament, but every other important matter, requiring legislative remedies, slighted, unless in some very few cases, to a petty, narrow, tantalizing extent.

Tithes, so long the great and constant source of heart-burnings and outrage, were left untouched. Mr. Grattan's motion on the 14th of February, 1788, for a committee to inquire into this crying grievance, was refused by a majority of 74—49 only being for, and 123 against it. A similar attempt in 1795 to redress this palpable, crying evil, was equally unsuccessful.

National education and national instruction, to provide which, is one of the most important duties of the legislature of any civilized country, was most miserably and partially doled out by our Irish parliament, notwithstanding its frequently repeated recommendation by the English government, through the lord lieutenant, to their special and efficient attention.

The Duke of Rutland, in his speech on opening parliament on the 18th of January, 1787, said, "I hope that some liberal and extensive plan for the general improvement of education, will be matured for early execution."



Yet nothing beyond some paltry measures, on confined and exclusive principles, was ever attempted. By one of the first acts of our independent parliament, the 23rd and 24th of George III. cap. 21, a tax was imposed, of one pound per annum, on every hawker, pedlar, &c., and a like sum on each horse or ass used by him in his petty traffic, as a fund towards the support of Protestant charter schools—"dealers in books, old or new," being particularly selected by the wise provisions of this act, as fitting objects for a tax to promote education. It was subsequently doubled; and on every unfortunate ragman, and every hawker of pins and needles, was imposed the tax for *national education*, through the Protestant Charter Schools of Ireland. Several parliamentary grants were afterwards made in support of this narrow, exclusive system; although, however, no attempt was ever made by our independent Irish parliament, to promote national education, on just or broad principles, the more fostering care of an enlightened imperial legislature, has been long directed to this most important object, and funds, yearly increasing in amount, liberally appropriated to it. Our youth, instead of being kept at bay with each other, by sectarian or exclusive systems, are brought together in the happy and never forgotten relation of *schoolfellow*, to become good neighbours and attached friends in after life.

The hostility to this system still lingering in Ireland, may be taken as a convincing proof, how little chance there was, that our College-green parliament *would*, or *could*, even to this day, have established such a measure.

Tithes, the fruitful cause of constant and just complaint, to which our domestic parliament refused to listen, have been effaced from the statute-book, in name and



nature, by the more wise and benevolent policy of an united parliament.

The long-sought-for measure of parliamentary reform, against which the Irish legislature closed its doors, has been granted by that of the empire, to as great an extent as the necessary balance in the different organs of the constitution, and the security of the great institutions of the state, may for the present warrant.

But, above all, and before all, has that legislative relief from cruel persecuting penal laws, so long petitioned for to our Irish legislature, yet so sparingly dribbled out by them, been fully and unreservedly granted by the imperial parliament of the united kingdom, untrammelled and undebased by vetoes or other odious contrivances for mock security.

How far we were ever likely to obtain any extensive measure of relief, by peaceable and constitutional means, from an Irish parliament, full of prejudice, and naturally sensitive on every point, likely to interfere with that monopoly of power and ascendancy, which they had so long held on exclusive, sectarian principles, may well be a matter of great doubt. The declared and publicly avowed sentiments of the two leading and prominent patriots of that time may, however, in some degree enable us to form a correct opinion.

Lord Charlemont, in his reply to the address presented to him by the volunteer army at Belfast, on the 14th of July, 1784, introduced the following observation :—

“ From your disapproving the present limitation of the right of suffrage, I am to conclude that you would wish to communicate the elective franchise with your Catholic fellow-subjects. This is indeed a matter of nice and delicate discussion, but as the subject of late has been generally treated, both in conversation and in writing, I have given it every consideration in my power,



and am sorry to say, that my decision essentially differs from yours. The limited nature of what I am now writing precludes me from entering into a detail of reasoning upon this point, and I shall therefore content myself with declaring, that though perfectly free from every illiberal prejudice, though full of goodwill to that very respectable body, my judgment, as far as it has been hitherto informed, will not suffer me to agree with you."

Such then was the well-considered, decided opinion of Lord Charlemont, selected as he then was, for the distinguished post of "*reviewing general*," by the volunteers of Ireland, in whose ranks were to be found hundreds and thousands of Roman Catholics, standing there in defence of their common country, for the protection of its institutions, of life, and of property, yet to whom he refuses a restitution of equal and constitutional rights—such the declaration of the same Lord Charlemont, so often lauded at your repeal meetings as a model of perfection, liberality, patriotism, and nationality.

In 1792, the apprehension that some concessions were about to be made to the Roman Catholics, having alarmed the corporation of Dublin, an address was presented by the lord mayor, sheriffs, &c. on the subject, to Mr. Grattan, as their representative, on the 26th of January, and from his reply on that occasion I take the following significant extract:—

"I do not hesitate to say I love the Roman Catholic; I am a friend to his liberty, but it is only inasmuch as his liberty is entirely consistent with your ascendancy, and an addition to the strength and freedom of the Protestant community.

"These being my principles, and the Protestant interest being my first object, you may judge that I shall never assent to any measure, tending to shake the security of property in this country, or subvert the Protestant ascendancy."

Here we have the deliberate, distinct declaration of our great champion of civil and religious liberty, openly avow-



ing his determination to support a sectarian ascendancy, over his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen ; not made, as should be observed, under the apprehension of a dissolution of parliament, or on the eve of an election, the next general election not having occurred until 1797, five years after. Have we not therefore, I ask, strong reasons in those openly declared views of Lord Charlemont and Mr. Grattan, at different periods, to doubt that those principles of ascendancy they then so positively advocated, would have been so modified, or rather so extirpated, even at the present day, in an Irish parliament, as that the same extensive and unclogged measure of relief, magnanimously granted in 1829, by the imperial parliament, would be yielded to our petitions, by our own, to this moment.

The estimation in which the conduct and character of our College-green parliament, were uniformly held by the liberal press, has been abundantly testified on several occasions ; the following specimens, however, are taken from the *Dublin Evening Post*, on those two occasions of their dissolution, and on the approach of the only general elections that took place during the period in question. The following is from the publication of April, 3rd, 1790 :

“ There never was a period at which the people were so strenuously called on, by the voice of prudence, to demand a test from those whom they are about to appoint as their representatives, as at present.

