

ESSAYS
ON THE
POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

OF
IRELAND,

WRITTEN
DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF
EARL CAMDEN;

WITH AN
APPENDIX,
CONTAINING
THOUGHTS
ON THE
WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

AND A
POSTSCRIPT,
NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.

BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

Dublin :

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1799.

Houses of the Oireachtas

P R E F A C E.

THE following Essays are republished, because they relate to subjects, on which it is of importance to throw every possible degree of light, both in order to the present restoration of tranquillity, and for the purpose of future information and instruction.

Had the commotions in this country been merely of a local nature, it might appear impertinent to call the attention even of the other parts of the British Empire to a republication of tracts, whose object was, almost wholly, to trace those commotions to their source. But when the plots and conspiracies by which Ireland has been af-

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flicted are so evidently the result of a kind of epidemic *Mania*, when the same pestilential principle has operated, and still more or less continues to operate in every quarter of Europe and North America, and when Great Britain herself, the happiest of Nations, is not exempt from the contagion, then circumstances in themselves local, may become of infinite consequence, both as serving to illustrate the nature of the disease, and as pointing to the most effectual methods of counteraction and cure.

Perhaps such a Republication as the present, may appear superfluous after so full a development of the principles and tendencies of the IRISH UNION, as has been given in the late Reports of the Secret Committees. But it is to be observed that the direct proofs of a treasonable purpose adduced in those important and interesting collections, scarcely go farther back than the year 1795, although the Society of

UNITED

UNITED IRISHMEN had existed for more than three years previous to that period. It may therefore not be useless to pay some additional attention to the earlier stage of that association, in order fully to ascertain whether the original views of its founders were limited to any thing which could be called Parliamentary Reform, or whether, on the contrary, their design was not systematically traitorous from the first moment of their career.

The consideration of this question becomes the more necessary, in consequence of the attempt made by some of the leaders of the United Irishmen to justify themselves, even at the moment when they were disclosing the most complicated villainies. It was then asserted by them that, though *Revolutionary Democracy* became at length their object, it had formed no part of their original design; that they *then only* had adopted it when their hopes

of obtaining moderate reform were at an end; and that consequently, the guilt of all which had ensued, belonged wholly to those who by obstinately rejecting their reasonable demands, had driven them to despair—"It was" says Mr. T. A. Emmet, "after they had despaired of obtaining a Reform in Parliament by peaceable means, that they sought to effect a revolution by subverting the monarchy, separating this country from Great Britain, and erecting such a Government as might be chosen by the People."

To evince the utter unfoundedness of this and every similar assertion, is one chief object of the present republication. It contains a series of observations on the spirit and temper of the United Irishmen in their earliest period, written by a country gentleman, who drew his conclusions from no other source than their own avowed declarations, and who took up his pen solely in
obedience

obedience to the dictates of his reason and his conscience. At no very distant period, he had himself been a sincere and zealous advocate for a limited Parliamentary reform; but having always had a just abhorrence of the principles and views of the *United Irishmen*, and being soon convinced of what one of their own oracles afterward acknowledged, that any degree of popular reform, would infallibly lead to every other degree of reform; *i. e.* to complete democracy, he felt it his duty to abandon a pursuit which appeared to him as dangerous as it was visionary, and to become to the utmost of his power an unqualified supporter of the existing constitution.

Under this impression he naturally wished to be the instrument of producing in others the same conviction of the mischievous designs of the *United Irishmen* which he had himself always felt, but now more strongly than ever. They had already disseminated through the country successive manifestoes, which

which he conceived, it was only necessary to consider with attention, in order to collect from them the most decisive proofs of the boldest revolutionary purposes. A temporary intercourse with the Convention-politicians of 1792 and 1793 perhaps gave him some advantage in understanding the vocabulary of Irish Jacobinism, and enabled him more readily to trace a systematic connexion between those seemingly detached bursts of treason with which the writings of the United Irishmen abounded, but which, from being generally mingled with a mass of loose declamatory matter, might frequently escape the observation of a common reader. To bring those early symptoms of a treasonable design into the full light of day, was accordingly his object in most of the following Essays.

It will be observed from the dates of these publications, that the far greater part of them appeared before the actual treason of
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the United Irishmen had been substantiated by the Reports of the Secret Committees in Spring 1797, and of course while no proof of their real designs could be adduced except what might be derived from their own avowed declarations. The reader will, notwithstanding, judge whether there is not in some of the following pages a tolerably just developement of the treasonable principles which were afterwards brought to light; and in some degree, an anticipation of those revolutionary expedients which have since been carried into practice. But the Author is far from laying claim, on this account, to any uncommon foresight or any extraordinary sagacity. He saw no more than what any intelligent person was competent to have seen, had he given the same attention to the subject, and indeed no more than what numberless persons did actually see, though they did not all, like him, communicate their observations to the public.

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The Author therefore ventures to hope that such a republication will not be entirely fruitless. If any well disposed person can still entertain a doubt with respect to the original principles of the United Irishmen, he will here find not only the conclusions formed by an unprejudiced observer respecting that association, in its earliest stages, but also the reasonings which led to those conclusions, and the grounds on which they rested. And the Author trusts, it will be seen, that the inferences were not rash, that the reasonings were not sophistical, and that the warmth which sometimes shews itself, and which increased as the subject became more practical, was not the rancour of party spirit, but the zeal of well-founded reprobation, of anxious indignant humanity.

While those who have but lately opened their eyes to the real views of those execrable disturbers of the community, may

may perhaps receive new light from the following pages, with respect to the primary purposes of the Conspiracy, the Author has the vanity to hope that those who have seen and felt as he has done, will not be unwilling to have those thoughts retraced, and those feelings recalled, which in the rapid whirl of events it is possible even for the most collected minds to lose sight of, till they are again brought to their remembrance. And he trusts on the whole, that a conviction will be either produced or confirmed in the mind of every attentive reader, that, notwithstanding all that may be alleged by men lost alike to truth and to humanity, no fact can be more established than that the Society of United Irishmen, from the first moment of its institution, has been, with respect to its leading members, a band of systematic traitors; that no possible means would have been adequate to their suppression but the most unremitting coercion, and the most vigorous resistance; and that no-

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thing can be more insolently false than to represent them as having been provoked into treason by those strong measures on the part of Government, which were then only resorted to when both the common sense and common safety of the country irresistibly demanded them.

To these objects the following Essays were uniformly directed, except when it was thought necessary to advert to the proceedings of the allies of the conspiracy abroad, or to the conduct of those who from an execrable spirit of party, and in spite of the clearest and most irrefragable evidence cherished and encouraged it at home.* These, together, make up the whole of the topics introduced. And they are treated either in the way of dispassionate argument, or of plain but warm expostulation,

* The first six Essays are chiefly on the subjects here mentioned.

exposition, by reasoning on general principles, or by adduction of acknowledged facts, just as appeared most suitable to the circumstances of the moment, or to imply the greatest probability of engaging the attention of the public.

The event to which the first Essay alludes need scarcely be brought to the recollection of any inhabitant of this metropolis, the riot which took place on the day of Lord Camden's arrival in this kingdom; commencing with an outrageous assault on the persons of the Lords Justices, and terminating in an attack on the Custom-house, in which one wretched man at least, fell a victim to his own folly. The observations upon this subject are little more than what must have occurred at the time to every person of sense and candour. Mr. Grattan's *energetic* Address to the Inhabitants of Dublin which appeared just before that event, has since the date of

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this

this Essay, become the subject of much more powerful animadversion. The Author trusts, however, he will be excused for republishing strictures which were merely suggested by the honest feelings of the moment, and which he conceives have been lamentably justified by every event which has since occurred in this abused and afflicted country. The subjects of the other Essays are so obvious, especially to those who have read the *Reports* of the SECRET COMMITTEES, as to supersede the necessity of explanation.

It may perhaps be a matter of surprize to some readers, that the unfortunate religious differences in this country, are so slightly touched upon in the following pages, and that when introduced, they are referred to, as a topic made use of by a disappointed faction, rather than as the ground of treasonable combination. But the dates of the Essays will sufficiently

sufficiently account for this apparent omission. The latest Essay in the Collection was written in the month of June 1797: and it will easily be recollected that at that period the actual movements of the conspiracy appeared almost exclusively in the province of Ulster, where no religious motive was so much as pretended, and where the Roman Catholics in particular seemed disposed to distinguish themselves by keeping aloof from combination. It required indeed little foresight, though it would most certainly have answered no useful end, to have prognosticated, that when those parts of the kingdom where the bulk of the inhabitants are Romanists, should become engaged in the conspiracy, religious motives would necessarily be added to those of a merely political nature; that bigoted Ecclesiastics in such circumstances, would naturally become the busiest and most pernicious agitators, and that those whose minds
were

were insensible to the differences between one species of government and another, would easily be wrought upon by the suggestions of a gross and intolerant superstition. But the Author freely acknowledges that he never could have anticipated those horrors by which the blood-hounds of Enniscorthy and Wexford have added new disgraces to a religion, whose former enormities it would have been infinitely better to have expiated than revived.

Still, however, the Author must deem those persons mistaken who conceive the Irish Union to have been originally a Roman Catholic Plot. He thinks the erroneoufness of such a supposition will fully appear from the following pages. The attentive reader will find sufficient proof, that the primary object of the United Irishmen was strictly and exclusively *Revolutionary Democracy*; and that though from the first moment of their institution, they

they regarded the religious disaffection of the Irish Catholics as the chief instrument of their design, and the surest pledge of their success, it was uniformly their object to make Religion subservient to Jacobinism, and not Jacobinism to Religion. How fatally they might have found themselves deceived, and how likely they were to have become the victims of their own infernal policy, the events of the late rebellion have strongly evinced; but such is the malignity of the Jacobin Temper, that we cannot doubt but the same artifice will be persevered in, until both the political malecontent and the religious bigot shall be obliged to feel the futility of combination as well as the frenzy of resistance.

For accidental inaccuracies of style and the frequent occurrence of what may be deemed colloquial barbarisms, the Author thinks it needless to apologize. It was his wish to be intelligible to all; and
wherever

wherever he thought it might serve an useful purpose, he willingly preferred familiarity to elegance. Besides, the papers now collected were intended in almost every instance for insertion in Newspapers, or for circulation in the form of hand-bills; and in some cases the latter part of an Essay has been issuing from the pen while the former part was in the hands of the Compositor. Under these circumstances, if plain sense, consecutive reasoning and perspicuous language were attained, they were the utmost which could have been expected. As compositions, the Tracts which are here collected, might no doubt have been altered for the better; but the avocations of the author did not allow him sufficient leisure; and material alteration would have destroyed identity.

Dublin, November

23, 1798.

ERRATA.



- Page 15 line 9, for *them*, read *themselves*.
34 -- 10, for *turn*, read *term*.
53 -- 6, for *to*, read *by*.
58 -- 25, for *or*, read *of*.
71 -- first line of Essay X. for *your*, read *my*.
73 -- 16, for *it*, read *its*.
74 -- 1, for *says*, read *say*,
76 -- 12, insert a comma after *intended*.
77 -- 24, insert *them* after *made*.
86 -- 3, for *exists* read *exist*, and insert a comma
after it.
89 -- 16, for *the metropolis*, read *this metropolis*.
93 -- strike out *to*, and insert a comma in its
stead.
96 -- 5 insert *in* before *England*.
110 -- 13 insert *the* before *maintenance*.
142 -- 11 for *Cataline*, read *Catiline*.
150 -- 7 for *in*, read *is*.
Ib. Note 2 for *it is*, read *is it*.
164 -- 9 strike out the comma after *decreed*.
Ib. -- 18 strike out the comma after *more*.
171 -- 8 for *pretend*, read *presented*.
225 -- 7 strike out *to*cracy.

Houses of the Oireachtas

E S S A Y S
ON THE
POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES
OF
I R E L A N D.

O! quis, quis volet impias
Cædes & rabiem tollere civicam?
Si quæret pater urbium
Subscribi statuis, indomitam audeat
Refrænare licentiam,
Clarus postgenitis.

HOR.

ESSAY I.

APRIL 7th, 1795.

HAPPILY for myself, no doubt, I am placed at a distance from political tumult: yet still, from that distance I sometimes take a view of what passes in the busy world; and though personally uninterested in the agitations of the hour, my regard for my fellow-mortals very frequently both fixes my attention and excites my anxiety.

Such being my usual tendencies, I could not be wholly unconcerned with respect to the disturbance which took place in this city on Tuesday night last; It was almost at an end, before I knew that it existed; and on the following morning I felt no small pleasure in learning that it had subsided with but little damage either to persons or property, and with scarcely the necessity of proceeding to extremities.

I am generally disposed to regard the evils of life in the most favourable point of view, and to look out for all the alleviating circumstances that the case will afford. I practise this species of philosophy partly to keep my own mind as easy as I can, and partly that I may be able to exercise charity towards all mankind with as little interruption as possible.

On the late occasion in particular, I felt no inclination to depart from my usual plan. I am not a party man, and of course had no wish either to magnify or diminish the excesses which had been committed: I was disposed to view them just as they were; and in thus considering them, instead of being surpris'd at what had happened, I felt both wonder and a degree of national pride that the business had terminated with so little mischief: I say, I felt wonder and a degree of national pride; and I almost think that

that when my candid readers have made the same comparison which I have been led to make on this occasion, they will experience pretty nearly the same sensations.

Who does not recollect the remarkable insurrection which took place in London in the year 1780, which for four successive days cramped the hand of Magistracy, and spread uncontrouled devastation through that great Metropolis? If we compare all the circumstances of the riot which lately occurred here, with those that attended that other memorable instance of popular frenzy, I apprehend we shall see cause to acknowledge that the result is highly flattering to the public character of Ireland in general, and of this city in particular.

I am not so partial to my Country as to pay it any compliment at the expence of truth; but on the coolest consideration I am persuaded, that so far as the eloquence of a Grattan excels the ravings of a Lord George Gordon, and so far as the widely circulated and frequently re-printed manifesto of the *former* might be conceived more forcible on the inhabitants of this city, than the incoherencies of the *latter* on the populace of London, in precisely the same proportion must we feel both surprize and satisfaction that the Dublin mob of the 31st of March, 1795,

fell short so amazingly, both in violence and in outrage, of the London mob of the 2d of June, 1780.

Every one knows that Lord George Gordon, had not signalized himself either by his understanding or his talents, and that he was remarkable only for enthusiasm and eccentricity; but every one also knows that Mr. Grattan is a person of acknowledged abilities; that his parliamentary eloquence, though not always approved of by the wise, has seldom failed to excite the admiration of the multitude; and that his name, while it might have been a most valuable auxiliary to the cause of true patriotism, would almost be sufficient to give, at least in the view of the unthinking many, plausibility even to the extravagancies of sedition,

If then the influence of Lord George Gordon was such as to collect a mob, consisting of fifty thousand persons, and to inspirit that mob with such frantic violence, that for four days together its course through the metropolis of Great Britain was marked with conflagration and ruin, might it not have been justly apprehended that when the eloquent, the popular Mr. Grattan, suffered himself to be transported by a paroxysm, as wild to the full as that of my Lord
George,

George, and gave vent to his passions in a manner at least equally dangerous—might it not, I say, have been feared that an insurrection would have taken place as tremendous as that of London, and that the consequent devastation would have been equally deplorable?

Whether my Lord George's impassioned appeals to the populace are upon record, I cannot at this moment pretend to ascertain; but if they are, I almost dare to say that they will be found to contain nothing better fitted to the purpose of popular excitation than that which we have read, and which our children's children will read (if it should chance to reach them,) with amazement, in Mr. Grattan's Answer to the Roman Catholics of Dublin.

“ I conceive,” saith he, “ the continuance of
 “ Lord Fitzwilliam as necessary for the prosper-
 “ rity of the kingdom, &c. &c. For myself, the
 “ pangs I should feel on rendering up my small
 “ portion of ministerial breath would be little,
 “ were it not for the gloomy prospects afforded
 “ by those *dreadful guardians* who are likely to
 “ *succeed*. I tremble at the return to power of
 “ *your old task masters*; that combination, which
 “ *galled* the country by its *tyranny*, and *insulted*
 “ her by its manners, *exhausted* her by its *ra-*
 “ *pac*ity, and *slandered* her by its *malice*: Should
 “ such

“ such a combination, at once inflamed as it
 “ must be now by the *favour* of the *British Court*,
 “ and by the *reprobation* of the *Irish People*, re-
 “ turn to power, *I have no hesitation to say*, that
 “ THEY WILL EXTINGUISH IRELAND, OR IRE-
 “ LAND MUST REMOVE THEM. It is not your
 “ cause only, but that of the nation. *I find the*
 “ *country already* COMMITTED in the struggle ;
 “ I BEG to be COMMITTED *along with her*, and
 “ to abide the issues of her fortune.”

If these words had been addressed to the opu-
 lent, the enlightened, and the respectable Ro-
 man Catholicks only, and if the reading and
 hearing of them had been confined to those ex-
 clusively, unjustifiable as such expressions would
 still have been in themselves, possibly they might
 have been productive of little or no danger,
 because it may be supposed that opulent Roman
 Catholicks feel themselves fully as much interest-
 ed in the peace and good order of the com-
 munity as any Protestants whatever : But let
 it be observed, that this paragraph stands in
 an address to the *Catholicks of Dublin* without
 exception, or limitation ; that it was to fall into
 the hands of the lowest as well as the highest of
 that description ; and that care was taken that it
 should be universally disseminated by the most
 extensive and frequent publication.

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Let me then ask any reasonable person, what impression these words, coming at such a time, under so great a name, were likely to make on the numerical majority of those to whom they were addressed? I say on the numerical majority, for I fear I need not hesitate to assume, that in no description whatever, Protestant or Catholic, the majority, told by the head, would consist of the enlightened and the respectable; and it can be no possible affront to suppose, that as a London mob would necessarily be a mob of Protestants, so a Dublin mob would by an almost equal necessity be chiefly formed of Roman Catholics.—The question then is, how were Roman Catholics of *this* description likely to understand Mr. Grattan? The subject was such as inevitably to interest their feelings, and let the candid reader pronounce whether the language was not such as to rouse their passions almost to madness?