“ They have now had seven years’ experience of the effects of constitutional and commercial freedom ; they have witnessed the operation of that freedom on the first parliament that ever acted under its influence ; they have witnessed the wily attempts of successive ministers to counteract and undermine, by secret means, every blessing of independence gained in the emancipation of their country ; they have seen those means within the present year swollen to the most alarming pitch of barefaced corruption ; they have seen the minister converting the senate-house into a stock-exchange, and purchasing in, by small parcels,



that parliamentary independence yielded in 1782 to the spirited claims of the people."

Can it be doubted that it would be so again, should a similar opportunity be afforded by a repeal of the union?

Again, in the *Dublin Evening Post* of the 14th of May, 1796, this commentary will be found:—

"There are few counties in Ireland which can fully approve of the conduct of their representatives for the last six years. The grossest dereliction of public interests and public principles has been too manifest; no one measure of national utility has been brought to bear, and such propositions as have been made to ameliorate the condition of the people, have been scarcely allowed a decent or respectful discussion; all the follies of ministers have been sanctioned, all their prodigalities, in the most extensive latitude, defrayed by subsequent majorities, and even provided for by anticipation."

What a catalogue of accusations, of corruption, and political infamy do not the foregoing extracts from the intelligent and liberal press of the day, furnish against our Irish parliament for the previous fourteen years, commencing with its independence in 1782. Can they be denied or refuted?—that is the question. Is this then the parliament, whose fostering care is now so constantly and so loudly extolled—this the legislature, to whose bear-like embrace we are now called on to force our way back, by a repeal of the union?

The following graphic sketch, taken from the *Dublin Evening Post* of the 22nd of March, 1794, further illustrates the disorganised state of the country at this period, and the gross culpability and inattention of our domestic legislature:

"Is it not matter of most infinite regret, that not a member in the House of Commons can be found, to institute an inquiry into the causes and consequences, of the disturbances that have so long agitated this country, under the various tribes of White-



boys, Oak-boys, Steel-boys, Peep-of-day-boys, and Defenders? The fact is, the inquiry must report, that the whole originated from the non-residence of the landed proprietary, and a poor, miserable, starving peasantry, left without example, protection, or employment, and prompt to listen to the insinuation of any miscreant incendiary."

The persevering apathy of our legislature, in not checking those disorders legitimately, by wisely removing the causes and evils which produced them, led, as would appear, every section and party in the country to consider themselves privileged, to commit whatever lawless acts their political feelings or fancies might lead them to.

At a meeting of the magistrates of the county of Armagh, on the 28th of December, 1795, Lord Gosford, the governor of the county, in the chair, the following resolution, among others, was unanimously adopted and published:—

"That it appears to this meeting that the county of Armagh is, at this moment, in a state of uncommon disorder; that the Roman Catholic inhabitants are grievously oppressed by lawless persons, unknown, who attack and plunder their houses by night, and threaten them with instant destruction, unless they immediately abandon their lands and habitations."

Then was the war-whoop, "*to hell or Connaught*," raised, not only in the county of Armagh, but throughout the greater part of the province of Ulster; then were thousands of poor, peaceable, innocent people hunted from their homes and forced to fly, with their families and any little of their effects they could scramble together, to remote parts of the kingdom, there to seek a domicile in mountains and bogs, by Peep-of-day boys, then for the first time assuming the appellation of Orangemen, with ultra, conditional loyalty on their lips, committing the greatest outrages on their fellow-subjects, and on those laws which, genuine loyalty to their country, and true fealty



to the sovereign, should rather have induced them to protect and uphold, all unchecked and unheeded by our domestic parliament, while nevertheless it is only justice to add, that under the more paternal care of an united legislature, those former, cherished feelings of that society have long since subsided, and greatly to their credit, would have altogether disappeared, but for the cruel provocation given by the repeal association to keep its dying embers alive.

When, however, those doctrines of exclusive rights and sectarian ascendancy, have had the countenance and avowed support, of such *pre-eminent patriots* of the day as Lord Charlemont and Mr. Grattan, it surely was not to be wondered at, that the less educated and less enlightened of that dominant class, under the superadded influence of fancied personal interests, should make those demonstrations in support of them, and commit acts, cruel as they were, and for which I am convinced many have since felt the most poignant sorrow.

It seems, however, although our independent, now so much admired parliament, could then calmly witness those continuous scenes of outrage and factious disorders, during the entire period of their transcendant legislation, without any efficient exertion to abate them or remove the causes, yet that the legitimate and peaceable amusements of the people of all classes, were considered fitting objects for stringent legislative enactments to suppress, of which I take the 31 Geo. III. cap. 43, as a specimen—an act prohibiting horse-races within nine Irish miles of the city of Dublin; under which a meeting of more than *twelve* persons, constituted an unlawful assembly, to be dispersed as such by any magistrate or peace-officer, and the parties liable to be prosecuted for the offence; the horses so running thereat to be seized and sold by auction, and the proceeds of the sale, after deducting the expenses, to be paid to the



treasurer of the county where the offence was committed ; all tents and booths that had been prepared for the accommodation of the persons present, to be prostrated, the spirituous liquors to be spilled, and the vessels containing them to be destroyed.

Such is the substance of the act passed by our parliament, in the ninth year of its independence, when at peace with the world, and neither insurrection threatened at home, nor invasion from abroad ; what, I should be glad to know, would our *sporting repealers* think, were such an act passed now by our denounced united parliament, what *agitation*, what *declamation*, what *placarding* and *black-guarding* would we not have !—why, I verily believe, the late prohibition of the *monster meeting* at Clontarf, never caused half the clamour or raised such “*public indignation*,” as the suppression of the Ashbourne or Howth races would now produce ; yet, the act referred to, passed quietly and unnoticed in 1791,—but then, to be sure, it was the act of our Solons of College-green, and of course must have been “*all right*.”

Their peculiar mode of wise legislation, to promote the trade, manufactures, fisheries and agricultural products of the kingdom, deserve particular notice and admiration.

One of its first acts, after being set free from the control of the British legislature, was to appropriate by the 23rd and 24th, Geo. III. cap. 12, a sum of £25,000, to which £7,000 was added the following year, by the 25th Geo. III. cap. 41, under the name of “*a loan, for providing a settlement of manufactures at the town of Prosperous, and to encourage manufacturers there, particularly of linen and cotton mixed* ;” the result of which job being, as might well be anticipated, anything but “*prosperous*,” although endeavoured to be propped by various subsequent enactments, to which I shall by-and-bye refer.



Concomitant with this wise measure, for the encouragement of our manufactures, were others equally admirable, passed for the advancement of our coast fisheries. By the 25th Geo. III. cap. 14, a grant of £20,000 was made to the Right Honorable William Conyngham, to be expended in the establishing of a fishing town on his own property in the county of Donegal, and, as good example is always deserving of imitation, a sum of £10,000 was granted the next session, [by the 26th Geo. III. cap. 25, to Lord Sudley, Sir Annesley Stewart, Bart., Alexander Stewart, and Samuel Hayes, Esqs., “for building houses &c., for curing fish, and the accommodation of fishermen,” on their properties also, in the County Donegal, for which £30,000, the nation never received *thirty pence worth* of substantial value in return.

One of its very earliest measures of independent legislation, the 23rd and 24th, Geo. III. cap. 5, was entitled “an act for the advancement of trade &c.,” imposing *duties on the exportation* of various “articles of home growth, produce and manufacture,” of which the following are creditable specimens of sound principles and consistency :—

	£	s.	d.
Bar iron, per ton . . . . .	2	10	0
Iron, slit, rolled, plated or turned, and manufactured Iron, per ton . . . . .	3	3	11
Calve skins dressed in oil, the hundred weight	1	8	0½
Vellum, the dozen . . . . .	0	3	3

This, I presume, will be admitted, was rather a novel mode to advance our trade, manufactures, &c.; with a view however, I suppose to its counterpoise, a sum of £15,000 was placed at the same time, by the 23rd and 24th Geo. III. cap. 33, in the hands of twelve gentlemen, named as trustees, to be applied by them, or any seven of them, in bounties, according solely to their own discretion



and judgment, on the manufactures of wool, cotton, iron and copper, and in the next year a further sum of £29,000 was appropriated by the 25th Geo. III. cap. 48, in the same manner, the particular objects, being however, more distinctly defined. The fourth section, in referring to bounties on iron manufactures, enacts, "that manufactures of iron be confined to scythes, tinned plates, or plates for tinning, H. T. and butt hinges, trace chains and double linked back bands ;" each and every article of which, came under the description, subject at the same time, to a duty on exportation : and as a further illustration of their *see-saw* system, while bounties were granted on the manufactures of wool and flax, an export duty was imposed on "white woollen cloth called broad cloth of 5s. 11½d. per piece, and on every pack of statutable linen yarn containing four hundred weight, £1."

I would, however, particularly refer to the 2nd, 5th, 6th and 7th sections of this act, as perfect curiosities, in the way of legislation, and to which I recommed the special attention of our Dublin repealers, but for brevity, I shall quote merely their marginal abstracts.

"Sec. 2, said bounties to be paid in a larger proportion, on goods manufactured at a greater distance from Dublin, than those manufactured in it, or within ten miles thereof, except as herein. Sec. 5, £5,000 for wheels, &c., to be employed not nearer than ten miles at least, from the city or liberties, and for establishing markets for woollen and worsted goods. Sec. 6, a bounty of £2 10s. for every £100 value of worsted goods, called new drapery, sold at any market for the purpose, twenty miles distant from Dublin, above all other bounties, the person who purchases the most, shall receive at the rate of £2 10s. for every £100 paid for said goods. Sec. 7, persons who keep a school, twenty miles from Dublin, shall receive for each of the first six children instructed in spinning worsted yarn, five pounds."

Here is a precious specimen of the legislation of our



lamented College-green parliament, not, I believe, to be equalled as a complicated contrivance, for fraud, deceit, jobbing and public speculation, by any other legislative acts in the world, and at the same time proving the stupid, blind ignorance of our Dublin repealers, who permit themselves to be so gulled, as to applaud the measures of that corrupt body, and so strenuously seek to return to its baneful tutelage, which, without assigning any cause or reason whatever, excludes the city of Dublin alone, and its numerous distressed manufacturers, from any and every participation in this large grant, from the public purse, and from those proposed benefits, conferred on the manufactures of the entire kingdom besides.

Under such a *peculiar* system of legislative attention to the improvement of our metropolis, and the employment of its artizans and manufacturers, it cannot be wondered, although the fact may create some surprise, among our ardent Dublin repealers, that the list of streets, squares, lanes, &c., of this city, which in 1781, according to Watson's register, numbered 660, had, as appears by the same authority, actually declined in 1800, under all the boasted advantages of a resident, independent parliament, free trade, &c., to 654. In 1800, there were according to Watson, but *eleven* mail and stage coaches running from Dublin; in 1781 there had been *nineteen* stage coaches, strong proofs, no doubt, of the real character, of that commercial intercourse and prosperity, which we have been so often assured, was *unprecedented* during that period. I may add that all have since more than doubled, "*under the blighting effects of the union.*"

The 23rd and 24th, Geo. III. cap. 19, furnishes a further proof of their wise and impartial laws, by which act a bounty was granted on oats or oatmeal, imported into the province of Ulster, of 6 pence per cwt. if from Leinster



or Connaught, or of 10 pence per cwt. if from Munster Dublin alone being again excluded.

The singular and admirable means, adopted for the encouragement of our agricultural produce, although noticed by me, on a former occasion, cannot with justice be excluded from its proper place here.

The following tariff of duties on exportation, was that fixed in its latest and most *improved* state, by the 37th Geo. III. cap. 3, having undergone some alterations then and during the previous parliamentary sessions:—

*Duties payable on exportation of the following, being the growth and produce of Ireland.*

	£	s.	d.
Bacon, the flitch . . . . .	0	0	1
Ditto, not in flitches, hams and pigs heads, 20s. value . . . . .	0	1	0
Beef, the barrel . . . . .	0	1	0
Ditto, the carcase . . . . .	0	1	0
Butter, the 112 lb. . . . .	0	1	6
Cheese, the 112 lb. . . . .	0	0	6
Hogs or pigs, each . . . . .	0	3	0
Horses, mares, &c., into Great Britain or any English plantation, each . . . . .	0	3	3
Ditto, to foreign parts . . . . .	1	0	0
Oxen, cows or steers, the head . . . . .	0	6	6
Pork, per barrel . . . . .	0	1	0
Provisions of all sorts not enumerated, every 20s. value on oath . . . . .	0	1	0
Sheep, the head . . . . .	0	2	6
Tallow, the 112 lb. . . . .	0	1	6

According to this peculiar system of encouragement to our agricultural produce, and to the prices of sheep in those times, the tax on their exportation was about 20 per cent—cheering prospects no doubt to our farmers, on the repeal of the union, and the return of such judicious guardianship to their interests.