When the indigent, the ignorant, the inflammable vulgar read or heard of *dreadful Guardians* succeeding—of *old Task masters* returning—of *tyranny, insult, rapacity, slander, malice*, and above all, when they received that unequivocal assurance “THEY WILL EXTINGUISH IRELAND OR IRELAND MUST REMOVE THEM;” what in the name of Heaven must have been their apprehensions? Who in their view would be the dreadful Guardians? Evidently those who were to succeed

succeed Lord Fitzwilliam. Who the old task-
 masters? Those of course who had been in power
 before Lord Fitzwilliam took possession of the
 government. And what was to be done with these?
 Why, *Ireland must REMOVE them, or they would
 EXTINGUISH Ireland.* What then, on the whole,
 was it possible for them to conclude, but that on
 a new Chief Governor attempting to land in the
 country they ought to rise in a mass, and by one
 grand effort rid themselves of all those whom they
 were taught to consider as obnoxious to them,
 either in the name of expulsion or of *extermina-
 tion*? An inflamed multitude would be little apt
 to enquire whether the word *remove* meant the one
 or the other.

Now, could my Lord George Gordon, or
 could indeed any *Enragé* that ever existed have ta-
 ken a more promising method of preparing the
 popular mind for insurrection? And all things
 considered, is it not, as I have already observed, a
 matter both of surprize and satisfaction, that the
 riot of Tuesday terminated with so little mischief,
 and that on that occasion the impassioned mob did
 not actually do their best to hurl Lord Camden
 the Lords Justices, and all that appeared connect-
 ed with the commencing government, into the
 bay of Dublin, as *that* at the moment might na-
 turally have occurred as the shortest and most ef-
 fectual mode of *removing* them?

Hitherto

Hitherto I have traced the similarity between the conduct of my Lord George Gordon and Mr. Grattan: It is but fair now to touch upon one or two particulars in which the resemblance does not hold; and this, having already exceeded my intended limits, I shall do as briefly as possible.

In the first place then, Lord George Gordon was actually insane: Of this his whole succeeding life was a continued demonstration; and though this circumstance did not lessen the mischief, it certainly furnished a strong apology for the unfortunate instigator. But in the present case this apology seems to be wanting; it does not appear that Mr. Grattan is insane, except so far as "anger is a short madness."

In the next place, it is evident that the generally disordered fancy of poor Lord George was then specially haunted with strange chimeras of the danger which was likely to arise from the relaxation of the Popery laws, and which he conceived could only be prevented by the multitude having recourse to the *sacred duty* of insurrection. But it does not appear that Mr. Grattan was tormented by any similar apprehensions; for at the moment he is stimulating the multitude to rid themselves of their oppressors, he expressly declares, "Your emancipation will pass;

rely upon it, your emancipation must pass." Why Mr. Grattan should therefore, in the midst of all this certainty of success, use a language which despair itself would not have justified—why, when by his own acknowledgment the Roman Catholics had still so fair a prospect, he, their friend and advocate, should thus like

“ Cæsar’s spirit ranging for revenge,

“ With *Ate* by his side, come hot from hell—

“ Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war,”

ingenious men may conjecture, but I shall not pretend to decide.

The third and last instance of dissimilarity is, that my Lord George in his own proper person, headed the fifty thousand men who had assembled at his call. Thus, he did something more than merely *beg to be committed*; he actually and *bona fide, committed himself*. What Mr. Grattan’s precise meaning might have been in the request he makes to be *committed with his Country*, I presume not to ascertain: But I certainly should not wonder if most of those whom he addressed considered it as an actual engagement to appear with them on the day of enterprise. How far their disappointment in this particular tended to damp their courage, I do not enquire; because,

cause,

cause, as I have already intimated, I wish rather to ascribe the limitedness of the mischief to the radical good-nature of my countrymen.

ESSAY II.

REMARKS ON
LORD FITZWILLIAM'S STATEMENT
 OF THE
 DISPOSITIONS OF THE IRISH CATHOLICS.

APRIL 21, 1795.

“GOD preserve me,” said some one, “from my friends, and I will preserve myself from my enemies.” The general justness of the sentiment I shall not contend for; but I conceive the Irish Catholics might on the present occasion adopt such an ejaculation as fairly as any other persons upon earth.

That my Lord Fitzwilliam meant to serve the Roman Catholics, is indisputable; and yet it might perhaps be asserted, that his Lordship has

actually done more to defeat the completion of their wishes than their bitterest opponents could have done, either in Great Britain or Ireland.

Many of my readers will be apt to consider this as a very bold paradox: But if they will do me the favour to attend coolly and dispassionately to what I have to offer, they will probably see cause to alter their opinion.

In order to avoid all possible dispute, I shall adhere to my Lord Fitzwilliam's own account: From this I learn, that when he parted from his friends in the English Cabinet, he conceived them disposed to grant to the Irish Catholics those privileges which had been withheld from them, as speedily as could be deemed consistent with the common safety of the country: But it seems, that when on his arrival here, he urged upon the British Ministers the necessity of carrying this design into immediate execution; they, after some time, objected to, and at length became totally averse from, the measure: A disagreement of course took place, which terminated, as we all know, in Lord Fitzwilliam's removal, and a total change in the Government of Ireland.

Whether the British Cabinet had or had not any private reasons for this apparent alteration, or whether any thought might have subsequently sprung up in their minds, which did not occur

cur to them at the first view of the business, I pretend not to determine; but I am inclined to think, that if the Cabinet Ministers did indeed change their opinion, they had abundant reason so to do from the very communications made to them by Lord Fitzwilliam himself, after his accession to the Irish Viceroyalty.

His Lordship gives so minute an account of what passed between him and his British Correspondents, as to put us into complete possession of the whole transaction. He told them that the danger of delay was "*great and imminent;*" that the general wish was "*not to be resisted;*" that to resist it wholly would imply "*the certainty of the most alarming and fatal consequences;*" and more than once he asserts, that "*he trembled about the Catholics, and that he had great fears about keeping them quiet for the Session.*"

It will scarcely be asserted, that the English Ministers on receiving the communications of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland were bound to acquiesce, at all events, in whatever was proposed to them.—It will rather be allowed that it was their duty, as the confidential servants of the King, to take into consideration the statements which they received, to exercise their judgment upon them, and to give the answer which appeared to them most reasonable.

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May I then, be allowed to ask what objects, on such an occasion, ought they to have had in view—what enquiries might they have been expected to make—and by what considerations should they have been determined? Will any person say that it would have been unfair for them to have asked what use the Catholics of Ireland were likely to make of the power they were so anxious to obtain; whether it was probable that when possessed of that power, they would use it liberally and discretely for the common good; or whether it might not be apprehended that they would make it the instrument of obtaining a political ascendancy for themselves, to the prejudice of their fellow countrymen? And surely no candid man will dispute that the determination of the Cabinet on the point in question ought to have depended on the result of such an enquiry.

Now let the unprejudiced reader ask his own reason, how, in such an investigation, my Lord Fitzwilliam's statement *ought* to have operated? The amount of it was evidently neither more nor less than this, that the Irish Catholics were determined *at all events* to gain their point; that in the apprehension of the Viceroy they were irresistible by the Irish Government; and that if they were not gratified, the consequences would be most alarming and fatal; most probably *re-*
bellion

bellion in one country, and the most serious calamities to both.

Had the British Ministry been conscious, that the strength of the empire was so far exhausted as to make it necessary for the Government to accede to all possible propositions, and to give a *carte blanche* to every sort of claimant, in that case I confess even hesitation might have been impolitic. But if they still found them strong enough to exercise their reason, might they not naturally enough have doubted whether the gratification of the Catholics would be warrantable, while their dispositions were so unpromising?—Would it have been unreasonable for them to have said—“If the Irish Catholics discover a turbulent spirit *now* while they are seeking power, will they not be yet more turbulent when they shall have attained it? If they threaten while in a state of comparative weakness, what will they not aim at when they shall have arrived at maturity of strength? If we concede to them in their present temper, will they not attribute their success to the terror which they have inspired? And instead of being grateful will they not become more haughty—instead of being contented, will they not meditate new demands? And will they not be encouraged to press every demand, however unreasonable, on the supposition that their strength is irresistible?”

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That the British Ministry did really argue in this manner I pretend not to assert, but if they did, I conceive it would be hard to prove that such reasoning was at all contrary to common justice or common sense. Let the reader suppose himself for a moment in the place of the Duke of Portland or of any other Minister in his Majesty's Cabinet Council, and then say, whether on considering the question in the light of Lord Fitzwilliam's communications, he would not have been led to form a precisely similar conclusion?

It is an axiom in politics, that Governments, if strong enough to maintain their ground, ought never to yield to intimidation; because, a Government acting from fear of the governed is in effect a Government no longer; it is a contradiction in terms, a radical absurdity. A Government then only performs its functions legitimately, when it acts from *reason*; but when *fear* predominates, *reason* is suspended; and when a Government acts from fear of that very force, the regulating and due restraining of which, is its chief end and design, it is to all intents and purposes destroyed: We might as well conceive the idea of a man alive and dead at one and the same moment, as that of a regular Government, determined in its conduct by the menaces of the multitude. That a Government ought ever to listen and to yield to *reason*
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I most readily grant; but in the present case, if my Lord Fitzwilliam's statement be correct, the Roman Catholics scarcely condescended to reason at all: Heretofore they had reasoned, and when they reasoned, they had been successful; but now it seems they preferred the more cogent argument. They had not as yet with respect to their new demands, tried the event of a petition either to the legislature or to the Crown; and yet, says my Lord Fitzwilliam, "I have great fears about keeping them quiet during the Session."

But besides the general impolicy of a government yielding to intimidation, there was another consideration in the present case, which I trust many even amongst the Roman Catholics themselves will allow to be worthy of attention—I mean the security of the Irish Protestants. It surely will not be disputed, that the British Cabinet was bound in reason and in justice to take the safety of these into the account, and consequently that it was fair to enquire in what manner they might be affected, by conceding in the present instance. Let it be observed that what I have to say upon this point, I do not wish to be applied to Catholic Emancipation in the abstract. Such a measure, brought about by the silent but resistless energy of good sense and growing benevolence, both on the one side and on

the other, and under circumstances which would furnish a reasonable security against any dangerous predominance of the more numerous party, would, I conceive, be quite a different matter from what we have now to consider. I speak of Emancipation only as obtained by the motives which it is clear Lord Fitzwilliam chiefly dwelt upon in his correspondence with the English Cabinet, I mean those of *menace* and *alarm*. And from Roman Catholick Emancipation so obtained, I must say, that the Protestants of this kingdom had every thing to apprehend.

It is no affront to the Irish Catholicks to suppose that they are but men; but more than men they must be, if after having gained their point by intimidating the Ministry in England, they would have rested satisfied with any thing short of absolute ascendancy in Ireland. Heaven knows I bear the sincerest good will towards the Irish Catholicks, but I cannot give them credit for what is not in human nature. Like all other bodies of men that ever existed, they must be under the influence of that potent principle, which has not unfitly been called the *Esprit du Corps*; they must even in their mildest temper, and under the most conciliating circumstances, desire not merely equality but superiority for their own party, and would necessarily consider

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as rivals, those who should seem to stand in their way to that attractive pre-eminence.

If then, the Catholick body should come into full political power, with the persuasion that they were indebted for every thing to their own force, and to the apprehensions of those who had yielded to them, in the name of Heaven where could they be supposed to stop? Would they not conclude that when the English Government found it hopeless to resist them, the Irish Protestants lay at their mercy—that their acknowledged irresistibility entitled them to every thing they might wish to demand; that they were *de facto* as well as *de jure*, the *Sovereign People*, and that the rest of the inhabitants of Ireland were so far from being entitled to share in the political power of it, that they were bound to do suit and service for their very existence?

ESSAY III.

REMARKS ON
LORD FITZWILLIAM'S STATEMENT
OF THE
DISPOSITIONS OF THE IRISH CATHOLICKS,
CONTINUED.

APRIL 30, 1795.

IN a former paper I pointed out the inferences most likely to be drawn by the British Ministry from Lord Fitzwilliam's statement of the temper of the Irish Roman Catholicks: and I attempted to prove that the very reasons which he assigned why they should be immediately gratified, viz. the irresistibility of the general wish, and the calamities to be apprehended if it was not instantly complied with, were sufficient, on every ground, except that of conscious weakness, to determine the Cabinet against an acquiescence in his Lordship's requisition.

To

To the observations which I then offered, I apprehend there can be but one possible objection,—that his Lordship's expressions admit of a milder interpretation, and that they do not necessarily convey the idea of an intended resort to force on the part of the Catholics, if their wishes were not gratified.

I should be sorry to attribute to my Lord Fitzwilliam's expressions any other than their fair and obvious sense; but if any doubt could arise, his Lordship has himself anticipated it, by fixing his own meaning beyond the possibility of misconception. "I refused" says he ("Second Letter, page 17th) "to be the person
 "to raise a flame in the country that *nothing*
 "*short of arms could keep down;*" and again, (page 24th) speaking of the British Ministry he says, "rather than indulge me they must boldly
 "face, I had almost said the CERTAINTY of
 "driving this kingdom into a REBELLION, and
 "open another breach for ruin and destruction
 "to break in upon us." Now let the intelligent reader compare these passages with those quoted in the last paper, and then say whether it is possible to give to his Lordship's words any other meaning than this, that in his opinion, the Irish Roman Catholics were determined at all events to have the extent of their demands; and that
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the only alternative was, full Emancipation or general Insurrection.

Whether the Roman Catholicks really authorized his Lordship thus to enforce their claims by the menaces of rebellion, they themselves best know; but if they indeed entertained the sentiments which he ascribes to them, if they harboured even the remotest intention of resorting to force for the purpose of obtaining the objects they had in view, what estimate are we to form either of their wisdom or their patriotism?

That the Irish Roman Catholicks should like other frail mortals, be ambitious of political power, that they should wish for place and patronage, and that the orators of their Body, should prefer the majestic theatre of the Commons house of parliament to the limited area of a Francis-street Chapel, is the most natural thing in the world. But that in order to obtain these objects, they should risque their own happiness, and that of the nation; hazard, as my Lord Fitzwilliam has said, *the most alarming and fatal consequences*, and endanger (as he expressed it) *the very existence of the country*—this I scruple not to assert would be a procedure unmatched as yet even in the history of revolutions, and in which it might be difficult to say whether guilt or madness would most predominate.

Bodies

Bodies of men are no less bound by the great laws of moral obligation than individuals; nor is a crime the less atrocious because it is perpetrated by a multitude. We should shudder at the infernal malevolence of that man who would deliberately set fire to the house of his next door neighbour, merely because the latter on grounds which to him seemed justifiable, delayed the payment of an alleged debt. But what would be the guilt of setting a hundred houses on fire, compared with the wilful enkindling of the infinitely more dreadful flame of intestine war? Let me farther ask, what is there in the circumstances of the Irish Roman Catholics at this day, which could justify in the sight of God or man, the sacrifice of a single life?

I acknowledge that resistance to Rulers may, in certain circumstances, be justifiable; but it can only be so in extreme cases, and even then it is a desperate remedy. To the vagabond and the desperado; to human wolves and tigers, whose appetite is rapine, and whose delight is devastation, it may doubtless afford an alluring prospect; and it may not want attractions for the dark demagogue who hates power in all hands but his own, and who devoutly wishes that the rabble may rule, because he hopes and trusts that he should rule the rabble. But to the social and humanized man, to the industrious and well regulated citizen, resistance will ever be the object

ject of horror; and then only will he be compelled to think of it, when Government directly counteracts the original ends of society, when there is no rational hope of redress in the use of milder expedients, and when personal liberty, domestic tranquillity and security of property, must either be contended for, or lost.

But are these the circumstances of the Roman Catholics of Ireland? Are their persons or their properties less secure than those of the Protestants? Have they not the same benefit of law, the same reward of industry, the same civil privileges in every respect with the rest of their countrymen? And is there a single burthen which either is, or can be imposed upon them, without equally affecting all the other members of the community? Where then is the insufferable grievance? Why, merely this, one in twenty thousand of them cannot have the full gratification of his ambition! And is it for this—to gratify this ambition, or rather to obtain the bare possibility of its gratification,* that the husbandman should leave his farm, the manufacturer relinquish his implements, the merchant forsake his count-

* "Except Parliament" says one of the Orators of Francis-street, "it" (that is, the wished for Emancipation,) "would confer nothing but eligibility; your measure" adds he, "would be taken, no doubt, for certain posts and employments; but you might remain for ever without filling any of them, from the highest to the lowest, unless Government was pleased to appoint you."—*Doctor Ryan's Speech at Francis-street Chapel.*

counting-house, and all rush forward into incalculable devastation and slaughter? Is it for this, that they should stake their own and their country's happiness in that desperate game of blood, the only certain result of which would be ruin—wide spread, lasting, perhaps remediless ruin?

That the body of the Roman Catholics either did or could entertain such intentions, I cannot possibly believe. Could I admit such an opinion, I must suppose them under a diabolical influence, like that of the possessed animals in the Gospel, which “rushed violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.” But it is evident that such were the apprehensions of my Lord Fitzwilliam; and if so, on what principle could he bring himself to take a step, of all others the most likely to realize the mischief which he dreaded? If the spirit of the country was as inflammable as he conceived, could any expedient have been devised more directly calculated to make the flame burst forth, than the publishing and disseminating of such representations? The private communication of them to the British Cabinet, when his Lordship supposed them to be founded, might have been a duty; but the sending them abroad amongst the very persons about whom he was *trembling*, and of whose *quietness* he despaired, was little short of an act of madness. Granting that he was con-

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convinced

vinced of the turbulent spirit of those Roman Catholics with whom he and his friends had corresponded, still it was possible that the insanity was not universal, and that some happy accident might have obstructed its general progress. But could any means have been thought of, more effectual to defeat such a hope, than for such a Personage as my Lord Fitzwilliam to proclaim to all the Roman Catholics in the Nation, that he deemed at once their purpose to be desperate and their wish irresistible? Of the intention of Lord Fitzwilliam, I say nothing, his private character secures him from the slightest imputation of malevolence, and he has too great a stake in this country not to be interested in its fate: But of the act itself, by whatever means his lordship was betrayed into it, can we say less, than that it was in effect, to light up the Beacons of Insurrection—to sound the Tocsin of Rebellion?