It may perhaps be argued, however, that although their legislative measures for improving the state and condition



of the country appear rather extraordinary, the financial results prove their soundness and advantage: in meeting this observation, I shall take the period of five years general peace, and immediately succeeding their boasted independence. On the 3rd of February, 1788, Mr. Corry made the following fiscal statement in the House of Commons:—

In 1783—The expenses of the civil and military establishments and extraordinary expenses amounted to	947,000
The revenue to	700,000
Expenses exceed the revenue by	247,000
In 1784—The expenses amounted to	934,000
The revenue to	832,000
Expenses exceed the revenue by	102,000
In 1785—The expenses amount to	913,000
The revenue to	789,000
Expenses exceed the revenue by	124,000
In 1786—The expenses amounted to	1,082,000
The revenue to	976,000
Expenses exceed the revenue by	106,000
I 1787—The expense amounted to	1,072,000
The revenue to	892,000
Expenses exceed the revenue by	180,000

So that according to this public, uncontradicted exposé, it appears that, during a period most favourable to the financial state of the country, the expenditure exceeded our income, by *seven hundred and sixty-nine thousand pounds*, the pension list all the while annually increasing; £7,500 having been added in 1786, amounted in 1787 to £97,366, exclusive of £5,000 for the concordatum list, on which latter there was besides, at the same time, what were termed “*exceedings*,” amounting to £63,000.

The accumulation of the national debt, during the



same period may, I presume, be also taken in further testimony of the value of their fiscal legislation and policy.

While at war with France, Spain, Holland, and the United States of America, and *still under the control of the British legislature*, our national debt was, in 1781, £1,551,704; peace being concluded with all those powers, and our parliament sitting independent in College-green, it was—

In 1783,	1,919,386
In 1784,	2,123,343
In 1785,	2,181,501
In 1786,	2,052,766
In 1787,	2,302,146

The Irish independent legislature, deficient, as I think the facts I have adduced sufficiently establish, in sound policy and political honesty, to manage our internal affairs to advantage, was soon found equally wanting in means and in power, to promote our trade or extend our commerce on any large principle, and in 1785, on the recommendation of the English government, the subject of our commercial intercourse and trade with Great Britain and HER colonies, was brought before the parliaments of both countries, with the view of fixing some distinct and permanent system for their regulation, when resolutions were adopted on each side, corresponding with their separate views, which, however, after long and repeated debates, and exciting the most earnest attention of both kingdoms for upwards of seven months, were withdrawn, as impossible to accomplish.

England required, that certain funds should be guaranteed by Ireland, towards the expense of equipping and maintaining a navy, necessary for the protection of the trade and commerce of both. Ireland spurned this proposition, on the grounds that by such an undertaking, she,



a *free country*, would be thereby *tributary* to Great Britain. England also required, that whatever laws then existed, or she should thereafter enact, for the regulation and control of her own trade and intercourse with her colonies, should be equally binding on the Irish. This was indignantly rejected by Ireland, as being an *independent kingdom* she should not be governed by the laws of any other state.

Many other conflicting subjects also arose, but those were the leading and principal points. How far reasonable and just those demands referred to were, I shall not stop now to discuss; they appear, however, to have very naturally led to the idea of an union of the legislature of both countries, as being indispensable for the true and permanent interests of each. Several questions subsequently proved the difficulty, or rather the *impracticability* of connecting the acts, and combining the executive of two countries, each possessing separate and distinct legislative powers, with sufficient compactness, to ensure that perfect concord and unity of purpose, so essentially necessary, for the security and prosperity of THE WHOLE; among others, the hesitation, and all but refusal of the Irish parliament, to contribute any supplies towards a threatened war with Spain, caused by some aggression on her part on *Nootka-Sound*; the Irish parliament objecting to contribute, because we did not enjoy any share in the trade of the Pacific Ocean, in which that settlement is situated. The all-important regency question, appeared also confirmatory of the necessity of a legislative union, besides, that the precedent of an union of the parliaments of England and Scotland, then nearly a century in operation, and the great advantages admittedly accruing therefrom to both those kingdoms, rendered it, under all circumstances, an object which, as a security to the throne and a means for the firm



cohesion of the empire, a paramount duty on the minister to effect.

As to its legality, or the constitutional power of parliament to enact such a measure, so frequently and so vehemently denied, we have the highest law authorities to sanction that, *or any other act whatsoever of the parliament*. The great Lord Somers, who framed "*the bill of rights*" and projected the union of Scotland, maintained the competency of parliament to legislate on these points; and that eminent jurist, Lord Coke, in describing the power and jurisdiction of parliament, says—

"It is so transcendent and absolute, that it cannot be confined either for causes or persons within any bounds. It hath sovereign and uncontrollable authority in making, confirming, enlarging, restraining, abrogating, repealing, reviving, and expounding of laws concerning matters of all possible denominations, ecclesiastical or temporal—civil, military, maritime, or criminal, this being the place when that absolute, despotic power, which must in all governments reside somewhere, is entrusted by the constitution of these kingdoms. All mischiefs and grievances, operations and remedies, that transcend the ordinary course of the law, are within the reach of this extraordinary tribunal. It can regulate or new-model the succession to the crown, as was done in the reign of Henry VIII. and William III.; it can alter the established religion of the land, as was done in a variety of instances, in the reign of Henry VIII. and his three children, Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. It can change and create afresh, even the constitution of the kingdom and of parliaments themselves, as was done by the act of union with Scotland, and the several statutes for triennial and septennial parliaments; it can, in short, do every thing that is not naturally impossible, and therefore some have not scrupled to call its power, by a figure rather too bold—the *omnipotence of parliament*."

These extraordinary powers thus vested in the parliament, he illustrates by the following observation:—

"That no parliament can so word a statute as to prevent its amendment or repeal by a subsequent parliament."



Such authorities should, I imagine, be quite conclusive on this point with every well-regulated mind.

From the period already alluded to in 1785, the impossibility of conducting the affairs of both countries on uniform principles, or in the necessary harmony, with separate legislatures, becoming every day more manifest, the subject of a legislative union was a frequent topic of public discussion, during the subsequent thirteen or fourteen years; so that it could not be justly said it was brought on by surprise, and two general elections occurring within that period—one in 1797, about a year previous to the first introduction of the measure, afforded the constituency every fair opportunity, of having their sentiments on the subject perfectly matured and made known.

A bill for this object, having been introduced at the close of the year 1798 into the Commons, occupied the earnest attention of all parties, and after three nights debate, a division took place on the 25th of January, 1799, when there appeared 106 for, and 111 against it. It was consequently lost by a majority of 5 *only*, in a house composed of 217 members. Such a result, naturally led to its being brought forward again, in the next session; and in the intermediate time, numerous meetings were held throughout the kingdom; resolutions and petitions adopted *pro* and *con*, according as the personal policy and private views of the several leading promoters dictated, in which, as may well be supposed, much unconstitutional and unjustifiable interference occurred; but there cannot be any doubt whatever, that after the want, misery, and sufferings which the manufacturers and the people generally, had endured so many years under their own parliament, they would, if left to themselves, have gladly agreed to any measure, that afforded the least prospect of a favourable



change of legislation. In fact, the principal opposition was raised by those who, trafficking on it, put their agency and influence up to the highest, whether in money or honorary rank, or in both. The Roman Catholics, independent of every other collateral consideration, justly looking to it, as the only probable means of relieving them, from that sectarian domination, which was advocated even by Lord Charlemont and Mr. Grattan, came forward generally with petitions, most numerous and respectably signed in its favour; and the bill brought in the following session, was carried in the Commons by a majority of 42, in a house consisting of 226 members, and in the Lords by a majority of 50.

The two legislatures thus united, have incorporated themselves, not for separate interests, or the pre-eminence of either, but to benefit the whole, without any transfer or surrender of power, of authority, of privilege, independence, or liberty, from one to the other, but an inter-communication of them all, one with the other, so as to strengthen, consolidate, and PERFECT THE EMPIRE.

Under the legislative care of this united parliament, as I have shown on former occasions from unquestionable authority, the triennial average export of our linens, regularly increased from 36,112,309 yards, in the year 1800, to 51,947,413 yards in 1836, which latter triennial average, exceeded by upwards of twenty-three millions of yards, that of any three consecutive years previous to the Union. Having before, also, clearly and indisputably traced the subsequent falling off in this manufacture, to sources which no legislative measures of ours, could prevent or control, I need not now refer to them farther than to observe that, as I had foreseen, it is now, and has been for some time, reviving; never, however, I believe, to become a source of cottage industry to the extent it has been—a



circumstance not chargeable to any mode of legislation, but to the improvements made in spinning and weaving machinery.

Our coast fisheries, the neglect of which by the united parliament, so frequently and so positively stated and urged, as grounds for seeking a repeal of the union, had, so long as that delusive and now obsolete system of bounties existed, received their ample, their more than proportionate, share from the united legislature. In 1819 an Irish fishery board was *first* established, and the tonnage bounty on the "open sea fishery," which was confined to an annual grant of £3,000 to Scotland, was *unlimited* in its amount to us. The several bounties granted to the whole of the British fisheries, for the ten years ending in 1892 inclusive, when they ceased throughout the united kingdom, amounted to £30,000; whilst, during the same period, Ireland, *neglected, ill-used Ireland* received £87,962 13s. 1½d., being nearly three times the sum, simultaneously appropriated to the fisheries of England, Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man altogether; and during the thirty-five years succeeding the union, the sum of £409,187 0s. 3d. was applied by the imperial legislature, to promote the coast fisheries of Ireland.

When the government contemplated the discontinuance of the bounty system, they addressed the fishery boards of both countries, on the policy of continuing their superintendence and regulations, unaccompanied by bounties. The Irish board replied in their letter of the 6th of March, 1824, that "their regulations would necessarily cease, with the bounties which gave rise to their adoption;" or, in other words, "if you don't give us funds to job on, we will have nothing to do with it." Not so the prudent British fishery board, which undertook the duties



of superintendence, without the bounties, and by whose judicious system of management, the Scotch fisheries have continued to flourish and annually increase.

Upon no subject, connected with the state of Ireland, has so much outrageous deception been practised in advocating repeal, as that of our coast fisheries. Your frequently reiterated, positive statement that “previous to the union, there was half a million’s worth of Irish cured fish, annually exported to France and Spain, &c, and the value returned in hard cash,” has been, I must beg leave to say, one of those *monster assertions*, totally devoid of any foundation whatever, and for which, I more than once challenged the production, of any official or satisfactory document to show that a *single sixpence worth of Irish cured fish*, had been exported to, or consumed in those countries. The fostering care and *successful legislation* of our independent parliament, respecting our coast fisheries, have of course been often and highly extolled; but having on different former occasions shown their system to have been a compound of deception, fraud, perjury, and official delinquency of the grossest description, I shall not now continue the subject, farther than to quote the opinion, deliberately given by our College-green parliament themselves, on their own legislation, after fourteen years’ jobbing management of our coast fisheries, and which may be found in the 2nd section of the 36th George III. cap. 52, commencing thus:—“*And whereas the attempts hitherto made for carrying on the coast fisheries on the coasts of Ireland have proved abortive, &c. &c.*” Need I, sir, add one word more to this distinct admission, and ample reply to all the vapouring we have had, of the prosperity of the Irish fisheries before the union.

I have dwelt thus, on this subject more particularly,



because I consider there is no class of our labouring population, which has been so cruelly led astray as our coast fishermen, by repeal agitation, and the expectations so constantly and so confidently held out to them of legislative aid, on the success of that movement, thereby influencing them to suspend and withhold, that independent energy and exertion, necessary to prosecute their calling to advantage.