And here it is impossible to omit observing, that his Lordship, in the opinion he formed of the dispositions of the Irish Catholics, could not have depended solely on his own judgment. We are warranted in concluding, that he neither acted nor spoke without the concurrence of those in this country, whom he honoured with his confidence; and that consequently in the statements he made to the British Cabinet, he delivered

vered their sentiments as well as his own. We know that Mr. Grattan in particular, was one of his most confidential friends, and that on the Catholic question their views were one and the same. But if Mr. Grattan was really of opinion that the Roman Catholics of Ireland entertained the sentiments which my Lord Fitzwilliam attributed to them, in what light are we to consider his well-known Answer to their Address? My Lord Fitzwilliam *trembled about the Roman Catholics*, despaired of *keeping them quiet*, and deemed their wish *irresistible*; and Mr. Grattan, his confidant, his second-self, says to those very Roman Catholics, "If such a combination re-
 " turn to power, I have no hesitation in saying
 " they will extinguish Ireland, or Ireland must
 " remove them—it is not your cause only, but
 " that of the Nation; I find the country already
 " committed in the struggle, I beg to be com-
 " mitted along with her." Did Mr. Grattan suppose my Lord Fitzwilliam's statements to be just, and yet did he speak thus? Did he believe the country to be so very combustible, and did he thus deliberately cast a firebrand into the midst of it? Was it patriotism which could impel him to this? Was it the pure love of his country which induced him to "appeal to the
 " latent and summary powers of the people," at a moment when, in the opinion of his Noble Friend, the public temper was such, as to ha-

zard *the very existence of that country?* Or was it the rage of disappointment, the disappointment of that high-raised ambition, which, could it only have combined Catholick *irresistibility* with its own Aristocratic influence, might have hoped to prescribe laws to the Legislature, and to hurl defiance at the Throne?—Gracious Heaven! what would have been the situation of this abused kingdom, if the calculation of the popular temper had been as founded, as the appeal to it was frantick?

E S S A Y I V .

DEMOCRATIC LIBERTY CONSIDERED.

MAY 4, 1795.

THE Revolution in the Dutch provinces bore at first a very mild and gentle appearance. It seemed as if Democracy had parted with its teeth and claws before it had visited the Hollanders; and that it was disposed to recommend itself to all Europe as a quiet inoffensive sort of beast that might be stroked and carested without any hazard whatever.

But

But it appears at length that this seeming innocence was the mere purring of a tyger. The locks of the democratic Sampson have grown, and he shakes the temple over the heads of those who were mad enough to admit him. The packets of last week announce that the Revolutionary Government of that *emancipated* country has just issued an edict, enjoining all who are possessed of *gold or silver uncoined*, to deliver it up forthwith to those who act in the name of the Sovereign People. By *gold and silver uncoined*, it is scarcely necessary to observe must be meant *plate* of all sorts, and perhaps watches, buckles, buttons, trinkets, with the whole tribe of *Etceteras* which are usually made of those precious metals.

Now, suppose we in this country were thus called upon—in such a case the rich would not be the only sufferers; every industrious man and woman who had been successful in business, and whose wish for decency had led them to lay out a part of their savings in decorating a tea or dining table, would in their several degrees be subjected to the general pillage.

But would the good people of Ireland like such a sweeping confiscation? Would the laborious mechanick and the thrifty housewife, who have hitherto felt a virtuous pride in being able
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to display to their neighbours at a holiday treat the shining tokens of their frugality and independence, and who have marked with secret delight the eyes of their customers attracted by the splendour of their glazed buffet; would they, I say, submit willingly to be stripped of their little hoard, by the hard hand of authority, whether of a King or a Republick?

But methinks I hear a neighbour ask, what signifies gold or silver compared with Liberty? But say I, what signifies Liberty if a man's silver spoons are not safe in his cupboard? For my part, I can form no idea of Liberty separate from security of persons and property; and I cannot help thinking that if my candlesticks are taken off my table, or my cup snatched from my lips, should either happen unfortunately to be of silver, it would be much the same thing to me whether it were done by an excise-officer, a national guard, or a common house-breaker.

Governments were instituted for the protection of society; that a man may sit securely in his house, and go along the road without being knocked down; that the industrious may labour without molestation, and may enjoy his acquisitions without being plundered: these are the rational ends of Government; when they are answered, Government is a publick good, and
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has a right to publick support. But *that* is a bad Government which not only gives no protection, but actually exists by preying on the decencies and innocent gratifications of civilized life.

Kingly Governments have, no doubt, been frequently oppressive; but when *they* oppress, they do not oblige their people to call that oppression *Liberty*: this adding of insult to injury is the peculiar glory of Revolutionary Governments. When Lord Peter, in the *Tale of a Tub*, cut a large slice off a brown-George loaf, and handed it to his hungry brothers, we are told he used to say to them, "Look ye, gentlemen, this is " mutton—excellent mutton, and if you don't " call it mutton, you'll be damn'd eternally." But Revolutionary Liberty beats my Lord Peter all to nothing; what he gave to his brothers was still something they could eat; if it was not just what he called it, it was food, it was not poison. But Democracy, as far as we have yet witnessed its good offices, gives, instead of Bread, a Stone; instead of a Fish a Serpent, and instead of an Egg it offers a Scorpion. Nor is this all, for when the Serpent bites, or the Scorpion stings, the wretched victims must not so much as whimper; when they are robbed and plundered, and stript, if they do not wish to lose their lives as well as their substance, they must still shout *Liberty! Liberty!*

So

So much for the first steps of Emancipation in Holland:—Let us now see what they may look to hereafter, as a compensation for the stripping of their sideboards. And who will pretend to say, that the Dutch will not have their full share of all the happiness the French have obtained; or that the Tree of Liberty will not bear as rich fruit amongst the former, as it has done amongst the latter? But what *are* the fruits which France has gathered off the Tree of Liberty? What advantages does it appear to have gained from its Revolution? To be informed on this head, we will have recourse to a sure quarter, remote from the influence of a Court, or Minister; we will go to a well-known Opposition Paper, the *Courier*, published in London on the 23d of last month, in the third column of the third page of which, we find a Speech relative to the present State of France, delivered by one *Pelet*, on the 8th day of the same month in the National Convention.

“ For these five years past, (says Pelet) the
 “ people who desire to be happy have been
 “ *duped* by words; for five years past they have
 “ been *oppressed* and *severely smarted*: Let us no
 “ longer adjourn our duty, and their rights for
 “ *ambition* and *crime*, ignorance and famine will
 “ not cease to spread their devastation. The
 “ erroneous system of our political œconomy is
 “ the

“ the source of all our sufferings—our *manufac-*
 “ *tures languish, our maritime trade is destroy-*
 “ *ed; whilst our victories render us illustrious,*
 “ and consolidate our power abroad, *disorder*
 “ *shakes the very foundations of society at home.*”

Now what is this? is it national happiness? is it a thing worth fighting for, worth risking every thing valuable for? Is it a just and adequate return for all the human blood which has been shed in the pursuit of it? And can Holland hope for any thing better? At present it is under a French Government; that French Government has begun its career with robbery; and as to what is likely to arise from it in the sequel, let us listen to Pelet in another part of the same speech.

“ If, “ says he,” you delay treating with Hol-
 “ land, if you continue occupying that country
 “ as a conquest, Commerce will fly from that
 “ Republick. You will annihilate that beauti-
 “ ful creation of human industry; in three
 “ months that country will be a charge to you,
 “ and its fugitive riches will increase the trea-
 “ sures of your enemies.”

Such then are the blessed fruits of Democra-
 tick Emancipation, which France enjoys already,
 and which Holland has in prospect, if France
 perseveres

perseveres in holding it as a fraternized country. Pelet asserts that France has been in the situation which he describes for *five years*, that is, ever since the commencement of the new system. So then, during the present *free* Government, France has been *miserable*; and during her old *slavish* Government she was comparatively *happy*! This is plain; because if she had been miserable under the old Government, *Pelet* could not have limited the turn of national misery to *five years*.

What then follows? Clearly, that *French Liberty* has been productive of so much misery, that they now look back to the very times of that old Government, which they so much reprobated, as times of happiness compared with the present.

And what do the expressions of this same *Pelet* imply relative to Holland? Obviously, that Holland too was comparatively *happy* before the French entered it. "You," says he, "will *annihilate* that *beautiful creation* of human industry; in three months time that country will be a *charge* to you, and its fugitive riches will encrease the treasures of your enemies." So then before the French entered, Holland was *beautiful*, it was *rich*; but what will it be, if they continue in it? Its beauty (according to *Pelet*)

Pelet) will be annihilated, and its "riches will
"make unto themselves wings and fly away."

Governments, like all other human institutions, must have their weaknesses; nor can it be hoped that a community consisting of frail mortals should be perfectly happy. But we can have few better proofs that the Government of a country is a good one, than that the country itself is *rich* and *beautiful*. This shews that industry is vigorous, and that men are encouraged to the honest acquisition of wealth, by the prospect of enjoying it without disturbance. Thus, general employment is excited; and general employment infallibly conduces to general happiness. I shall not dispute with those who view matters in a different light, and who think desolation and deformity and want and despair to be the marks of a good Government; but I shall say, on the authority of *Pelet*, that if they are, the French, whether we consider them at home or abroad, in their own country or in Holland, have unquestionably the best Government in the world: For (to use the words of the Prophet,) "The land is as the Garden of Eden before
"them, but behind them a desolate wilderness."

But after all it must be acknowledged that the Tree of French Liberty has by no means thriven so well in Holland as it has done elsewhere: If

we wish to see it, as Wolfey says, in Shakespeare, "bearing its blushing honours thick upon it," we must take a view of it in Spain: and here again we will admit no partial, prejudiced reporters: we will consult the same honest Opposition paper (since it is so usual to believe, that whatever opposes the British Government must be honest) that we did before.

In the *Courier* of April 27th, we are told, that on the 15th of the same month, Tallien made the following statement in the Convention: "In the Provinces of *Guipuscoa* and *Biscay*," said he, "the inhabitants, friends to liberty, were ready to receive the French as brethren; *St. Sebastian* opened its gates with acclamations of joy; but the entrance of the French troops was distinguished by pillage, and the most unheard of cruelties. The Priests have been arrested, the Monks and Nuns have been torn from their cloisters, have been heaped in carts and dragged to *Bayonne*, where they were made to suffer the most unheard of treatment. In *Biscay*, columns of troops had advanced, carrying devastation and death with them; towns and villages have been laid in ashes; those vales where *peace* and *security* had, TILL THEN *inhabited*, are become scenes of the most atrocious barbarity. The women are ravished;

“*wished*; and those *who on their knees asked for*
“*their lives, were barbarously massacred.*”

And now, whether we contemplate Democratic liberty in France, in Holland, or in Spain, is it not a most delightful and most alluring thing? In France, it *dupes with words*, and its fruits are *oppression, scarcity of provisions, languishment of manufacture, destruction of trade*. In Holland, it strips the people of their gold and silver; and if it continues, will strip the country of its *commerce, its riches, and its beauty*. And in Spain, amid those vales in which TILL THEN (mark *till then, i. e. till French generosity* came to free them from *Spanish despotism*) PEACE AND SECURITY *had dwelt*; it triumphs over all justice, decency and humanity, out-doing *Tiberius* in lust, and *Nero* in cruelty.


“Mr. Pitt,” says a Francis-street Declaimer, “commenced the war to curtail and weaken the principles of liberty, and the principles of liberty have been extended and fortified.” What this Gentleman means by *the principles of liberty*, we can be at no loss to determine. How much reason he has to glory in their being *extended, and fortified*, let *duped* and beggared France, let Holland, once *rich and beautiful*, now *robbed and likely to be ruined*, let the lately *secure and peaceful*,

peaceful, but now bloody and depopulated plains of *Biscay*, declare to an astonished world.


People of Ireland! are you not very miserable that you have not yet participated in these invaluable blessings? Have you not reason to lament that your friends in this city were not able to lay their schemes better, and that the English Fleet was not a little weaker, and the French Fleet somewhat stronger? Then you too might have been *enriched* like the *Dutch*, and made *happy* like the *Biscayans*? Then in truth you would have been *greatly emancipated*; your country would have been emancipated from its wealth; your wives and daughters would have been emancipated from their chastity; and yourselves, perhaps, as the last blessing of which you would have been capable, would have been emancipated from existence.

ESSAY

ESSAY V.



DEMOCRATICK LIBERTY CONTINUED.



SEPT. 10, 1795.

MONTESQUIEU has observed, that the political liberty of the Subject, consists “in a tranquillity of mind arising from the opinion each person has of his own safety,” and, he adds, that “in order to have this liberty, it is requisite the Government be so constituted as that one person need not be afraid of another.”

This is plain common sense, obvious to every man’s reason, and corresponding with every man’s feelings; but if so, what estimate are we to form of the effects of French Democracy?

The statements made daily in the Convention are indisputable, because the Convention itself authenticates them, by making them the ground of its decrees. But if these accounts are authentic, may it not fairly be asked, in what country, or at what period, has the very reverse of political liberty been so completely exemplified as in
France,

France, since its adoption of the Democratick system ?

Where or when had individuals so little ground to reckon upon their own personal safety ? Where or when had every one man so much reason to be afraid of every other man ?

What, by its own confession, has been the Convention ? Has it been the temple of rational liberty, the bright focus of national light, the terror of the oppressor, the asylum of the wretched ? Has it not, on the contrary, been at one period the mean unresisting instrument of a Robespierre ; at another the weak, hood-winked dupe of its own villainous Commissioners ; blind as a mole to the mischiefs of the hour, and sharp-sighted as the eagle to those that had gone by ; a giant in theory and a pigmy in practice ? “ We “ were forced,” says Pouzalles, “ to submit to “ the empire of an execrable faction, which shed “ our blood, and afterwards extended its ravages “ to every part of the Republick ; the signal of “ distress was given, but we had no succour.” An honourable acknowledgment from a body calling itself a Legislature ! Is it not strange that though none could disprove this miserable confession, some should not have objected to its being handed down as an historical document to posterity ?

But

But now that they dare to speak out; now that they are in retrospect so purely *virtuous* and so profoundly *wise*, what in fact do their inquiries amount to? The blackest scenes are developed daily; each fresh discussion brings forth some greater abominations; and the human fancy is puzzled to conjecture where the monstrous volume is to end. But are not their accusations of their colleagues, direct criminations of themselves? For who, or what were those blood-hounds who are now acknowledged to have confounded persons and properties in one common wreck, and to have blended in promiscuous slaughter all ages, sexes, ranks and characters? Were they not the confidential members, the selected Commissioners of the Convention? Were they not those too, who once used as plausible language, and laid claim to as pure a patriotism as any of their accusers? and is not candour itself obliged to suspect that the chief difference between the one and the other lay rather in their situations than in their principles and tempers? All of them could not have authoritative trusts in the Departments; but it appears, that few who had the opportunity to be villains, suffered it to escape unimproved; and those who had not the opportunity, have in several instances shewn what they would have done, had it been in their power. Every one recollects *Jean de Brie's* famous motion for a band of assassinating Missionaries;

naries; and *Tallien's* proposal for executing those who were accused, without the *unnecessary* forms of a trial, can scarcely be forgotten. And yet *Jean de Brie* sits quietly to this hour in the Convention, and *Tallien* is little less than a leader of the present prevailing party. But even the few processes which have commenced, seem scarcely to have been instituted in earnest: we hear of numerous accusations, but of few or no punishments; and *Barrere*, though accused of the grossest crimes, does not appear to be as yet even brought to trial.

But be the proceedings against the culprits sincere or hypocritical, the crimes are such as the world has scarcely before witnessed. Cruel as the Spaniards may have been in South America, the circumstances of the Natives did not admit of a similar pillage; and the shorter duration of the former massacre of Paris could not have left room for such diversified barbarity. It is in *free Revolutionary France only*, that at one moment, and in the same persons, *Nero* would have seen himself rivalled in malignity, and *Heliogabalus* in buffoonery; it is in free revolutionary France only, that *Voltaire's* ideal Monster, the blended Monkey and Tyger, is realized to a nicety; it is on that high-raised theatre, and in the view of an astonished world, that men acting as Magistrates, and calling them-

selves

selves Philosophers, have “played such fantastic tricks before high Heaven,” not barely as would make “Angels weep,” but as Ideots would despise, and Savages abhor.

Is this declamation? Let the man that thinks so, if such can be, advert to the reports of the Convention, as given in an Irish Opposition Paper, the *Hibernian Journal*, of Wednesday August the 19th. Let him read the account of *Lequinio*, a Commissioner from the Convention; one moment embracing, in the view of the multitude, a ruffian who had offered voluntarily to be the minister of his malice, another moment acting the part of an assassin himself; now haranguing the people from the blood-stained Guillotine, and then forcing the defenceless victims of his tyranny to ascend it, merely that he might make them trample on the remains of their slaughtered relatives! Let him read the laconic epistle of *Piorry*, another Deputy and Commissioner to the People of Poitiers: “Lose
 “not a moment, every thing must be destroyed,
 “burnt, guillotined, carried off, regenerated!”
 And, lastly, let him attend to the merciful project of Bo, for giving plenty to France, by cutting off one half of its inhabitants. “Be of
 “good cheer, France has enough for twelve
 “millions of people; the rest of its inhabitants
 G 2 “ will

“ will be put to death, and then provisions will
“ be abundant !”

Surely since men began to multiply on the face of the earth, such scenes never were exhibited in it before. I will not insult the understanding and the feelings of my reader, by asking what connexion all this has with *Liberty*? But I call upon the man of candour and reflection, to say, whether it is not amazingly like the retributive justice of God? France would not even allow *existence* to the humane, tender hearted, too gentle Louis; it saw him, approvingly saw him, hunted down and worried to death by an infernal pack of Jackals and Hyænas. What then could be more equitable, than that the monsters should turn upon those who had encouraged them, and glut their whetted appetite with the blood, the treasures, and the happiness of France itself?

ESSAY VI.

DEMOCRATICK CONSISTENCY.

SEPT. 19, 1795.

THIS, doubtless, is the age of Political Prodigies. The well-known Metamorphoses of the Roman Poet, seem almost to shrink within the limits of nature and probability, when compared with the transmutations just now exhibited in the French Convention.

Legendre, the Butcher, the Leader and the Mouth-piece of that Rabble of Savages, who, with a pair of old black Breeches on a pole, and the heart of a Calf on the point of a pike, for their standards, burst into the Castle of the Thuilleries on the memorable 20th of June—*Legendre*, who proposed that *Manuel* (who, though a Democrat, had a conscience and a heart) should be voted *mad*, merely because, while the trial of the King was pending, he suggested

gested that tickets of admission should be distributed among the real Citizens, in order to prevent the galleries from being filled by a domineering mob—This same *Legendre*, now pathetically laments—what? That the Convention are trenching on the sovereignty of his old associates; that the Aristocratized Legislators wish to depress and trample on the true *Sans Culottes*, and to substitute their own Majesty in the room of the Majesty of the People? No such thing; but on the contrary, that “the Primary
 “Assemblies of Paris, though generally composed of honest Citizens, are governed by a
 “horde of BEGGARLY RASCALS!”