I shall not extend this review, by quoting those several official, tabular returns of the different articles of our import and export, having already placed them before the public, clearly demonstrating the great advance, regularly made and making in the general civilization, wealth, and prosperity of Ireland since the union. They may, however, be summarily shown on the important points thus:—The official value of all our exports and imports have doubled within that period. Our imports of foreign timber have increased fifteen fold, and of cotton wool one hundred fold. The shipping inwards, while more than double in number, has trebled in amount of tonnage. Imports of tea, double; sugar, the same; and of coffee, about ten fold. Our exports of oats, increased about ten; of wheat, twenty; of butter, four; and of bacon and hams, ten fold. Of black cattle, twelve; of pigs, one hundred; and of sheep, three hundred times the number that was exported at the time of the union; and had the duty, which our lauded College-green parliament imposed on the export of black cattle, sheep, and pigs, been permitted to continue by the united legislature, our present export thereof, would produce an annual revenue, of about *one hundred thousand pounds*. How much to the advantage of our farmers and peasantry, I shall leave to the Repeal Association to discuss.

Notwithstanding, however, these indisputable proofs of



the general advancement of the country in wealth and civilization, it must be admitted, as it is, by none more decidedly than myself, that poverty, distress, and almost insufferable misery, prevail to a grievous extent among our labouring classes, extending also, in a serious degree, even to the middle ranks of society; the proximate and primary causes being an inadequacy of remunerative employment, occasioned by a variety of circumstances, resulting from ages of misrule, to which it is evident, our independent College-green parliament contributed not a little.

To remove and remedy evils of such long standing, by prudent, cautious, *legitimate* means, ought surely be the earnest desire of every person, really disposed to benefit his country, and raise the condition of its people. No person could possibly have been placed in a more favourable position for effecting those grand, those noble objects than yourself. Have you sir, availed yourself of it? Alas, no!

After the general election in 1833, you boasted "there are eight of us," alluding to that number of your family and relatives, then returned to parliament, and also on several occasions assured us, at that time, truly I believe, that fifty Irish members, acting in concert, with energy and honesty, could effect every reasonable object for Ireland. Have you, I beg leave to ask, ever proceeded on that sound, that rational principle?—nay, have you, informed and qualified as you so perfectly were, ever, even to this day, urged practically, in your place in parliament, any *one single measure* calculated to remove the evils we labour under, or to ameliorate the condition of our country? No, indeed no. And I ask emphatically, what proposition for the advantage of Ireland could you have possibly brought before the legislature, *less likely of suc-*



cess, than that which you so perseveringly seem to seek?

Instead, therefore, of applying your great and acknowledged talents, your pre-eminent energies, to the attainment of practical, feasible measures, you have "set us all by the ears," rendering us a nation of MONSTER DUPES, such as history cannot furnish a parallel for, since the time of Mahomet, in pursuit of an object which you must know and feel is perfectly unattainable, an *ignis fatuus*, which, if obtained, would be the greatest calamity that could possibly befall this country.

In the foregoing pages sufficient evidence may, I think, be found of the corruption, venality, and incapacity of our domestic parliament during the lauded period of its so-called independence. I now beg leave to take a prospective view of the results likely to ensue from a return to its tutelage; and in doing so, it will be judicious, I presume, to take into consideration not only its probable disposition, but its *power* and *means*, to advance and sustain the general interests of the country, equally with those of an united legislature.

I may, no doubt, be told that, although the Irish parliament, contrary to the praises lavished on it, had acted corruptly and disadvantageously during its independence, the increased intelligence and public spirit of the people now, would be a sufficient guarantee for the return of pure, honourable, trustworthy members, *patriots every man*, to a College-green House of Commons. May I ask whether the last election, and the choice made of those returned on popular and repeal principles, justifies that expectation? Have I not witnessed with pain and sorrow our clergy engage *as such*, and employ all the influence yielded to them *as such*, in fierce efforts to return their chosen candidate. Priests and prelates degrading thus,



if not themselves, the venerable office at least which they filled, jostled and hustled about by the mob in which they mixed—parish priests and curates, forsaking their parishes, some of them distant twenty or thirty miles from the scene of action, during periods, too, set apart by our Church for particular acts of devotion, to join in party processions and cabals; yet, after all this unbecoming display, will you yourself not admit, that an honest, well-conducted *cow-boy*, would have been a much more judicious selection than some of them.

A nation kept so long as this has been, in a state of great excitement, must naturally, and, as history supplies many examples, become at length disgusted and fatigued; when political apathy will follow, and landed property, with its interests, being almost the only one to be represented with us, the certain consequence must follow, that both our houses of parliament, would be ultimately filled by Irish landlords and their agents.—Would this inevitable result be desirable?

Thousands of our peasantry annually resort to England for harvest employment, where they cannot fail to make *contrasting* observations; and I would put it plainly and simply to those deluded creatures, who have all, no doubt, enrolled themselves and their shillings on your repeal list, whether they would prefer being governed by laws framed by Irish landlords alone, to those in which the *feelings* and *practice* of the English landlord would be united. Can you doubt what would be the *universal* reply? Could you, sir, hold out the slightest practical gleam of hope, that the relation between landlord and tenant in Ireland, now so generally condemned, would be ameliorated by Irish legislation?

In the united parliament, although the landed and the agricultural interests are fully represented and sufficiently



protected, they are not *paramount*, nor ever can. Our commercial interests, for which we could scarcely send a single representative to an Irish House of Commons, are now amply guarded, in common with those of Great Britain. Our manufacturing and shipping interests, and even our dawning railway concerns, each and all find representatives and fostering protection in the united parliament, which surely could not be anticipated from our Irish landlords. Colonial subjects, or interests, we should not *then*, to be sure, be troubled with, not having a speck of one which we could call our own, on the face of the globe.

By our union with Great Britain, truly GREAT Britain, we participate equally with herself in all these supreme advantages, which under our domestic legislature we could neither claim, nor hope for. Her ambassadors and diplomatic agents, at the seat of every government, and her consuls in every leading foreign commercial port in the world, pay equal attention to Irish interests and trade, as to her own, while both are protected and defended by her great, her commanding naval power. When, I ask, would the position of Ireland, in the trade and commerce of the world, entitle us to either one or other of our own?