Is it possible that this ruffian forgets, or can he persuade himself that the world forgets, that shortly elapsed period, when, at the head, and in the name of just *such a horde of BEGGARLY RASCALS*, he told the gentle, submissive Louis, “Monfieur, listen to us; yes, Monfieur, you
 “are made to listen to us; you are a perfidious
 “fellow; you have always deceived us, and
 “you are deceiving us still!” And, yet this is the man who, on the 8th of this present month, declared in the Convention, that they (the Convention) having in vain tried the effects of Reason, (i. e. having in vain tried to prevail with the *Sovereign People*, to bow before the self-created

created sovereignty of himself and his colleagues) *must now have recourse to Arms!*

But even the effrontery of this Hero of the Slaughter house, must yield to the happier impudence of *Tallien*, who, in his harangue to the Convention on the 5th instant, exhorts them to “make use of their *omnipotence*, and to march “under the Standards of the Armies, and of the “*Patriots of 1789.*” But, who, or what is this *Tallien*? Why, at the period he mentions he was nobody, an obscure Clerk in Paris. Then only, when the chaldron of Democracy began to boil high, and the vilest dregs of the community arose from its bottom and formed a scum upon its surface, then, and not till then, *Tallien* rose also. His primary function was that of Secretary to the sanguinary self-created Council of Commune, which commenced its fell career on the night of the 9th of August, and under whose superintendence the massacres of the 2d of September were projected and achieved. His first public appearance was at the Bar of the Legislative Assembly, as a Commissary from that same Council; where during the very season of perpetration, while every heart, that retained any thing human, was thrilling with horror, he coolly excused the hellish business, by calling it “the, in some sort, *just* “vengeance of the People!”

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When for his merits, thus opening to view, he was elected to the Convention, he not only distinguished himself by his petulance and self-sufficiency, but still more by his determinate opposition to every motion for investigating those murderous transactions, which he, with his bosom friends *Robespierre* and *Chabot*, on all occasions asserted to have been the act of the people themselves. Of that execrable faction, so long as it appeared likely to retain its power, he was the decided partizan; and on some occasions even called forth the censure of his co-partners by the rancour of his conduct and expressions. When, for instance, the question of allowing Counsel to the imprisoned Monarch was debated in the Convention, a merciless wretch (*Offelin*) proposed that they themselves should name Counsel for the King, whom he must either accept, or find others, within four and twenty hours. To this even the majority of the Convention objected, struck with the unreasonableness of obliging an accused man to take Counsel chosen by his accusers, or an imprisoned man to fix so important a choice in so limited a space of time. But what said the *mild* and *moderate Tallien*? "Let him," said he, "do the best he can; let him find counsel who will act, that is his affair; it is our concern to avenge the National Majesty." Again, while the King was preparing for his trial, it was proposed that he should

should have a free intercourse with his family; this was no sooner mentioned than the great majority of the Convention agreed to it almost by acclamation. But even then the virulence of *Tallien* transported him so far as to tell the Convention, "You may decree this as you please, but if the Municipality" (that blessed nest of vipers, whose Secretary he had been) "do not chuse it, he will be allowed to see none of them." The indignation of the Convention was excited, the wretch was censured, and the censure inserted in the *Proces Verbal*. But the malignity of his heart could not be restrained; for even then, when the cause of inhumanity was compleatly gained, when the fulness of success might have afforded a moment's relaxation to the malice of the devil himself, I mean when the King was pronounced guilty, even then *Tallien* was not to be satisfied; but, as if ever on the watch to grasp the utmost possibilities of cruelty, he urged immediate execution, on a pretence of mercy so infernally ironical, that even *Danton* himself was shocked, and remonstrated against his barbarity.

And this man now talks about justice and moderation; condemns loudly the measures of that party whom he once spurred on to enormity; and speaks with rapture of the *Patriots* of 1789, whom he and his coadjutors devoted to death or

drove into exile. This man, the *creature*, the *instrument*, the *justifier*, the *exciter* of dark conspiracy and bloody insurrection, now dares to say that "a new *Royal* conspiracy like that of the "31st May," (that is, the conspiracy of himself and his friends, which raised *Robespierre* to the Dictator's chair, and more than twenty of his opponents in one day to the scaffold) "is pre-paring, and that they are endeavouring *once more* to mislead the Commune, by persuading "the inhabitants that they are *Sovereigns*." And if they are, whose example are they following? Whose lessons are they inculcating? Those surely of *Tallien* himself and his execrable auxiliaries! Miserable, distracted France, what must be thy fate, when thus in abeyance between the misrule of the disjointed, perplexed, infuriate multitude, on the one hand, and the military dominion of such infernal vagabonds and hypocrites on the other!

Irish and British Democrats, (those of you I mean who are not in the secret; who, misled by artful demagogues, are yourselves more sinned against than sinning) for your Country's sake, open your eyes, and see in *Legendre* and *Tallien* what must ever be the character of Revolutionary Leaders when once raised to power. Ask your own reason, whether the dominion of such men would be a blessing to this country; and rest

rest assured, that if a Revolution would not *find* such characters, it would *make* them; it would hatch them by its pestiferous heat in the carcase of mangled society. And think, oh think, whether the present regular administration of laws and protection of property, (regular I say, unless so far as it has been made otherwise by the insidious artifices of your own Chieftains,) would be well exchanged for the base stratagems, the insulting haughtiness, the fawning adulation, and the brow-beating despotism of such Mushroom Miscreants!

E S S A Y VII.

JUNE 16, 1796.

IN my walks through this city, I sometimes fall in with a class of men so peculiarly distinguished from all other persons, that I dare say, many besides myself are in the habit of observing them. They appear occasionally in private companies, but they make a far more conspicuous figure at Clubs and publick Societies. The traits by which they are known, appear with equal prominence in their conversation and countenance.

tenance. In their conversation they harp eternally on the same string, the wickedness of Government and the wrongs done to the people. In their countenances they exhibit the most striking marks of discontent, irritability and arrogance. If the gloom brightens at any time into a doubtful sunshine, it is when the French have gained a victory, when the English Fleet has been driven back by contrary winds, or when *Horne Tooke* has entertained the mob at Westminster with a philippick on the Minister.

It cannot be doubted, but that these men are singularly unhappy, and on this account they might at first view seem objects of commiseration; but the indefatigable eagerness with which they labour to make others as wretched as themselves, and to transfuse into the minds of all with whom they converse, that corroding venom which rankles in their own breasts, has in it something so exquisitely infernal, so like what we have been used to attribute to the arch-enemy of God and man, that the tendencies to pity must in all well-disposed minds speedily give way to disgust and indignation.

In what degree the persons to whom I allude stand related to the disembodied National Guards, or the dispersed Society of United Irishmen, I shall not pretend to determine. One thing

thing is plain, that they are actuated by the same spirit, and are in pursuit of the same ends: they only differ in adopting, perhaps through necessity, more indirect and less alarming means. The war exists; the object is unchanged; but the champions of this day hope to effect to *sap* what their predecessors failed in accomplishing by *storm*.

Their immediate purpose is too plain to be mistaken: they evidently wish and hope to make the great body of the People so compleatly dissatisfied with the present order of things, that they shall at last rise in a mass, overturn the Government, and thus leave an open field for the introduction of any theoretick plan which the enterprizing genius of those who excite them *now*, and trust to be their leaders *then*, may happen to suggest.

That the designs of these men have failed hitherto, or may fail finally as to their full accomplishment, makes little difference in the amount of their merit or their guilt. If their purpose be virtuous, their intention should not be defrauded of its due praise, because from contingent circumstances it has proved abortive: if it be criminal, they stand charged in the sight of God and man with the enormities they would have committed, and the miseries they would have occasioned,

occasioned, had Providence permitted their schemes to be successful.

I ask then, (and I conceive it is a question which even the less guilty agitators of doubtful political points have not yet considered as they ought,) whether any crime can be equal to the wilful, wanton endeavour to dissolve the regular order of a community? If murder, and pillage, and ruthless havoc, and headlong devastation entail guilt on the immediate actors, they who cause these enormities, who determinately pull down the only barriers which restrain them, who excite the passions which must produce them, and create the circumstances which leave scope for them, they, I say, are much more than accomplices; they must pass for principals in every crime that is committed, in every barbarity that is perpetrated.

That Law and Government of some kind are necessary to the safety of society, might be proved, if any one was mad enough to deny it, by lamentable demonstration. For when at any time these restraints have been suspended, even by events which must have called forth pity where it was, and might almost have created it, where it was not, by earthquakes for instance, or by conflagrations, the spirit of violence and rapine has discovered itself immediately.

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The sense of this necessity first suggested the only possible remedy; and the establishment of Law and Government marked the epocha of man's rise from savageness to civilization, from brutal fierceness to the endearments of humanity. Then, and not till then, came the idea of safety, and with the idea of safety, the attempt to be comfortable; then, and not before, the sanguinary howl softened into the song of peace; then sprung up the charities which bind man to man, the virtues which enrich our nature, the acquirements which adorn it, the domestic and social enjoyments which make life worth preserving.

But would these indispensable requisites to human happiness survive the burst of anarchy? Would not the overbearing flood of uncurbed passion, of unrestrained depravity, sweep them all away? And would not the poor disconsolate lover of order see all that he held dear, the fruit of his industry, the reward of his ingenuity, his domestic comforts, his fireside delights, all carried off, hopelessly and remedilessly carried off by that resistless torrent, which while rising above every mound of right, would be to all the purposes of vice as ductile as a rivulet?

Gracious Heaven! And are there indeed men in the community, who, lost to all the tender feelings of nature, would put these essentials of
human

human comfort to hazard; nay, to infinitely worse than hazard, to certain ruin, and for no one rational object? We shudder at the tale of midnight murder, or the narrative of cold cruelty; but what midnight murder, real or fabled, what cold cruelty, in ancient or modern story, is equal to this—that men not driven mad by oppression, not roused to enthusiasm by any species of persecution, should thus make open war on social happiness, on every thing that is mild or gentle, or estimable in human nature?

And are there such persons? Alas, are there not? Would there be inflammatory Newspapers if there were not such to cherish and to feed them? Would there have been *Defenders*, if there had not been such persons to encourage them? Or would there be just now a band of plotters, of deeply systematized plotters against the Government and peace of the Country, in the prosperous and plenteous *North*, if the tones of sedition had not been sounded from the metropolis, and echoed and re-echoed by that busy instrument of mischief, “*The Northern Star.*?” Yes, I write from honest indignation, because I know that in one of the most thriving districts in the kingdom, where oppression is not felt, where distress does not occur except from mere misfortune or absolute vice, the spirit of sedition, unexcited by the shadow of provocation, and wrought

wrought up to phrenzy solely by the mental poisons of those murderous Mountebanks, has, within these few weeks, precipitated a number of wretched persons, (who in order to be completely happy, wanted nothing but contented minds) into the gloom of a jail, preparatory, perhaps, to the horrors of a gibbet.

E S S A Y VIII.

JUNE 18, 1796.

IT is by no means my wish to indulge in unqualified censure or acrimonious severity towards those political agitators to whom I alluded in my former paper: I think in my conscience, that they are guilty beyond what words can express; but still I would much rather convince than exasperate them; and I should be sorry to excite the detestation of others against them, if I could only hope that they themselves would be led to regret their misconduct, and to open their bosoms to “the compunctious visitings of nature.”

To themselves then, rather than to the Public at large do I make my appeal. I call upon every man who has the understanding and the feelings of a human being, and who is conscious of having so written or spoken, as to encourage that spirit of restless disaffection which in so many parts of this kingdom has already produced, and is at this moment producing such deplorable effects, to enter at length into a review of his own conduct, to call himself before the tribunal of his own conscience, and to enquire impartially and solemnly, whether he has acted wisely and well, as a Patriot and as a Man, and consistently with his duty to his Fellow-creatures and his God.

That the agitations to which I refer (agitations so unlike any thing that ever before occurred in our memory, so determinately *political*, and so singularly *systematic*) are and must be chargeable on the persons to whom I am addressing myself, they themselves will not venture to dispute. It is notorious that for years, they have been labouring in every possible way to detach and alienate the lower ranks from the higher ranks, the People from the Government. In hand-bills of various name and title, studiously framed, so as to operate on vulgar minds through the medium of their ruling passions, and disseminated so industriously as to find their way to every village,
fair,

fair, and market, they have been incessantly inculcating on the multitude that they were the most wretched, abused, oppressed people under the canopy of Heaven, that their misery arose solely from a political cause, viz. the radically bad Government under which they lived, that their happiness must depend on an alteration of that Government, and that since those in power were not disposed to comply with the popular wish, the people ought to do justice to themselves by having recourse to such movements as could not be resisted.

Let any person acquainted with what has been passing in this country for the last four years, say, whether this has not been the uniform purport of all the publications of the well-known Society of United Irishmen; and I would further ask, whether the same design has not been too successfully pursued, (even since their first mode of dissemination has been deemed inexpedient) through the medium of such news-papers as were willing to encrease their circulation, by courting depravity and sacrificing truth?

But was it possible in the nature of things that such statements could be urged with earnestness, and inculcated with unwearied assiduity; and not make a powerful impression on the minds of the populace? The person, be he who he may,

Mountebank or Politician, who descants on human misery will be sure of an audience, and if he flatters the passions while he pretends to furnish remedies, his prescriptions will be received as the dictates of an oracle. What then could be expected from the publications to which I allude, but the very consequences which have followed? When the ignorant vulgar read them, or heard them read, (and care was taken that they should not want the opportunity) and when they met with such positiveness of allegation, such apparent fervour of sentiment, and warmth of expression, how could they doubt but that every assertion was true? And what could be the effect of such a persuasion, but deep hatred of Government, rankling jealousy of their superiors, and a fixed determination to force their way through every difficulty and danger, in order to come at that political paradise which was thus presented to their view?

To imagine that the persons in question were not aware of the likelihood of these effects, would be to deny them the praise not only of superior talents, but of common rationality. Supposing, then, that their exhortations had been attended with equal success in all the different districts of the kingdom, I could wish them to ask themselves, what would be the vast advantage?

tage? We have heard of the achievements of Defenderism where it was triumphant; would it be very much for the happiness of the country if these outrages were to be universal, if they were to rise above the check of magisterial power, and if the existing Government, faulty as some men may esteem it, were to be set aside to make room for a provisional Directory of Defenders?

When malice is indulged to its extent, every object is overlooked, except what tends to gratify the predominant passion. An ambition as frantick as it is profligate, has impelled a few incendiaries to aim at the destruction of the present ruling powers, and they account no expedient too desperate, if it only tends to accomplish their purpose. But, supposing them to have gained their point, are they sure that even they themselves would not soon have reason to repent of their rashness? If general insurrection were now the order of the day, would the restless multitude continue to bow before the speculative geniuses who had called them into action? Or can we imagine that a committee of *Switcher Donnellies* * would long be swayed by the metapho-
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* The *Nom de Guerre* of a noted leader of Defenders and United Irishmen just then taken into custody at *Maghera* in the county of Londonderry.

rick energy of an *Helot's* † eloquence? It had been all-powerful to excite, but would it be equally effectual to restrain? It was well fitted to draw the peasant from his industry, and to engage him in mid-night murder, and noon day depredation. But when the multitude had once tried the strength of their own brawny arms, can we think that tropes and figures of speech would still keep them in subjection to a few physicians, lawyers, and haberdashers, whose “professional prudence” had induced them to conceal themselves until they hoped there was no hazard in the exposure of their persons?

But in putting these questions I feel discouraged. They to whom they apply, are as “the deaf adder which stoppeth her ears.” Once more then I turn to the friends of order and human happiness. I call upon them to weigh what I have said, and to judge whether any madness is to be compared with the attempts which we have seen, and still see, to excite the ignorant impassioned populace to discontent, to violence, to rebellion? and whether they who persevere in this diabolical pursuit, after the deplorable results which have already arisen from it, and in the
view

† Alluding to a well known publication, called the *Helot's Letters*, which appeared about the year 1784, and was the first effusion of that inflammatory rhetoric which has since been used by the United Irishmen with a success so fatal to the quiet and safety of the country.

view of those infinitely greater mischiefs which would necessarily accrue from the completion of their schemes, do not deserve to be hurled from society as the enemies of God and Man?

E S S A Y IX.

JUNE 23, 1796.

THE exertions of Government to suppress that spirit of combination and insurgency by which this country has been harrassed, are deserving of the highest praise. They have been as judicious as they were vigorous, and the benefit arising from them has, perhaps, been as great as on any fair grounds could have been expected. But I hesitate not to say that, in order to a radical cure, there is a necessity for remedies which no government of any extensive country can of itself apply. Government may repel actual insurrection by opposing to it a superior force: it may give energy to the endeavours of active Magistrates by a prompt attention to their applications: it may keep good order in the metropolis and its immediate environs;

rons, but it cannot detect the embryo plots that are hatching from time to time in remote provinces. It cannot follow the midnight steps of the foul fiend while he sows the tares of sedition in the soil of village simplicity. It may lop off the stem, what appears above ground and strikes the eye at a distance, but it is impossible it should be able to pursue and trace out the entangled roots of the mischief which extend themselves beneath the surface.

These are duties which they, whose interest is at stake must perform for themselves. The men of understanding, of property, of principle, in the different parts of the country, must exert themselves to preserve the country, with an assiduity proportionate to that which other men have used, and are still using to destroy it, or a thorough extirpation of the evil cannot possibly be expected.

That the actual agitators are few in number, and that amongst those who have any pretensions to respectability, the well-disposed would out-reckon the malcontents by hundreds to one, I cannot entertain a doubt. But the mischief is, that the many are indolent, while the few are indefatigable. Good, easy, undefining men, sit quietly at their fire-sides, while the guileful
anarchists

anarchists are diffusing the principles and maturing the schemes of insurrection and revolution.

To an indolence of precisely a similar nature, much more than to the number or the strength of their adversaries, the gentry of France have owed their ruin. Had they, at the beginning, exerted themselves in their respective provinces to prevent combinations, to detect misrepresentations, and to prevent their adherents and their neighbours from being debauched by the mad-denying principles of the Jacobins, they would, in all probability, never have been driven from that country, of which, in spite of all that can be advanced by prejudice or by petulance, they were the grace and the ornament.

But if ever it should happen that the Gentlemen of this country should, in consequence of a similar negligence, experience a similar ruin, their blame would be aggravated beyond all comparison; because they have advantages, as well as motives, which French Gentlemen were not blessed with. Here we know what we have to support, a Constitution under which we and our fathers have enjoyed the most substantial blessings; and the permanence of which is our only tenure for public and private safety, for property, liberty, and life. A French Gentleman could not feel this; still less could he enforce it

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upon the ranks beneath him. He could not appeal to the experience of the manufacturer or the husbandman for their exemption from oppression, for their uniform enjoyment of the most rational liberty; he could not urge them not to hazard blessings which they had not yet enjoyed. An Irish Gentleman, on the contrary, has the *reason* and the *conscience* of the farmer and the tradesman ready retained to support him; he has every thing on his side but *ignorance*, which he may do much to enlighten, and *profligacy*, which he has still sufficient power to repress.

It is the glory of the British Empire, that the governments of which it is composed neither *do* nor *can* rest on the basis of mere executive power; and that in order to their stability, they require the constant and concurrent support of men of property and independence. The Government is in fact little more than the concentration of *their* strength, and they again are the natural conduits, the nerves and arteries of the Body Politic, through which alone Government can extend its energy through the system. If therefore men of property fail in this their legitimate function, the body must become paralytic; unable to repel attacks from without, or to throw off maladies from within; and the head and the
members,

members, the Government and the property must be in danger of perishing together.

I ask then, have the men of property and independence done in general, what they owe at once to the Government and to themselves? On the contrary, have they not in too many instances looked up to Government as the waggoner in the fable looked up to *Jupiter*, when he expected the aid of heaven without once putting his own shoulder to the wheel? When the votaries of sedition formed their well-known society in this metropolis, for the avowed purpose of annihilating the Constitution, (a society which was in its form an embryo *Convention*, and in its action the very ape of the Jacobin Club of Paris,) and when its myrmidons had already mustered, and paraded openly, carrying the menace of treason in their very name, exhibiting on their buttons the Irish harp *un-crowned*, and wearing *trowsers* that they might affect *Sans-Culotterie* even to the letter, the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council crushed this rank rebellion by a timely and temperate exercise of their constitutional power. When the same society had the audacity to call for "a national convention, to declare" (as in the delirious rant of France they termed it) "the national will," the legislature, by an act of parliament, which was only declaratory of the common law, and of the *common sense*

of the country, at once extinguished their ardour and their hope. But I again ask, what did the men of property throughout the kingdom do? Did they, as was done in England (where the necessity was much less,) and as the very practice of their adversaries might have suggested to them, form a constitutional league to counteract the anti-constitutional efforts of the lurking traitors, to administer antidotes as fast as *they* uttered poisons, and to meet each stimulus to *popular phrenzy* with an equally ardent appeal to *reason* and to *conscience*?—On the contrary, were not the flying sheets of the enemy (those miasms of mental pestilence) indolently permitted to make their way to every farmhouse, and to every cottage; and to appear, in the view of the multitude, who judge only from appearance, *unanswerable*, because no answer was given to them?

It was from these seeds, I scruple not to repeat, more than from any other cause (only aided by the indefatigable after-culture of malignant news writers) that the various enormities of Defenderism have arisen, to disfigure and disgrace our country; and that now, after having been mowed down by the scythe of justice in so many different parts of the kingdom, they burst forth again in the extremity of the North. And why do they thus appear? because the roots are

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are in the soil, and can only be extirpated by local exertion, by the vigilance and assiduity of those who are on the spot, of those who know the men and the circumstances of that part of the country.

To the men of property and independence then, in those Northern Counties, (but not to them exclusively, since what is their duty is more or less the duty of all) would I now take the liberty of addressing myself: “ For your own
 “ fakes, and for the sake of your country, do
 “ not feed by your inertness that mischief which
 “ your vigorous exertions would very soon and
 “ very easily suppress. Let not the leaders of se-
 “ dition suppose you are afraid of them, nor
 “ leave them any room to persuade those whom
 “ they are labouring to seduce, that you are
 “ disposed to yield to efforts which you find
 “ it impossible to repel. Take instruction from
 “ your adversaries, and learn from their exam-
 “ ple the best methods of counteracting them.
 “ They unite together to aid each other by mu-
 “ tual counsels, and to act more effectually, by
 “ acting in concert. Co-operate, you, to pre-
 “ vent mischief as closely and as steadily as they
 “ do to perpetrate it. They take care to know
 “ what *you* are doing, that they may guard
 “ against you; be you equally vigilant in ob-
 “ serving *them*, and make them know and feel
 “ that

“ that you do so. They build upon your inaction; the appearance of your activity will discourage and intimidate them.

“ They labour to make profelytes, and to instil their pernicious opinions into all they converse with. Meet them on this very ground; lose no opportunity of conversing calmly, but earnestly, with your neighbours, your tenants, and even your day-labourers, and of pressing upon them the wickedness and the madness of destroying trade, stopping the course of industry, and letting loose violence and rapine and murder to lay waste the country if they should be successful, and of bringing themselves to the gallows if they should not.

“ Farther, the persons whom you have to oppose, read and study that they may be able to preach sedition. They furnish themselves with the arguments of democrattick writers, and what they want in reason they make up by the imposing shew of superior knowledge. Do you also, take pains, if you are not already informed sufficiently, to acquaint yourselves with their usual artifices, and with the most conclusive replies to them; and when you meet any tract which you think calculated to undeceive and tranquillize the popular mind, be you as
“ assiduous

“affiduous in disseminating it, as the United
 “Irishmen have been in sending abroad those
 “of a contrary tendency. If even your success
 “should not always be striking, do not relin-
 “quish your endeavours; you will stagger even
 “where you do not convince; though you may
 “not overcome prejudice, you will inspire doubt
 “and awaken conscience; and even that deep-
 “rooted malignity on which reason cannot ope-
 “rate, will be awed and made despondent by
 “your spirit and perseverance.”

ESSAY X.

JUNE 30, 1796.

PERHAPS some of your readers will sup-
 pose that in the hints to country gentlemen in
 my last paper, I ought to have introduced the
 distresses of the poor, and urged their relief as
 one means of restoring tranquillity. My omis-
 sion in this respect did not arise from insensibi-
 lity to distress, let it exist where it may; but it
 proceeded from the deepest conviction that the
 present disturbances amongst the lower classes
 have

have not arisen from their distresses, and that to represent them as having done so is a gross and barbarous imposition.

Of what may have happened in a few particular districts, where from pasturage being pursued to the neglect of tillage, or from other local circumstances, the working-class may be liable to peculiar inconveniences, I pretend not to speak. The busy assiduity of faction may perhaps find some such instances, which may be held forth to ignorance and folly as specimens of the whole. But even in these, it can hardly be doubted but that the pictures which have been given, were grossly exaggerated, and that the petty insurrections which have occurred heretofore in such situations, were much more the effect of vicious habits and hereditary turbulence, than of any plausible provocation.

But waving these instances, (to which the general improvement of the country is even now applying a gradual but infallible remedy) let us turn our view to the kingdom at large, and see where those distresses are to be found, on which the fomenters of sedition have been so long ringing the changes. It is certain that in this, as in every other community, there must be a large proportion who have neither hereditary nor acquired wealth. This, however, has been the
 case

“affiduous in disseminating it, as the United
 “Irishmen have been in sending abroad those
 “of a contrary tendency. If even your success
 “should not always be striking, do not relin-
 “quish your endeavours. You will stagger even
 “where you do not convince; though you may
 “not overcome prejudice, you will inspire doubt,
 “and awaken conscience. And even that deep-
 “rooted malignity on which reason cannot ope-
 “rate, will be awed and made despondent by
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E S S A Y X.

JULY 7, 1796.

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 one means of restoring tranquillity. My omis-
 sion in this respect did not arise from insensibi-
 lity to distress, let it exist where it may; but it
 proceeded from the deepest conviction that the
 present disturbances amongst the lower classes

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have

have not arisen from their distresses, and that to represent them as having done so is a gross and mischievous imposition.

If those disturbances proceeded from distress, it would be natural to infer that the resentment of the supposed wrongs would be strongest where the wrongs themselves were most sensibly experienced, and that, of course, the most distressed districts of the kingdom would, in general, be the most turbulent. But has this been the case?— Does it appear that they who have been loudest in their complaints, have had the most plausible pretences to remonstrate against injuries; or that scenes of greatest agitation have been generally those of least happiness?

Let it be observed that I do not now speak of those local and petty insurrections with which this country has, at all times, been harrassed. I do not advert to sudden risings of mobs, to quarrels with excise-men or tythe-proctors, nor to associations of banditti for the mere purpose of nightly depredations. But I confine myself to Defenderism,* in its new and systematical form;

* The disturbances in the North which are here termed *Defenderism*, were in fact the re-invigorated movements of the Society of UNITED IRISHMEN, who after a temporary depression, about this time resumed their activity, and spread themselves through the province of Ulster, with greater spirit and more consistency of plan, than ever

form; to the methodized operations which have of late shewn themselves in different parts of the kingdom; which appear bound together by a secret and mysterious chain, and which, scorning all reference to specific grievances, regard Government as the one great grievance, and a democrattick revolution as the only remedy.

I ask, then, did this mischievous combination originate in distress? Its first movements were in a region where distress is as little known as in any in Europe, in the town and neighbourhood of Belfast. Here, it is notorious, the spirit of fraternization first embodied itself in a society, on the very face of which, even in its infancy, every revolutionary feature was boldly prominent. Its first voice was an outcry, not against personal or civil wrongs, for it felt none; not against supposed political faults or deficiencies, for of these it disdained to take cognizance, but against the existing constitution of the kingdom. "We have," said they who spoke for it, "no National Government." And the object it aimed at was correspondent to its complaint, an abolition of the Commons' House of Parliament, and the substitution of a mob-elected and mob-dependent
 L 2 assembly

ever before. This has appeared since, from the evidence laid before the Committees of both Houses of Parliament. But as there was no means of proving the fact at the time of writing the above, it was thought best to designate those commotions by the term which was then generally descriptive of plans of combination and insurrection.

assembly in its room. " We have gone," says they " to what we conceive to be the root of " the evil; we have stated what we conceive to " be the remedy. With a parliament *thus re-* " *formed*, EVERY THING *is easy*; *without it* NO- " THING *can be done*. And we do call upon and " most earnestly exhort our countrymen to fol- " low our example, and form similar societies in " every quarter of the kingdom."

What misery, can we conceive, did these first votaries of anarchy experience, when they rung this early alarm-bell to the yet slumbering turbulence of the multitude? Where they pining in want? Did they feel oppression? Did they lack one requisite of earthly comfort? Were they not in general, in prosperous trade, in increasing wealth, in circumstances, of which, in most instances, their births had given no promise?—What then excited this desperate appeal? Their own expressions abundantly inform us:—" With " a Parliament thus reformed," (that is, made menially subservient to the will of the populace) " *every thing is easy*, without it NOTHING CAN " BE DONE." In other words, " wealthy and " comfortable as our external circumstances may " be, we are, and will be unhappy, and will do " our utmost to make all others unhappy, until " we, the wise, eloquent, able politicians of " Belfast, shall have the Legislature under our " controul,

“ controul, and shall, of course, be able to do
 “ with it and with the country, whatever we
 “ think proper.”

If we could for a moment overlook the wickedness of such a project, we might amuse ourselves with the exquisite absurdity of those who conceived it. We have heard of persons who imagined they were turned into glass, or who thought their heads so enormous that they could not pass through ordinary doors. But these and all other instances of hypochondriacal insanity are but mere types and shadows of the far more preposterous case of warm yeomen and thriving traders, thus wretched in the midst of abundance, one moment calling themselves slaves, the next raging and foaming, and invoking the nation to rise and assist them, merely because they think they are born to rule the State, and are not permitted to carry their sublime purposes into execution.

And yet frantick as the call was, it thrilled upon the ready tuned heart-strings of the congenial spirits in this metropolis? A society was forthwith *organized*, in name, in principles, in pursuit, the same with its original, but in form approaching yet more nearly to the cast and figure of the French Assembly. Its officers were almost the same; the dignity and the powers
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of its President were an exact miniature likeness; and, lest even a ceremony should be wanting, the signal for profound silence with which all were bound implicitly to comply, was *the putting on of the President's hat*. It had, also its Committees, not only of accommodation and correspondence, but of *Constitution and Finance*, and it had already, by anticipation, the symbol of Republican Ireland (the same as on the buttons of its life-guards) as a seal to authenticate its acts. In a word it appears to have been not the mere model of what was intended but an actual provisional Constitution, put together in frame work, and as if placed upon rollers, just ready to be shoved into the place of the old Constitution, the very moment its demolition could be effected and its ruins cleared off.

But was all this ponderous machinery an expedient suggested by *distress*? Were they, who had projected it, the wretched and the unfortunate? Had they eloped from Bastiles, or were they made desperate by confiscations? Were they not on the contrary in profitable trades, if not already in opulent circumstances? If those of them who were in genteel professions (and such perhaps formed a numerous part), were not in all instances as eminent in their way as some others, surely they could not accuse the Government on that account. No act of Parliament
debarred

debarred them from taking fees either from clients or patients. What then made them so very miserable? We can only reply, that they were sick of the same disease with their brethren at Belfast, they were politically hypocondriacal; they imagined their heads too big for the situation they were in, and they only wanted to pull down the Government and the Constitution, that they might have room to move about at pleasure.

It would be impossible to speak seriously of these planet-struck politicians, were it not that the ridicule excited by their motives is lost in indignation at the wickedness of their expedients. To effect a purpose in which the height of folly mingles with the height of crime, as the monkey with the tyger, in Voltaire's picture of his countrymen, they call the unharnessed volunteers to re-muster and re-arm; they basely and barbarously attempt to debauch the soldiery, beseeching them as "partaking the passions and interest of the people," to remember, "that they were *once* Citizens—that *seduction* had *made them Soldiers*, but that nature had made *men*;" and they ply the populace throughout the kingdom with unceasing manifestoes, artfully adapted to meet their feelings, and raise their passions to madness, with the hope of a golden age,

age, if only a democratic Revolution could be once accomplished.

To give force to such applications, it was necessary, if they could not explain their own distresses, at least to mention some as felt by the multitude; and they make an attempt to do so in the last Address they ever dared to publish. This, they trusted, would remain as an inserted sting in the minds of the publick; and on such an occasion they would of course collect their whole store of venom. What then do they produce? What political grievances of the lower ranks do they point out as reasons why the poor should assist them in revenging their wrongs? Neither more nor less than the *Game Laws*, the *Stamp Act*, and the *Criminal Code*! These three are the sole instances of Tyranny which those sharp-sighted Politicians could enumerate, when for once they deemed it necessary to leave the vague generalities of declamation, and make some attempt at stating particulars.

Was there ever a more conclusive testimonial given to the Legislation of a Country? Or could there be a more decisive proof, that there were in fact no political grievances which could be specified; and that whatever distresses the lower ranks might feel, they could not by all the acuteness of malignity, be brought home to the Law
or

or the Constitution? Of the instances that are adduced, the two first are ridiculous: Who can imagine that the Game Laws abridge, even accidentally, the comfort of a single cottage in the community? And the Stamp Tax, it is well known, is laid on in this country with the most attentive care lest it should bear heavy on the poor. If the general equity of its principle needed any sanction, it has had one lately, in being adopted even by the republican legislature of America.

But there was at least no absurdity in bringing forward the Criminal Law: It lay directly in the way of the Gentlemen themselves, and afforded an argument apposite to the cause, and in character with the object: This, therefore, they dwell upon, while they did little more than mention the others.—“ We shall refer,” say they, “ to a much more important system, the Criminal Code. If the lower classes of the community had been represented in Parliament when their necessities first urged them to insurrection and outrage under the denominations of White Boys and Defenders, Parliament would have enquired into and redressed their grievances, instead of making laws to punish them with death. The acts which are prohibited by *many* of our laws are crimes, but the punishments inflicted by those laws are *greater*

“ *crimes* : The reason of this great disproportion
 “ is, that the rich man is never guilty of sheep-
 “ stealing, and the poor man,”—(i. e. the sheep-
 stealer*, who of course was to have been specifi-
 cally represented in the projected Legislature),
 “ has no one to plead his cause in the Senate.”

I have given this passage at large, because I conceive it to be a master-key to all the mysteries of Defenderism, and that it would of itself account for every mischief that has ensued. The authors of it must have been conscious, that they could hope for nothing from the quiet and virtuous in any rank, when they took this method of fraternizing with all the thieves and robbers and murderers in the country. To all others the argument was inapplicable; but with these it was infallible. Circulated as it was through every haunt of vice, the ruffian of whatever description, would at once, on the reading or the hearing of it, start up a politician. The midnight vagabonds who had associated to pursue some contraband traffic, or perpetrate some private revenge, would instantly see their horizon enlarged, be attracted by a new object, and begin to glow with enthusiastic ardour to demolish the Constitution. Here, villains of every description, from
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“ The shout of whiskey” said Mr. Grattan once in a lucid interval
 “ will return the members of the senate and elect a *felonious* repre-
 “ sentation.”

the callous highwayman to the trembling pick-pocket, would find a combining principle, a common rallying point, and would feel as forcibly as any of their brethren whether in Belfast or Dublin, that “*with a Parliament thus reformed, EVERY THING WOULD BE EASY, without it, NOTHING COULD BE DONE.*” Thus enlightened they would naturally look up to their friends and patrons who had so kindly sympathized with their grievances, and were ready to lead them on to liberty and happiness; and in thus looking, they would find every principle they had learned, illustrated by example. Those who were already in combination would see a body like themselves, bound together by an ambiguous *oath*, and shrouded in a veil of darkness, through which none but approved and attested brethren were permitted to penetrate: And those who had not yet associated, could hardly fail to comply with the earnest exhortation already sent abroad by the parent Society, entreating their countrymen to “follow their example, and form *similar Societies in every quarter of the kingdom.*”

I now call upon every man of common sense and common humanity to declare whether an address of this kind, so directly applied to the worst passions of the worst men, was not, in every point of view, as cruel, as villainous, as infernal a contrivance, as ever was suggested by political
 * depravity;

depravity;—whether this, alone, does not exhibit the true and real source of that spirit of disaffection and conspiracy by which the country has been convulsed;—and whether on the whole, it is not self-evident that the Society of United Irishmen has been the Parent Tree of Sedition and Treason, and that all the various combinations which have shewn themselves in different parts of the community, are but mere suckers from its roots.

ESSAY XI.



JULY 12, 1796.

MY readers may perhaps be surpris'd at my stating so many particulars about a Society which no longer appears amongst us. It is true, that that Society is to appearance dissolved; and they who compos'd it, no longer dare to send forth their manifestoes openly and avowedly through the country. But it may justly be fear'd that the disposition and views of the individuals continue the very same as before, that the venom instilled into the popular mind still operates, and, that of course there is as great necessity for providing antidotes against this lurking poison at this day, as there was while the Society was in acknowledged existence.

It is for this reason that I proceed to consider more particularly a part of their conduct which I conceive to be even more villainous than the attempts to seduce the soldiery, or to attach the ruffians of the community to their interest. I mean their endeavours to persuade all the distressed

tressed poor throughout the kingdom that their poverty and wretchedness have arisen solely from the present Government and Constitution, and that by overthrowing these they would obtain infallible relief from all their grievances at once.