Such, then, are the advantages, this the empire, from which you seek to detach us ; for, disguise them as you may, all your arguments, all your statements, all your proceedings and tactics for repeal, tend, with your *instalment* plan, in a ten-fold degree, to that event. Your repeal artillery is pointed, no doubt, to that object, but all ranged, nevertheless, to bear *point blank* on SEPARATION. Why else, if *mere repeal* be *your* object, endeavour to revive and excite every bad feeling towards England, by continually raking up all her misdeeds towards us, ages ago? Have we no dark and bloody pages in



our own history? Have we not on record, Irish massacres and horrible atrocities in abundance?—province against province—clan against clan? Would it be wise—would it be Christian, to parade and publish them now?

We all exult, justly exult and pride ourselves, and none more loudly or more frequently than yourself, in our free institutions, our magna charta, bill of rights, habeas corpus act, and the unparalleled constitution of which they are the bulwarks. To whom, may I ask, are we indebted for those pre-eminent, social, and political blessings? Surely not to Ireland, to our parliament, or to ourselves, in the most remote degree. No; we have derived them each and all from England, and our connexion with "*the Saxons*"—an epithet of groundless disparagement, so much in vogue lately with our repealers, showing distinctly, if no other evidence was forthcoming, the system of delusion practised on our ignorant multitudes.

Alfred the Great, whose name and character as a brave, wise, and good monarch, will live as long as the world endures, was a Saxon, and received his early education, as is generally reputed, in my native county, at the college of *Mayo na Sassenagh*, (Mayo of the Saxons,) whose mouldering remains are still to be seen. Surely, then, no Mayo man at least, should consider the term a reproach? Edward the Confessor was another *Saxon*, than whom no monarch was ever more beloved by his subjects. And if we are to judge of family origin by their names, some of your fellow traversers may perhaps trace their descent to "*the Saxons*."

Are all grateful recollections to be obliterated, of the generous and benevolent sympathies of our benefactors, those "*Saxon robbers*," by whose munificent subscriptions



from all classes, of *half a million sterling*, hundreds of thousands of our famishing people were, under Divine Providence, rescued from the threatened famines in '22 and '31?

You have told us repeatedly that, "although your personal influence while living, would secure us so long, against any outbreak or burst of popular feeling, yet from the degree of excitement existing, you could not calculate on such a calamity being stayed, beyond the term of your life." Can that, sir, be the state in which a true lover of his country, of his family, and his friends, should desire to keep it? or can insurrection, civil war, and their bloody concomitants, be the woeful bequest you would calmly anticipate leaving them?

But what rational security is there, that, although you certainly can raise the storm, you possess the power of stilling it? History, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, furnishes ample proof of the slender reliance to be placed, on the movements or impulse of an excited populace or people. Can you forget the treatment you yourself experienced, at the public meeting held in Dublin at the Royal Exchange, on the 20th of January, 1838, the lord mayor presiding, on the subject of the lawless combinations, then existing among the tradesmen? when, notwithstanding the view you took thereof in your speech was as sound, your reasonings as just, and your arguments as conclusive as possible, yet, after a most stormy debate, it broke up, as described thus by the *Morning Register* of the 23rd of January:—

"The room resounded with shouts of 'The traitor, the traitor! Ah, O'Connell, you won't put us down—you're not in the Corn Exchange now,' &c. &c. Luckily for Mr. O'Connell he happened to be surrounded by a body of his friends, who succeeded in getting him out of the room unscathed."



From this, as I presume *you* will recollect, you made your escape to the Commercial Buildings, when a body of police having been sent for, you were escorted to your residence, under their protection, against the threatened outrageous assault of your fellow-citizens and *constituents*.

On a former occasion, also, at a meeting held of your Irish Volunteer Society, at the Corn Exchange rooms, on the 3rd of January, 1833, a scene of uproar and tumult arose, which you were totally unable to put down, until, as the *Freeman's Journal* of the following day continues to state, "Mr. O'Connell proceeded to put out the gas lights"—a novel, though sure mode, no doubt, of putting your opponents and their arguments *in the shade*, and your audience *in the dark*, but certainly no strong testimony of any extensive moral influence, on your part, *when peaceably directed*; besides, who can tell, although preaching peace and submission to the laws to-day, you may not recommend a general "*walloping*" plan to-morrow, with the same sad and bloody results as attended your former deliberate, public advice, to resist the law in that way, and which the widows and orphans of Gortroe have to deplore. Surely of all men living you have the least claim to the character of consistency. "The winds of heaven" are not more fickle or changeable than you have proved yourself to be, even on the most important matters. Denouncing poor laws, when first brought under public discussion, in the most vehement manner; again, as strongly recommending them with all the ardour, as you then expressed yourself, of "*an apostate*"—then again attacking them as fiercely and violently as before—now, however, quietly looking on, in doubt, it would appear, which side you would take next.

On the important subject of a state provision for the



Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland, you have shown the most dexterous versatility—first, in your solemn evidence before the parliamentary committees in 1825, not only deliberately and earnestly recommending it, and in no very complimentary terms, to our clergy themselves, designating it pointedly and significantly as “*a golden link*,” but actually fixing a scale for your proposed salaries; yet, on several occasions SINCE the passing of the act for our relief in 1829, you have denounced such a measure “through all moods and tenses;” and at one of your meetings held at the Corn Exchange rooms on the 8th of January, 1838, you actually had the hardihood, as stated by the *Morning Register* of the following day, to request the chairman would suspend the commencement of the proceedings, for the purpose of affording you an immediate opportunity of declaring “that you never did consent, nor never would, that the Catholic clergy shall have any connexion with the state, unless as loyal subjects.”

Where, sir, is the slightest trace of truly loyal consistency to be found, in expressing at one moment the strongest and most attached fealty to our gracious sovereign, her crown and dignity, with the most adulatory expressions of devoted affection for her person, and at the next instant loudly exulting at every symptom, however distant or trifling, of the hostility of a foreign power, or the lawless acts of her own subjects, that can injure, weaken, or lower the empire, placed by Providence, under the placid, yet powerful sway of her sceptre?

Neither can much honourable consistency be discovered in denouncing a political party, in the strongest and most opprobrious terms our language supplies, on one day, and in the next, sanctioning the acceptance of office, by your immediate family and relatives, under it.