“ Do you,” say they to the lower classes,
 “ find yourselves sunk in *poverty* and *wretched-*
 “ *ness*? Are you overloaded with *burdens* which
 “ you find yourselves little able to bear? Do
 “ you feel many grievances which it would be
 “ tedious and perhaps *unsafe* to mention? Be-
 “ lieve US THEY CAN ALL BE REDRESSED by
 “ *such a Reform as will give you your just propor-*
 “ *tion of influence in the Legislature, and BY SUCH*
 “ A MEASURE ONLY.”

I have already had occasion to dwell so much upon the obvious views of these men, that I am absolutely sick of the subject. I shall therefore, leave the reader to form his own conclusions, from the style and manner of this address respecting the motives of those from whom it proceeded, and shall confine myself to the following plain question: Is there any truth in the assertion that the poverty and wretchedness which are to be found in this country arise from the faults of the present Constitution; or might it be expected that if these gentlemen had gained their point, they would have been able to make good their engagements?

I have

I have already observed, that when it was peculiarly incumbent on them to be explicit with respect to grievances, they mentioned nothing more than the *Game Laws*, the *Stamp Act*, and the *Criminal Code*. When they named these only, was it for the reason given above, because "it would have been tedious and perhaps *unsafe* to be more particular?" The tediousness might have been avoided by mentioning only those that were most intolerable. And as to *danger*, it is inconceivable that they should deem it hazardous to state particular grievances, when, at the same moment, they were urging the overthrow of the whole Constitution. The only danger they could apprehend, was that of attempting to adduce what could not be substantiated. And in fact, what Law could they possibly have brought forward, the repeal of which would enable the cottager at a twelve month's end to purchase a new coat, or an additional blanket for his bed?

If the present Constitution were the cause of national unhappiness, that unhappiness would necessarily extend more or less over the whole kingdom; because the *whole nation* being subject to the influence of the Constitution, the effects arising from that influence must be as extensive as the cause. But will even the effrontery of faction assert, that misery appears generally throughout

out the nation? Will any man who has understanding, who has eyes, subscribe to so shameless a falsehood? If instances of distress exists are they not clearly confined to some particular places, while commerce, manufacture and agriculture are almost every where else extending and encreasing. What follows? Evidently that the distress complained of arises from accidental causes, and not from the Government or the Constitution.

But it will be said that *Poverty* in some degree or other prevails throughout the whole kingdom. True. And it has prevailed in every kingdom and in every age. The world has continued at least six thousand years, and no specific has yet been discovered for this universal malady. The Revolution has not abolished it in France; it is only the smallness of population and the vast extent of territory, that prevents its growth in America; and the extended commerce, the countless manufactures, the widely diffused comfort, and five millions annually expended in stated and occasional relief, have not abolished it in England. It is the inevitable result of full population, and nothing like a radical cure has ever been suggested for it, except, perhaps, that proposed by Citizen Bo:—"Be of good cheer, says he, France has enough for twelve millions of
 " people;

“people; the rest of the inhabitants must be put
“to death, and then provisions will be cheap.”

If the Irish Democrats should not wish to avail themselves of this humane suggestion, (whether they would or would not, heaven best knows) I should be glad to learn how they would set about the abolition of poverty? They would, of course, in the first instance reform the Parliament; that is, they would establish a Legislative Assembly, chosen annually by all the males in the community. But this would not operate like a charm; the poor man's fire would not burn more brightly, nor his meal of potatoes be a whit more favourable, merely because he had a thousandth share in the three hundredth part of a new legislature. His happiness would still depend on what this new legislature could effect in obtaining for him a deliverance from felt distresses, and an increase of actual comfort.

Suppose the Democratick Senate actually in a committee of ways and means for the abolition of *poverty* and *wretchedness*. Hope would be high-raised in the hungry multitude, and *Sans Cullottes* of every description would be pressing into the gallery, thronging every avenue with anticipatory transports at the plenty which was to drop from the heavens, or burst through the earth, at the call of their wonderful
 N representatives,

representatives; while unfortunate Aristocrats would be knocked on the head at every corner, for having so long kept them from happiness. But what would the sages do to realize the expectation they had excited? It is fair to put the question; in all their addresses I do not recollect one single intimation of any specific measure: And this is the more extraordinary, as, although they might not have had liberty to *act*, they had full liberty to *think* as they pleased, and to mature their schemes against the expected moment of power. Would they then resolve at once to make the working classes independent of labour, and give them an unlimited credit on the national purse? Or could they hope to secure them against the casualties incident to their station, by a decree against sickness and old age, against the uncertainty of the seasons and the frosts of the winter, and also against all vice, and folly and idleness? For so long as these natural and moral causes operate, the working classes must inevitably be subject to infinite distresses; and the Legislature which would effectually put an end to them, must be able to bind up free agency and new modify the laws of nature.


Nothing is more common with half-thinking men, than to confound the evils which arise necessarily out of the state of civil society, with those which spring from a bad Government, or
 a faulty

a faulty Constitution. But to men of common sense the distinction will be obvious. There are, and will be, in every community under heaven, deficiencies and inconveniencies, burthens and grievances which no laws can reach, and which of course no legislature can cure. Of these a great part may be palliated, but they cannot be eradicated—Providence has entailed them on our nature. Others may unquestionably be remedied, but not by Government; they arise from the misconduct of society, from the wrong exercise of general free agency; and it rests with society by its own voluntary exertions to remove them.

For instance, there is perhaps as much distress in the metropolis as in any one of the four provinces besides. A great deal of this undoubtedly comes within the class of unavoidable misfortune; but a great deal also arises at this moment from a cause equally remote from nature and politicks, I mean the influence of fashion: The whole tribe of staymakers, for example, must now be in extreme distress, because the female sex have thought proper to throw off their bodice. The silk and stuff-weavers must be equally wretched, from the universal wear of linen and muslin; the buckle-makers can be little less embarrassed from the general adoption of leather shoe-strings; and the unfortunate corps of hair-dressers

dressers are consigned over to misery and despair, by the new generation of *Roundheads*. All these together, must make up a deplorable mass of *poverty* and *wretchedness*. But is the Government or the Constitution to be blamed for this? Or, are the Democrats less blamable than any of their neighbours? Do they not enter as deeply into the fashions of the day as the nobility themselves? And is not the starvation of the last enumerated victims in particular, their own peculiar achievement? Were they now in power, consistency would bind them to denounce the Grecian waist, the calico robe, the shoe-string, and the crop'd head, as instances of incivism, and symptoms of an anti-revolutionary temper. Perhaps it is to keep their extraordinary humanity in full preservation for thus exercising it as *Rulers* of a *Republick*, that they do not now chuse to squander it while *Subjects* of a *Monarchy*.

ESSAY XII.



JULY 16, 1796.

I FIND myself unavoidably led, by the subject of my last paper, to make a few remarks on a publication of the *Whig Club*, which appeared in the *Dublin Evening Post* during the course of the last month. It is stated to be a Report from a Committee appointed by that Society to enquire into the situation of the labouring poor, and consists of a single resolution, which I copy verbatim from the D. E. P. of the 14th of June:

“ Resolved, That from the information we
“ have received from some counties in this king-
“ dom, it appears that the price of labour is not
“ adequate to the support of the labouring poor
“ in those counties.”

Without meaning the least disrespect either to the active or *passive* Members of the Whig Club, I cannot help observing, that this resolution, standing singly as it does, seems to be one of the most extraordinary publications that ever appeared

peared in the motly pages of a newspaper. It speaks of information being received, upon which it professes to be grounded, and yet in its manner it betrays a consciousness that that information was insufficient, and that it did not warrant explicitness. It furnishes no clue to come at facts by, no hint to direct candid enquiry; and yet it contains enough to strengthen discontent, and spread disaffection. In short, were it not that its repeated appearance forbids such a supposition, it might most reasonably be imagined that it had been published through mistake, as it is really little more than the blank form of a resolution, prepared to be filled up, when particulars should be ascertained, and occasion should require.

To what rational end could such an abortion serve? It is inconceivable that it should promote any one good purpose, and it is certain, that it may be made to answer a most pernicious one. It bears testimony to the existence of an alledged grievance, which has been uniformly resorted to as an apology for sedition; and yet the statement is so strangely indeterminate as to leave it in the power of the fomenters of disturbance to apply it to their purpose equally in every part of the kingdom. Those lurking agitators may now quote the authority of the *Whig Club*, to the peasantry of *Down, Antrim, Tyrone, Londonderry,*

ry, just as easily as those of *Longford*, *Westmeath*, or *Roscommon*: They may produce their usual oracle, the *Dublin Evening Post*, and say, "See here, the lords and great men who are now in *Dublin*, and who would say nothing in your favour, unless truth obliged them to acknowledge that you are wronged and abused, and cheated. They say this too, though they know you are just now striving to do yourselves justice; of course even they cannot deny that you are right, and therefore it cannot be doubted, but that you'll gain your end at last; you need have no fear that you'll be hanged now, when these great people own you have justice on your side."

The lower classes, every where, and whatever their situation may be, are easily enough persuaded that they are ill-treated by their superiors. They have the same passions, but not the same restraints, which operate in the higher ranks of the community. They are as selfish, and as partial to themselves, as any of those above them, while from ignorance they are incapable of distinguishing between their real interest, and what only tends to the momentary gratification of their vices or their follies. At this time, (as I have more than once mentioned,) the strongest marks of *Defenderism* that are to be seen any where, shew themselves

selves in some of the richest and happiest coun-
 ties, where no wants exist but those inseparable
 from society. But can it be supposed that the
 turbulent there do not find some pretexts to jus-
 tify their conduct, to themselves, and to one
 another? Can we doubt, but that those of them
 who pay the lowest rent, think still that they pay
 too much; and that they who receive the largest
 wages think they ought to have more? To such,
 this indefinite resolution of the *Whig Club* will
 appear just as applicable, and consequently will
 be matter of as mischievous encouragement as to
 the most really wretched cottagers in the pro-
 vince of Connaught.

Let the existence of distress be ever so incon-
 trovertible, yet if insurrection has become con-
 nected with it, though relief ought as far as pos-
 sible still to be afforded, it ought to be done
 with cautious hesitancy, and the most delicate
 management. The greatest distresses which the
 poorest inhabitants of this kingdom are liable to,
 cannot be so bad, so really injurious to them-
 selves, as an habitual spirit of insurgency. But
 the strongest encouragement that can be given to
 such a spirit, is to allow the insurgents room to
 think that they have gained their point by their
 own exertions. *Relief* in this way, however
 equitable in every other view, instead of confer-
 ring comfort, cherishes vice and misery, puts
 those

those who have received it into a worse state, on the whole, than they were in before, and makes provision for everlasting outrages and depredations. If then, the *Whig Club* or any other *Club* were ever so fully convinced that there was distress in the Country, and if their eagerness to relieve it were ever so ardent, still common sense and honest policy, and even mere mercy, would point out a quiet silent procedure, a secret investigation, a rigid abstinence from publicity, and, (when the time should be ripe for proposing the measure) such a mode of introduction as would have no tendency to connect the idea of relief with that of insurgency in the minds of those relieved.

It is so wonderful that the *Whig Club*, furnished as it is with grave and learned men, should overlook, or rather act in the most direct contradiction to, these obvious principles, that good-nature would be ready to attribute it to their want of experience as a charitable association.

But farther; let the existence of distress be ever so certain, it is no better than refined cruelty to hold out a prospect of relief, unless it be tolerably certain that the scheme of mercy can be realized. Does any such certainty exist at present? Or is there ground to believe that those who are in distress could be relieved by any Legislative
 ○ act?

act? Report says, that the present movements of the *Whig Club* are to pave the way for bringing into Parliament some such plan for regulating the wages of day labourers as has been talked of England. This may certainly furnish a good topic for opposition to display its philanthropy upon; but even at first view its utility appears highly questionable, and its practicability still more so. It is acknowledged that it is only in some places where such a measure could be necessary, that is, where the wages of labourers are unreasonably low. But what causes them to be low in such places? Is it not chiefly the want of employment? The price of labour, like that of every other marketable commodity, finds its own level. Where the work to be done requires all the hands in a country, but no more, then the pay is at its natural medium. When it requires more hands than can easily be had (as is the case in the United States of America) then wages rise proportionably. When it can be done by fewer hands, as is the case in the districts in question, the market of labourers becomes glutted, and the price falls accordingly. What then will a law for regulating wages avail, so long as there is not sufficient employment? We see now, in the far greater part of this kingdom, where there is enough of labour, that no such law is requisite; and by parity of reason, where there is not enough of labour, it will not be effectual.

It may even injure instead of serving; because it may make the little labour, which even as it is keeps the cottager from starving, still less. If low as the wages are, the occupant of land from a hope of greater profit turns from tillage to grazing, when the expence of tillage is encreased by law his motive to do so will be still stronger. The only rational prospect of relief must arise from the increase of tillage, which will remedy the evil by furnishing employment. And any law, however specious, which would check the progress of tillage, would be a curse instead of a blessing. But were such a law to be enacted, the probability is that it would do neither good nor hurt. Where most needed it would be least enforced, and the day-labourer would unite with his employer to elude it. The law could not oblige any one to *employ* labourers, and the unfortunate peasant would prefer six-pence, or even four-pence a-day, to nothing at all.

But the only *present* resource against this evil must be sought in the good sense and humanity of the employers; and probably it would have found a remedy in this ere now, if the spirit of insurgency had not been excited. But would any men in their reason think of raising wages at the call of an armed banditti? The suspension of *right* in such circumstances, if not *justice*, is something better; it is *mercy*. Whatever then tends

to promote turbulence, and to put off tranquillity, whether it be an inflammatory statement of grievances from the United Irishmen, or an indirect, indefinite sanction of such statements from the *Whig Club*, can amount to nothing else but the enlarging and rivetting of the calamity.

But the cautious tranquillizing plan which I have been recommending would not perhaps have answered *all* the purposes of the *Whig Club*. It would not have served to furnish ammunition for the next Parliamentary campaign, or rather for the exhibition of political squibs and sky rockets with which it may be preparing as usual to annoy administration and amuse the populace. It would not have been instead of a show-man's pipe and tabor to give notice to the mob of their entertainment for the evening. It would not, in short, have been a substitute for any of those hacknied expedients by which oppositions uniformly seek to obtain that degree of popularity, which may serve as a *fulcrum* for the *lever* that is to raise themselves to power.

In tranquil times, when society was in its natural state, such tricks and stratagems might have been pardonable, because they were likely to be followed by no very serious consequences. But *now*, when doctrines unknown to our fathers, have put public peace and safety in jeopardy,
when

when political madness is just as epidemic, and where it rises to its height is just as destructive as ever the pestilence was in the centuries that are past, and when even amongst ourselves there are alarming symptoms, which can only be suppressed by the strictest union and steadiest co-operation of knowledge and talent, of wisdom and virtue, at such a time to scatter ambiguous words amongst the vulgar, to seek for a little popular favour by appearing to flatter a false and dangerous misconception, to leave room, by laxity of statement and vagueness of expression, for the enemies of the country to infer, that their premises are admitted even by those who revolt from their practical conclusions, is a conduct which must excite astonishment in all who have understanding, and ought to raise the indignation of every man who has a heart.

But the extravagance of the folly lies in this, that all will be unavailing. The well-affected and judicious part of the community will see through and reprobate the clumsy juggle, and the *Democrats*, who have long shewn a fixed purpose not to be cajoled by any partial approximation, will despise it in their hearts. That these hate *all* who disagree with them can scarcely be doubted; but the cream of their malice seems to be kept for the *Opposition*. They abhor these in proportion to the closeness of resemblance, just

as

as the fiercest antipathies sometimes reign between animals of the nearest species: And most probably, were a Democratic Revolution now to be effected, those very gentlemen of the *Whig Club* would be amongst the first who would be promoted to the Guillotine or the Gibbet. It would not be amiss for them to keep this in mind, and to recollect that though they may not be quite as happy as if they were in power, and though this may lead them to see things around them through somewhat of a gloomy medium, (as a man who has the jaundice sees every thing tinged with yellow) still, that it might be far worse with them than it is, that it is better to be without *places* than to be without *estates* and without *heads*; and that (as SOLOMON says,) "A living Dog is better than a dead Lion."

ESSAY XIII.

ADDRESSED
TO
COUNTRY GENTLEMEN,
AND
OTHER PERSONS OF PROPERTY
IN THE
NORTH OF IRELAND.

Dec. 12, 1796.

GENTLEMEN! What are you doing? your country demands your strenuous and united exertions. A plan for preserving it alike from invasion and insurrection, by associating and arming the loyal Yeomanry, has been proposed, and has received the approbation of every honest and sensible man. Are *you*, in your several districts, using your best skill and influence to carry this scheme into immediate and effectual execution?

Gentlemen,

Gentlemen, if you are not active, your enemies are. The men who wish to overturn the constitution, the desperate few who hope, by means of the misled many, to share amongst themselves the power and the property of the kingdom, are indefatigable, mustering their forces by night, disseminating their principles by day, at fairs and markets, on the high road and in the hedge alehouse, in the tradesman's shop and the peasant's cottage. No expedient escapes them that subtlety can suggest. To inspire awe and secure secrecy, they have sealed their combination with the abused religion of an OATH. To excite vulgar curiosity, they affect profound mysteriousness, and assume significant words and signs, understood only by their sworn associates. That they may pervert the timid as well the vicious, they have recourse equally to threatenings and promises. And to attach the idle and the indigent, they hold out the prospect, that if their design was once accomplished, the wealth and comfort which they represent as now unjustly monopolized by a few, would flow down even amongst the lowest of the people, in rich and ceaseless abundance.

Could any thing be contrived with more villainous ingenuity both to attract the ignorant multitude in the first instance, and to insure their aid in every desperate measure, to which their
 leaders

leaders might wish to direct them? An enthusiasm so congenial to every profligate and every foolish propensity, could not fail to spread amongst the lower classes; and a populace actuated by such a spirit and combined by such principles, if once strong enough to burst forth, would as certainly destroy all safety, and make a wreck of all property, as a flood of *Lava* issuing from a burning mountain, would be sure to desolate the surrounding country. Form to yourselves the idea of such an event; and then ask your own understandings, whether in these circumstances, your most valuable acquisitions, the dearest comforts of your life, or even your life itself, would be worth a day's purchase?

Already has the mischief spread from an inconsiderable society to an unsummed multitude; it has gone on from parish to parish and from county to county, like "the pestilence that walketh in darkness;" and fresh numbers of the peasantry are every day catching the contagion. If no effectual check be provided, is it not self evident, that it will advance incalculably; forming still a wider and a wider circle, until the malignant principle shall have diffused itself through all the lower ranks of the community?