You long opposed the adjustment of tithes, and recommended the resistance of others to the impost, even to the shedding of blood and the loss of life, peaceably submitting, however, at the same time, to the demand yourself; the clergy of the Established Church, and the tithe proprietors generally, feel themselves, nevertheless, indebted principally to you and your *consistency*, for their present secure and favourable position.

In your speech at the Corn Exchange rooms, on the 8th of January, 1838, as reported by the *Morning Register* of the following day, you stated seriously, and with much emphasis, "it was proverbial with the people of Munster, that Ireland is to be sold by an *O'Brien*;" yet, strange to say, it was a gentleman of that name, whom you selected for the high and leading post of *agitator-in-chief*, your *alter ego*, and though that respectable individual may consider himself laudably engaged, thus, in working out the tactics of his party, and their return to power, the choice was not certainly any great proof of *cautious, prophetic consistency*, on your part.

With all those facts before us, and many, many others that might be adduced, what reliance can be placed on your possessing sufficient influence or power to check any outbreak that might arise, from a spark caught by a highly excited people? still less on the *consistency* of your views and proceedings, that you would attempt it? Can you imagine that, in this age, a nation will unresistingly submit to have a mine continually placed under it, with a fuze in your hand, or that of any individual, ready to apply, when the *suitable* time of "*Ireland's opportunity*" shall arrive? No, sir; the time is fast approaching when the respectable, intelligent, and truly patriotic portion of the community of all classes and creeds, can no longer stand, apathetic spectators, with folded arms, but *MUST* come forward,



cordially and firmly supporting the government of our gracious and benevolent queen, by every constitutional means, and thereby, at length, release themselves and Ireland from this disgraceful, this abominable incubus.

You, as is evident to every rational observer, are placed in a position which, although you may not readily admit, you cannot but *feel* most painful and degrading; ostensibly *free* in your actions, but really *a slave*, entirely in the hands and management of a merciless *clique*, whom you dare not disobey—some employing you as an instrument for their political purposes—many, very many others, as their mere tool, to promote their schemes for personal emolument and aggrandisement. You are the lion of their *menagerie*, who must *crouch* or *jump*, *growl* or *roar*, and play any other *prank*, regularly placarded, as your unfeeling keepers may *goad* or *tickle* you, while other *bipeds* of this *monster exhibition* play their *minor tricks* for the same objects. *The show*, it appears, is about to be removed temporarily to England; where, however, I apprehend the people will be found too well engaged otherwise, to render this a very profitable scheme.

Will you, sir, I ask, continue longer in such degrading thralldom? Should you not rather muster sufficient moral courage to shake it off, ere it is too late, and take the proud, the honourable position, of the real, practical benefactor of your country. PUT YOUR AGITATION ASIDE, and permit the exuberant wealth and capital of England, now so much inclined to this channel, to flow freely, and with confidence of security, to us; thereby naturally and obviously securing the strongest tie which *interest* in our permanent welfare and prosperity can supply; and while promoting the extensive employment and consequent comforts of our people, remove the imputation from your own character, of pursuing systematically, every plan that can lead



to their distress and discontent, as the obvious source of your "tribute."—Permit our clergy to retire from those political arenas, which had plunged their brethren of France and Spain into such unspeakable calamities, and to devote their undivided attention to those pious duties and more becoming avocations, which they had solemnly undertaken.

Instead of those political schemers and unprincipled adventurers who, in too many instances, now disgrace our representation, and of whom "*the less we say the better*"—instead also of those who seem to consider themselves as the mere deputies of a faction, disinclined or incapable to take a part in debate, on any question of general state policy or interest, unless some low party views are involved; exhibiting energy only, on some petty, paltry, pimping subject, more befitting a parish than a nation—instead, I say, of such characters, permit us to send to parliament trustworthy men, of honourable principles and intelligence, competent not only to represent our local wants and wishes, but to take that dignified position and extensive share in the legislation of this mighty empire, which, as representatives sent from this kingdom, they are entitled to; thereby acquiring high consideration for themselves, due attention to their opinions, a favourable estimate of their constituency, and just respect for their country.

Some few, some very few indeed, we have, it is true, of this description, who, as the *oasis* in the desert, distinguish more strongly the surrounding sterility—estimable in private as in public life, yet who, as in perfect keeping with the general character of the proceedings of your repeal association, are objects of attack with some of its *worthies*, whose eulogy would be a nuisance, as their censure confers an honour.



If the *end* you sought, by the *means* you have taken, has been that, of attracting more extensive and closer attention to the state of Ireland, and the many real grievances we suffer under, it has no doubt been attained. Will you not, then, allow some breathing time to correct and remove evils, the growth of ages? Your valuable co-operation in such a course would, I am sure, be received with pleasure, and hailed with satisfaction by all parties. Do not, then, throw away the golden opportunity which now, but never again, may, present itself. Instead of being the focus of discord and animosity, become the centre of all that is worthy in the country, and earnest for its amelioration: so that, instead of the bitter reflection of having sown the poisonous seeds of acrimony, ill-will, and discontent, your latter moments may be soothed and blessed with the happy conviction that you had been the PEACE-MAKER of your long-divided and distracted country. These candid observations and recommendations you may not, most probably, consider as those of a friend. They cannot, I trust, be attributed to an enemy.

I am, sir, your obedient, humble servant,

R. P. MACDONNELL.

Dublin, September 14th, 1844.

THE END.

DUBLIN

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*W. H. Miller*

*Constitutional*  
*or Republic*

the more you have taken  
the extensive and close  
to this state of mind, and the many  
we enter under it has no doubt been  
Will you not then, allow me to  
and more evils, the growth of  
in such a country would, I am  
with nature, and filled with  
the golden oppor-  
which now, but never again may present itself  
being the force of interest and animosity, be-  
the force of all that is in the country, and  
of the latter  
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and his mind, and his  
and divided with the  
has been too long-divided and dis-  
tracted energy. That  
institutions you may not most  
of a kind. They cannot  
enemy.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

W. H. MILLER

Dated 21st October 1844

*W. H. Miller*  
*Secretary*  
*for me*  
*W. H. Miller*  
*W. H. Miller*  
*W. H. Miller*