Gentlemen, is it possible, that any individual amongst you should look with unconcern on so
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alarming a prospect? Believe me, on you alone it depends to realize or defeat it. There is but one infallible expedient for coming at the root of the evil; and that is, by plainly proving to them and to all whom they are labouring to seduce, that the *people* are against them as well as the government and the laws, that all that is rational, virtuous, or respectable in the community are agreed in detesting their principles, and are resolved to counteract and crush their projects by a *union* and *co-operation* as firm for the preservation, as theirs for the destruction, of property, of liberty, and of life.

For such a *union* and *co-operation* the plan of the associated Yeomanry furnishes the fairest and most promising opportunity. And in the conduct of such of you, as have exerted themselves to give it effect, as well as in the signal success which has attended their endeavours, I discover a cheering pledge of re-established order, of re-animated credit, of annihilated rebellion.

Till now, those who call themselves *United Irishmen* had but too much room to persuade their followers, that placemen and pensioners and writers for Government newspapers, were the only persons in the country who were decidedly against them. "If the independent men," they might say "and the respectable Yeomanry of Ireland were disposed to resist us, they
" would

“ would learn from our example to unite with
 “ one another to counteract our plans ; they do
 “ no such thing, they suffer us to proceed with-
 “ out almost the shadow of efficient opposition.
 “ They of course wish us success, or they are
 “ neutral, or they think opposition fruitless. In
 “ either case we have little to fear ; the Military
 “ or Militia may march against us because they
 “ are commanded ; but if the rest of the com-
 “ munity be our friends, or at worst mere look-
 “ ers on, the conflict will be short, and our vic-
 “ tory certain.” Such assuredly have been their
 statements, and when the peasant and day-labour-
 or on whom they were urged, neither saw nor
 heard any thing to contradict them, could they
 hesitate to become partners in so promising an
 undertaking, so irresistible an enterprize ?

But in proportion as the yeomanry associations
 extend, the deception will vanish. The dema-
 gogues will see, that the constitutional spirit of
 the country was not dead, as they had fondly
 deemed ; but that it only slumbered that their
 insolence hath awoke it. Bodies of gentry and
 yeomanry, voluntarily formed for the defence of
 the Constitution and the Laws, as well against
 factious insurgents as foreign invaders, will speak
 a language which the dullest must comprehend,
 and the most obstinate be unable to refute. Al-
 ready they have shewn how fully they feel its

force by the threats and execrations with which their publications teem. And on their own principles they are right. In the re-invigorated circulation of constitutional sentiments, and the re-kindled ardour of loyal feelings, which this safe and salutary fraternization will extend through the country, they anticipate the sure decay of their own delusive influence, and in the clang of arms, taken up at once spontaneously and loyally, they hear the knell of their high-fed hopes. If the undertaking needed a testimonial, *their* reprobation of it would be a decisive proof of its value and utility.

Yes, I repeat it; to those spirited and judicious men who have come forward in this equal exercise of patriotism and humanity, the country will, in all human probability, be indebted for its safety, and perhaps for its existence. But what shall we say of those who still stand aloof, and do nothing, though they acknowledge the wisdom of the measure, and the pressing exigence of the occasion; and though they are restrained by no one difficulty, which those who are now most successful, did not feel at the beginning?

But instead of censuring I shall expostulate. I ask you, then, who are indolent, while others around you are active, whether the present situation of the country (the internal dangers of which

which are at this moment aggravated by the threats of invasion) does not demand the exertions of all its well disposed inhabitants? If it does, what would be the consequence, if all persons of property followed your example? Could you conceive a more infallible method of destroying themselves and the community? Grant even that there should be no invasion, that you had nothing to apprehend except from faction at home; still, if you sit inactive by your fire-sides, while the malcontents are busied in disseminating their principles, and maturing their plans, what can you look for, but their infallible success, and your own inevitable ruin? Look impartially at the consequences of such a conduct, and see whether you can vindicate it for one moment at the tribunal of your reason and your conscience?

Are you restrained by *fear*, by the apprehensions of injury to your properties or your persons? Think, I pray you, on the folly of yielding to this unworthy principle. If you are afraid now, what will become of you hereafter? Confine not your view to the dangers of the present moment, when so much greater dangers may be rapidly approaching. Resistance to popular violence must always be attended with some risk; but the longer the evil is winked at, it must still acquire greater strength, and opposition to it be of course attended with still greater hazard. Is it
not

not then the height of madness, by pusillanimous forbearance, to nurse the infant sedition into an irresistible strength, of which *you*, no less than your neighbours, must be the helpless victims?

Strange as at first view it may appear to you, I hesitate not to assert, that the greater you conceive your present danger to be, the more pressing necessity is there, for your facing it at once. Because, the greater malevolence your enemies discover *now*, the more certain you are of your own ruin, if by your timidity you suffer them to gain a power of injuring you equal to their will. You now fear your house being broke, or your barn, or stable, or turf-stack, or hay-stack being burnt, and therefore you'll do nothing. Do you not see, that by this means you tell them in the plainest terms, "you are the strongest, and you may do as you please?" But by thus surrendering at discretion, are you safe? Will house-breakers and house-burners when once in the plenitude of power, suffer you to live undisturbed in return for your neutrality? Will not even *they* despise you for your cowardice, while they will hate you for what they know you wished to do if you had dared; and will they not of course deal out as hard measure to you as to the most active of your neighbours? Think whether the reprieve of a few weeks, which you now so meanly purchase, will be then any very substantial consolation.

You

You have perhaps received threatening letters, telling you of the vengeance which awaits you if you proceed in the performance of your duty. Prove that you despise them, and ten to one you will receive no more of them. Listen to them, shew by your conduct that they have had their effect, and in all probability you will next be told, that if you do not leave a sum of money under a certain stone, or if you don't deliver up your arms without asking questions to a certain person who will come to a fixed place by night to receive them, or perhaps if you do not take the United Irishman's Oath, or a hundred other such things (for there need be no end to them, if you encourage them by your fear) your house will be burnt and your stock destroyed. Is it not then infinitely better, even on the ground of present safety, to act at once a manly and decided part? By doing so you will animate the well-disposed around you (who may probably at this moment be only waiting for your call) you will fix the wavering, and you will dishearten your enemies. When you have thus prepared yourselves to act in concert, and the malcontents see a phalanx formed against them, rest assured they will shrink from the conflict; and *your* persons and properties will probably be the safest in the country. The experience of all ages has proved that in times of danger the chances are infinitely in favour of the resolute and the undaunted.

But

But even in the most zealous efforts you will be liable to fail, if you do not proceed with judgment as well as activity. The seeds of the mischief lie in the *minds* of the lower classes, and you must work upon their reason or you will strive to little purpose. It is not enough that you ride hastily through your tenantry, or the tenantry of the person for whom you are in charge, and tell them, "On such a day you must all come to me and take the oath of allegiance." No, you must talk to them calmly, hear their objections with patience, and in plain and dispassionate language shew them the interest they have in maintenance of public order and that regular administration of justice, by which the meanest and the lowest are protected as well as the richest and the greatest, and press upon them the wickedness and the madness of destroying trade, stopping the course of industry, and letting loose violence and rapine and murder; all which you may easily prove to them must inevitably arise from a successful invasion from abroad, or from the ascendancy of house-breakers and house-burners and midnight assassins at home.

To such views no honest man will long be insensible. The oath of allegiance, taken in consequence of being convinced of such truths, will be the proper and natural antidote against the poison couched in the insidious oath of the

United

United Irishmen. And by thus confirming the tie by which all good subjects are bound to the King and the Laws, and uniting them to each other in a mutual league for their own and their country's protection, you will give a new energy to the body politick, before which every attempt, whether of sedition or invasion, will be abashed and discomfited.

Gentlemen, I congratulate the country that this good work is well and happily begun. In the name of God, let it not stagnate with any one of you. Any force will suffice to plunder and enslave you, while you remain indolent, insulated individuals; active and united you may bid defiance to the world. Resist not then for one day longer, the imperious call of honour, of interest, of humanity, of religion. Hesitate not to determine whether you will be the *preservers* of all you value, and all you love; or the *betrayers* of every trust that Providence has committed to you, as husbands, as fathers, and as rational beings.

ESSAY XIV.

ADDRESSSED
TO THE
UNITED IRISHMEN,
IN THE
PROVINCE OF ULSTER.

JAN. 6, 1797.

AT this awful moment when an Enemy's fleet is hovering about our coasts, hoping to carry fire and sword and devastation through this hitherto peaceful country, is it possible that any persons should be cold and unconcerned? Or worse still, is it possible that any should be disaffected and ill-disposed, flattered with the prospect, that in the general confusion a revolution might be brought about, and the Constitution be new modelled according to the wishes of the *United Irishmen*?

Whoever you are, that harbour such a thought, and who in that expectation wish the French to come, or intend if they were here, not to resist them,

them, I tell you, you are pursuing an infernal Will 'ith the wisp, into a gulph without a bottom. You may delude yourselves with ten thousand fancies, but if you think to gain any one object from the French succeeding in their plan of invasion, except desolation and misery to your country and to yourselves, (misery of which neither you nor your children, nor perhaps your children's children might see the end) you are the most infatuated mortals on the face of God's Earth.

Suppose for a moment that what your leaders tell you, of the grievances you suffer, were true; still, could you persuade yourselves that you would find a remedy for those grievances in the introduction of an army of foreign invaders? Such acts of madness have been committed; but what followed? History will tell you that in every such case, the wretched country was in the first instance desolated by wars, which raged on till they went out like a fire for want of fuel, and in the end, the foreigners became masters of the soil, and made "hewers of wood and drawers of water" of those who had let them in.

Irishmen! have you forgot the annals of your own country, the stories of old times, with which, when you were in a happier temper of mind, you used to amuse one another at the winter fire-side? Would you now with your eyes open, put yourselves in the state in which your forefathers were,

when from their quarrels amongst themselves the Danes got into the country, and became the lords and masters of the natives? Do you think that human nature is not the same now that it was then; and that the French, if once let in amongst you with arms in their hands, and in a state to give law, would not be just as insolent and overbearing to *you*, as the Danish soldiers were to your ancestors? But let them do as they pleased, you would be at their mercy: All your resource would be to send a pitiful deputation to the French assembly to implore compassion, and wait in trembling suspense till it should decide upon your fate. Such at this instant is the degraded condition of the Netherlands and of Holland. * Would you then, ye deluded Irish, if it were in your power, add yourselves, as one more, to the enslaved dependents of those headstrong, haughty demagogues? Would you, I say, part at once with your successful industry, your high-road security, your fire-side comforts, your real independence, to be for once, in the honeymoon of your new alliance, greeted with a fraternal embrace, and have your messengers admitted to the honours of the sitting?

But the comfort is, that after all, the doom of your country is not in *your* power, and that
as

* And such at this instant, (Sept. 29, 1798) is the condition of the ill-fated Switzerland, over whose miseries the good *Lavater* has just poured forth his pathetic and heart-rending complaint.

as matters actually stand, this horrid prospect is but a frightful dream. Neither you nor the French to help you, would be able by your utmost, united efforts to produce more in the political state of this kingdom than a short-lived disturbance. You may, if you will, lie down flat and let the flood of invasion roll over your sluggish bodies into the midst of this rich and flourishing province; or, still more lost to sense, you may yourselves start up, and help on the havock by frantick insurrection. But you will end your career in disappointment and the gibbet. You may injure, deeply injure, the credit, and the comfort of your country. But flatter yourselves as you may with the delusion of an Irish Republick, the *Irish Constitutional Monarchy* will be more than a match for you all.

Before you can abolish this, you must sink Great Britain in the ocean, or you must shove Ireland off its rocky foundations, and sail it down to the French coast, or out half way to America. Placed as you are by the hand of omnipotence, you may work yourselves into convulsive struggles; but the chain that binds this country to its true interest is the chain of Nature; you cannot dissolve it.

What have you to oppose to the wealth of that country, the merchants of whose metropolis

lis so shortly ago came forward with a loan of Eighteen Millions, and an offer of as many more; and a single sea-port of which, (Liverpool) as a proof of what might be done on an emergency, offered Nine Millions? What have you to oppose to that Navy which for a century has rode triumphant on the ocean; to whose power at this day hostile fleets have struck without firing a gun, and to whose extension you can place no barrier? What have you to oppose to that fervency of Union with which every true British heart amongst its mass of inhabitants would leap forth in concert with their King and Government to assist the loyalty of Ireland?*

Yes, the loyalty of Ireland. Do you imagine the loyal men are few or impotent, or that if even they stood unaided, you would be able to crush them at your will? Drop for a moment your self-flattering presumption, and see with your own eyes who your opponents are. They are the whole landed interest of Ireland; ninety nine out of an hundred of those who possess property of one hundred pounds a year and upwards. They are the mercantile interest of
Ireland,

* How gloriously has the confidence here expressed, been realized in the magnanimity of those gallant regiments of English Militia, who have so nobly sacrificed their safety and comfort to assist this country in the hour of peril, and who in conjunction with our own native loyalty, form at this moment the impregnable bulwark of Ireland.

Ireland, with a few despicable exceptions, of men not merchants in reality but mere assumers of the name. They are the respectable inhabitants of the metropolis almost to a man; gentlemen, merchants, men in professions or in trade, all, not only resolute in the common cause, but actually arming; the very youth of the University, forsaking for a time, their peaceful studies, and forming themselves under their own tutors into a military corps, for the defence of their country. They are the humane, the rational, the well principled, the lovers of safety and domestick comfort, in a word, the men of common sense in every part of the kingdom, who, let their lesser differences, religious or political, be what they may, know and feel that the existence of every thing they hold dear upon earth depends on the repelling of invasion from abroad, and the crushing of treason at home.

And these, backed by an army of military and militia such as Ireland never before could boast of, and who have already shewn an ardour to attack the enemies of their country which cuts up by the roots every hope you might have harboured of their disaffection to the Constitution; by a body of armed yeomanry, horse, and foot, already not less than forty thousand, spreading at this moment, in spite of all the efforts of the Demagogues, into places lately the most adverse

adverse to the measure, and certain to spread to an extent greater even than that of their genuine predecessors, the Volunteers of *Eighty-Two*; and let me add once more, backed by the wealth, the power, the unanimity of the British Empire.

I ask again what have you to oppose to all this force, which needs only the pressure of the occasion to bring it into united action? Will you set against it, the *wisdom* or the *spirit* of those leaders by whose unceasing exhortations you have been enlightened into discontent, and made frantick with the hope of you know not what? Do you even know who they are? Could you fix upon the persons who sit in the dark centre of your combination, and regulate its mysteries and its movements? They have sent amongst you songs, toasts, creeds, constitutions, all kinds of papers, to induce you to start up and fight for them; but have they let you see *themselves*? No; while they wish you to run your necks into an halter to serve their infernal views, they themselves skulk behind; so that if the game should in the end go against them, they may escape to France or America, and leave you, whom they have deluded, to be the sacrifice*. Would you then commit yourselves to these invisible champions, and

* Has not this been realized almost to the letter, in the submission of so many of the leaders of the conspiracy, and in the confessions of *Mc'Nevin*, *Emmet*, and *O'Connor*?

and embark on their blind assurances, in destroying the peace and safety of your country first, and being hanged for it afterwards?

Do you trust to France for permanent aid against the mass of power that would be opposed to you? If you do, you are your own deceivers and betrayers. Can you suppose that the Allies of the absolute Monarchy of Spain would trouble themselves for a moment what Government you had, except so far as they could make you the instruments of their own ambitious purposes? I tell you it is not to serve *you* but to injure Great Britain that they would come hither; and their one object would be to set you all a going in the blessed work of butchering one another, and then leave you to your fate.

If you have the smallest doubt whether their present attempt is any thing more than a last desperate effort to split that Empire with which they feel themselves unable to cope, or if you think that they have any wish to share happiness with you, read their own account of the precious blessings they have to impart. I will give it to you in their own words, as they stand in a message sent from their Directory to their Council of Five Hundred on the 10th of the last month: It has been published in all the newspapers, and I solemnly assure you every syllable of it is their own.

“ The multiplied wants of the Republic call
 “ imperiously upon you to display and employ
 “ all her resources. Every branch of the public
 “ service experiences the utmost distress. The
 “ defenders of the country suffer all the horrors
 “ of nakedness. The hospitals are in want of
 “ fuel, medicines, and all other necessaries. The
 “ public alms and workhouses experience the
 “ same want ; and for this cause they reject the
 “ needy and infirm citizens, who usually found
 “ an asylum in them. The public roads are im-
 “ passable, and the communications interrupted.
 “ From one end of the Republic to the other,
 “ the Judges and Administrators are reduced to
 “ the dreadful dilemma, either to expose them-
 “ selves and their families to the utmost misery,
 “ or to sell themselves to intriguers. Murder
 “ and assassination are organized in many places,
 “ and the administration of police, without ac-
 “ tivity and without force, is unable to check
 “ these disorders.”

Gracious heaven ! is this the happiness of Re-
 publican France, and are these the Allies from
 whom you have been taught to expect an abso-
 lute heaven upon earth ? Use your reason, my
 deluded countrymen, and compare the state of
 things at home with this melancholy picture
 which your friends in France have drawn of
 themselves with their own hand. They by their
 own

own account are sunk into the lowest wretchedness; you are rising more rapidly in all the requisites of national comfort than any other nation in Europe. You may crack your brains, or break your hearts, because you cannot alter the laws with a *wish*, or because you *pay* rent instead of *receiving* it, or indeed with equal reason, because you have not the strength of Lions or the swiftness of Eagles; but go to a surer standard than your own misguided fancy. Look back upon the circumstances of your own neighbourhood twenty years ago. How many of you were then poorly lodged and cloathed, and backward in the world, who are now warm, and independent and money making? Look only at a market or a fair, and see the striking difference in the very dress of the people *then* and *now*. Cast your eyes around; see how many snug and comfortable houses have arisen on every hand. Perhaps all circumstances considered, there is not a country in the world which has advanced within the last hundred years, as this country has done during the last *twenty*. Would you then, if you were left to your own choice, exchange the real advantages you enjoy, and the incalculable increase of them to which you may fairly look forward, for that misery and poverty which the Governors of the French Republic themselves confess to be the portion of their *regenerated* country?

Why are not *you* more rich and more comfortable to-day than you actually are? It is chiefly from this cause, because your Country was formerly wasted by war. For the last hundred years you have been more free from this scourge than any other Nation in the World; and during that time you have been rising with encreasing growth from the desolation of former ages. The Empire with which you were connected, has been at war again and again. But you heard not the roar of battle; your peaceful fields were unpoluted with blood. Sheltered by a defence, to which you merely contributed, but with the support of which you were not burthened, (the *British Navy*,) you sat tranquil and secure, while Europe has shook with repeated hurricanes; but which were softened to a murmur, before they reached your ear. Are you, then, tired of this invaluable exemption, and do you wish to be driven back in the course of a few months to a state which it will take another century to repair, or more probably may never be repaired? If this be indeed your wish, if you prefer wretchedness and beggary to rapidly increasing comfort, you have taken the true means to accomplish your object; by encouraging a foreign enemy to take advantage of your frantic divisions; and you will seal your doom by now sitting still, and letting that Enemy get footing in your country.

Irishmen of the North, who call yourselves *united*, but who have in truth *conspired* against your own true interest, your Country and your God, Heaven has been kinder to you than you have been to yourselves. The winds, which have dispersed the *fleet* that hoped to surprize this country by the suddenness of its attack, have left you an happy interval for reflection and repentance. Seize then this valuable opportunity; cast from you with honest scorn the wild expectations you have been taught to entertain; and break at once through the villainous engagements which at this moment of peril would make you the betrayers of Ireland. Speak out, say, swear, (for honest men will swear what they say) that you are ready to repel the foe at the hazard of your lives. Thus may you yet deserve well of your country. Your return to reason will save the labour and the bloodshed of resistance. For the enemy need not be taught, that they might as easily cut a way through the centre of the solid earth to get at the other side of the globe, as penetrate into Ireland through the rampart of a unanimous people.

ESSAY XV.

—
ADDRESSED

TO THE

UNITED IRISHMEN

IN AND ABOUT BELFAST

WHO JOINED IN THE LATE RESOLUTIONS.

FEB. 1, 1797.

THE alarm for the safety of the country having for the present subsided, it is impossible not to pay some attention to your particular conduct at the moment of agitation. When the fate of Ireland seemed to tremble in the balance, and every honest mind was on the stretch to avert the impending horrors, you too came forward. But for what purpose? Was it to lay down your jealousies and discontents at the altar of national safety, and join heart and hand in the measures taken for the common defence? No, but it was to counteract the efforts of your better disposed neighbours, and to turn the public occasion which

which their honest zeal afforded you*, into an opportunity of insulting Government by a proposal in the very teeth of the laws, and of adding fresh fuel to that flame which your own arts had kindled in the bosom of the community.

I will not assert, what has been so long suspected, that you yourselves were the inviters of invasion and the sworn allies of the foe. But if you were, how could you have acted more fully up to the character? Cautious as you have ever shewn yourselves measuring your every word by the letter of the law, that you might effect the purposes without incurring the penalties of sedition, you would not, at the most critical moment of your career, have made the false step of premature discovery. Had you lighted the beacons of insurrection before the invaders were even sure of landing, you would instantly have blasted their projects and your own hopes. Your first

* A meeting of the Inhabitants of BELFAST, held on the 31st of December, 1796, is here alluded to. It had been convened by the loyal gentlemen of that place, in order to adopt a plan of constitutional defence, against the then impending invasion, but the disaffected, (who were easily able to obtain a majority of persons called *Inhabitants*) perverted it to their usual purposes of counteracting Government, and inflaming the publick mind. The meeting of course ended in a string of insidious resolutions, one of which was, that "they were ready if permitted by Government, to arm in like manner as the *Volunteers*" that is, they were ready to *take arms* if they were allowed to do so, without any oath of allegiance, or any obligation to military obedience, and in *direct violation* of the provisions of the Yeomanry act, passed a month or two before.

first rebellious movement would have called forth a force against you, which as yet you could have had no prospect of resisting; and before your foreign friends could have come to your aid, you would have been the victims of your own temerity.

What then could you have done but what you actually did? You shewed your followers that you were neither indolent nor wavering; that you were on the watch to seize every advantage offered you by the moment, and were ready to go all lengths for the accomplishment of your object. Should any of them have been embarrassed with remaining scruples, you took a method of settling their minds which *Machiavel* himself could not have outdone. An offer of arming on terms which you knew beforehand to be inadmissible, was a master-piece of crooked policy for persuading your adherents, that being refused the means of self protection by Government, they were free in all conscience, to do what they could for themselves, and of course to form a junction with the invading army.

It might be wished for the credit of human nature, that your conduct could be ascribed to some principle short of systematic treachery. But is there a single circumstance to turn the scale of opinion even thus much in your favour? Is there in the language you have used, one trait of candour,

dour, or the slightest mark of honest though misguided minds? Is it not on the contrary a clumsy effort of dissimulation, detestable for its intention and contemptible for its execution?

You have asserted "that a determination firmly manifested on the part of Government," to gratify the popular desire "would conciliate the affection of the people whose wish is *Reform alone*." In your mouths what is this but the vilest prevarication; a despicable playing on the word *Reform*, which from its looseness of meaning may be applied to any thing from an Octennial Bill up to an absolute Democracy? You know in your hearts that nothing consistent with the *existence* of the Constitution would conciliate you. As United Irishmen you stand pledged not to rest satisfied with any thing short of *annual elections, every man a voter, and every man capable of being elected*. You may call this *Reform* if you will; but you would be amongst the first fools in the Universe if you were not aware that a stab through the heart could not be more fatal to a living animal, than *such a reform* would be to the present Constitution. And we should be still greater fools, if after reading your various publications we did not see, that your certainty of its being thus fatal to the Constitution is the sole cause of your unabating eagerness in pursuing it.

On the late occasion however, you did not deem it to your purpose to go beyond an indirect intimation of what *you* meant by *Reform*. You wished to make as large a muster as you could; and you were aware that some would join you in a general wish, who were not yet sufficiently enlightened to adopt your particular definition.

But do you suppose that any who are acquainted with your practices will not see through this despicable artifice? Will you persuade us that you have had no hand in publishing, and dispersing amongst your fraternity, those books of Democratic Songs*, which inculcate by every mode of address to the imagination and the passions, that hereditary legislators (such as our King and House of Peers) are hereditary absurdities and curses; that the happiness of mankind depends on the abolition of kings, and priests, and thrones, and titles; that the French are the great benefactors of the human race; and that from their assistance alone, Liberty, and the restoration of the Rights of Man are to be expected? I state nothing from hearsay; I have had the execrable volumes in my hands, and saw in some of them with honest indignation, talents which might have been usefully employed, prostituted to the most infernal purposes. Is there one of you who does not know the books I allude to? What then must be your
hardened,

* *Paddy's Resource*.—*The Irish Harp tuned to Liberty*. &c. &c.

hardened effrontery, after having as you hoped sufficiently possessed your own sworn associates with your real principles, to attempt, by merely slipping them aside like a dark lantern under an affassin's cloke, and putting on the mask of ambiguity, to pass yourselves off for moderate reformists and friends to the Constitution !

Will you dare to disown the publications I refer to, and call for those direct proofs of their being yours which your subtlety has made it impracticable to obtain ? Then I take you on the ground of an avowed declaration, in which, at a moment when the phrenzy of your zeal overpowered your discretion you disclosed to us the whole extent of your views. It deeply concerns all who have not a taste for rapine and massacre to pay attention to this, for never before was the real object of such disturbers of society as yourselves so exquisitely developed. " In fourwords" say you, " lies all our power, *universal emancipation and representative legislature*, and yet we " are assured, that on the pivot of this principle, " a *Convention*, less, a *Society*, less still, a SINGLE " MAN, would be able first to move, and then " to raise the World !"

The expressions scarcely require a comment. They shew at once both your object and your motives with a strength, which no colouring

could heighten. Your wish is, that the majority told by the head should elect the legislature, in such a manner as to secure a constant, inevitable, popular controul. And you desire this, because you think, that if the populace could only controul the legislature, you would be sure of leading the populace, and of course be possessed of unlimited political power. Such, if we can give credit to your own words, is the secret spring of your pretended patriotism. "On the pivot of this principle" you say, (that is by means of your plan of *reform*,) "a Convention" (the thing, were you once in power you could call at any time,) "less, a Society" (yourselves the thing you actually are) "less still, a single man" (any active citizen who might happen to catch the ear of the mob; the gloomy spirit whose pen was used on the occasion doubtless had himself in view,) "would be able first to move and then to raise the world;" i. e. in the lowest sense of the words, might do whatever you, or *any* of you who ruled for the hour might wish, with law or government, with persons or property, with individuals or the community.

This is not Republicanism; it is not mere Democracy; but it is the high delirium of the very fever of Anarchy. It is what those disgraces of human nature, *Chabot*, *Danton*, *Marat*, or the wretch *Robespierre* himself, never had
the

the audacity to utter. It is a deliberate preference of the greatest curse that can befall society, for the sake of its most deplorable consequences.

Good God! what the originators of French democracy now look back upon with horror, you, from the very lust of power, the devil-like ambition of ruling in hell rather than obeying in heaven, have looked forward to with rapturous delight! In portraying the visions of your perturbed fancy, you have even marked the progress which the revolutionary Demon traced for his blood-stained Bacchanals, in that devoted country, amid the ruins of human happiness. There "a *Convention*" put down the monarchy and the constitution; "a *Society*" (the Jacobin club) rose above the convention; and last "a *single man*" ruled the Jacobins, the Convention, the Nation. And all "on the pivot" of your very "principle" *Universal Emancipation and Representative Legislature*; a principle which France even already, with her eyes but half open from her sanguinary debauch, has renounced and reprobated as her pest and her disgrace.*

With such a bewitching prospect in your view; frantic already with the certainty that by the completion of your plan, each of you would be
forthwith

* See the Speech of *Boissy D'Anglas*, on reporting from the Committee appointed to form the Constitution of 1795.

forthwith transformed into a political *Archimedes*, moving even the world at your will, by the omnipotence of your machinery, who could wonder that you should rage and chafe at the checks which the Legislature has placed in your way? It was not more extraordinary that you should go mad at the Convention act, the Gunpowder act, the Infurrection act, and those other acts which never would have been thought of but for *You*, than that a murderer should rage at being deprived of his dagger at the instant when he hoped to perpetrate an affassination.

But whatever hopes you may have had from the calamities of your country, Providence has for the present defeated them. Would to God you could yet avail yourselves of this opportunity for reflection! But if this be impossible, if you are lost to every feeling of justice, humanity, and common sense, then I say it is the instant duty of every man in the community to exert himself for his own, his family's and his country's safety. Your combination must be put down, or the country is undone. To keep terms with you, to hesitate in speaking of you as your enormities deserve, or in counteracting you by the most open and decisive opposition, would be a degree of baseness little short of your own.

Gracious Heaven! To what a state have you already brought this once peaceful province!
Like

Like the first deceiver of man you have stolen into the retreats of innocence and tranquillity, and changed them by your pestilent suggestions into scenes of turbulence and guilt. You have robbed the poor of their own peculiar boon from heaven, quiet unambitious resignation, and have infused into their simple bosoms the hell that rages in your own. Till your accursed society existed, there was no midnight terror, no wanton cruelty. The wealthy farmer went to his repose, and the benighted traveller pursued his way, unsuspecting and unarmed. But since your disastrous rise, I appeal to any man who knows the country, whether there have not been more house-breakings and house-burnings, and more attacks upon person and property than occurred for an hundred years before? And I ask farther, where ever you have spread, have not violence and outrage, nightly plottings, and dark threatenings been your uniform attendants? If such be the first fruits of your labours, what must be the fulness of your infernal harvest?

Curses and disgraces to society that you are, shall you still be suffered to go on? Your overt acts *may* and *must* be curbed by the iron hand of the law, but the source of the evil, the principles you have propagated, can only be subdued by the energy of general execration. Fitted as they are to flatter and to feed depravity, congenial

with

with every view and hope in which the ruffian of whatever description loves to indulge, so far as profligacy extends, they will not fail to attract votaries; and the sole remedy must be a steady active counter-union of the wise, the respectable, and the virtuous. And shall this any longer be wanting? Shall not all who are yet uninfected with your contagion, rouse themselves however hitherto they may have slumbered, and unite as one man with Government and the Legislature, in rescuing their dishonoured and injured country! What Demosthenes felt when the Athenian state was on the brink of being betrayed by its own unnatural sons, is what every good man ought to feel towards *you*. I quote the passage at large, that it may be seen from the striking coincidence, that the worst traitors of antiquity were to the very letter, of the same cast and character with yourselves.

“ I was never known” says that illustrious orator “ to march through the city with a face
 “ of joy and exultation at the success of a foreign
 “ power. I was never known to receive the
 “ successes of my own country with tremblings,
 “ with sighings, with eyes bending to the earth,
 “ like *those impious men*, who are the defamers
 “ of the state, as if by such conduct they were
 “ not the defamers of themselves, who look
 “ abroad, and when a foreign Potentate hath
 “ established

“ established his power on the calamities of their
 “ country, applaud the event, and tell us we
 “ should take every means to perpetuate that
 “ power.

“ Hear me over-ruling heaven, (he goes on)
 “ and let not these their desires be ratified above.
 “ Infuse a better spirit into these men; inspire
 “ even *their* minds with purer sentiments, this is
 “ my first prayer. Or, if their natures are not
 “ to be reformed, pursue them even to destruc-
 “ tion. But to us display your goodness, in a
 “ speedy deliverance from impending evils, and
 “ in all the blessings of protection and tranquil-
 “ lity.”*

* *Demosthenes on the Crown*—concluding words of the Oration.

ESSAY XVI.

R E M A R K S
ON THE
FIRST PRINTED PROPOSAL
FOR THE
I R I S H U N I O N .

How now you *secret, black, and midnight* fiends
What is't you do?
A DEED WITHOUT A NAME!

MAY 28th, 1797.

AFTER the statements contained in the late Reports of the Committees of both Houses of Parliament*, it may, at first view appear unnecessary to call the attention of the publick to any new remarks on the treason of the *United Irishmen*. There is however one point upon which it may not be impossible to throw some additional light; I mean, the precise intention with which that Society was originally formed.

On

* The Reports here alluded to, were those made in the last Session of the late Parliament.

On this head, the letter of *Theobald Wolfe Tone*, inserted in the Report of the Committee of the Commons, affords the most striking, and to minds not warped by prejudice, the most conclusive evidence. But there is another important document which does not appear to have come before the Committee, and which is, if possible, still more demonstrative of the primary design of the IRISH UNION.

To *Tone's* letter it might perhaps be objected, that being not intended for publication, but merely to be communicated to a few confidential friends, it shews the sentiments of a private person, rather than evinces the principles upon which the society of *United Irishmen* was actually founded. But the paper to which I refer comes forward under different circumstances. It is not the mere correspondence of an individual with a junto of his political intimates; it is a most elaborate memoir, composed with every aid of fancy and every artifice of language, for the express purpose of circulation. It is, in a word, a complete, well digested statement of the principles and views of the intended institution; drawn up not only for the information of those who were already friendly to such a design, but in such a manner as infallibly to recommend it to all the perturbed and profligate spirits in the community.

The date of this memoir* seems to be nearly the same with that of *Tone's* letter. It appeared in Dublin, in the month of June, 1791, was closely printed on a quarto sheet, (of which it occupied nearly three pages and an half,) and was handed about in the form of a circular letter, with indefatigable assiduity. Its peculiar stile, marked throughout with that turbulent and gloomy rhetorick which had distinguished the well-known *Helot's Letters*, made it scarcely possible to doubt, that the same hand which had formerly been busied in stimulating the Ulster Volunteers, was now employed to diffuse through the kingdom at large, a better concocted and far more deadly poison.

I cannot help requesting my readers to give close attention to the quotations which I shall make from this extraordinary composition. They will be found to illustrate the primary idea and spirit of the *Irish Union* with a clearness, of which all expressions but those of the memoir itself would fall infinitely short; and I hesitate not to add that they will enable every man of common understanding to determine at once, whether the first design of the institution was limited to a temperate reform of abuses, or whether on the contrary it did not imply as desperate a system of *Revolutionary Treason* as ever was suggested by profligate ingenuity.

“ It

* This paper has been inserted in the Appendix of the late Report of the Commons of which it forms the third number.

It begins thus : “ It is proposed, that at this
 “ juncture a society should be instituted, having
 “ much of the *secrecy* and somewhat of the cere-
 “ monial attached to *Freemasonry* ; with so much
 “ *secrecy* as may communicate *curiosity*, *uncer-*
 “ *tainty* and *expectation* to the minds of surround-
 “ ing men ; with so much *impressive* and *affecting*
 “ *ceremony* in all its internal œconomy, as with-
 “ out impeding real business may strike the soul
 “ through the senses, and addressing the whole
 “ man, may animate his philosophy by the ener-
 “ gy of his passions.

“ Secrecy is *expedient* and *necessary* : It will
 “ make the band of union more *cohesive*, and the
 “ *spirit* of that *union* more *ardent* and more *con-*
 “ *densed*. It will invelope this *dense flame* with a
 “ *cloud* of GLOOMY AMBIGUITY, that will both
 “ *facilitate its own agency*, and at the same time
 “ *confound* and terrify its enemies by their igno-
 “ rance of the *design*, the *extent*, the *direction*,
 “ and the *consequences* : It will *throw a veil* over
 “ those individuals whose *professional prudence*
 “ might make them wish to lie *concealed* until a
 “ manifestation of themselves become *absolutely*
 “ *necessary*.”*

Now

* The resemblance between this plan for the *Irisb Union*, and *Weisbaup's* project of the *German Union* is so close as almost to preclude the possibility of its arising from mere coincidence. Let the reader compare the above quotations with the following passages from

Now, let it be considered, that when this plan was suggested, those supposed obstacles to political exertion, which have been since so often adduced by the malecontents as apologies for their enormities, did not exist, nor were even in contemplation. There was no Convention Act, no Insurrection Act, no treasonable Correspondence Act, every mode of communication was open, the war had not commenced, nor was the public mind agitated by any alarm. In these circumstances, (in which there was not merely a liberty, but an absolute licentiousness of scope, both for discussion and co-operation) can it for a moment be supposed that men who only wished to effect a temperate Reform in Parliament would have adopted *gloomy, impenetrable secrecy* as the first feature

from *Weisbaupt's* own account of his scheme as quoted by *Robinson*. His words are as follow: 'The slightest observation shows that
' nothing will so much contribute to increase the zeal of the
' members as secret union. We see with what keenness and zeal the
' frivolous business of Free Masonry is conducted, by persons knit
' together by the secrecy of their union. It is needless to enquire
' into the causes of this zeal which secrecy produces. It is an univer-
' sal fact, confirmed by the history of every age. Let this circum-
' stance of our constitution therefore be directed to this noble purpose,
' and then all the objections urged against it by jealous tyranny and
' affrighted superstition will vanish.—*Robinson's Proofs* Page 115. Irish
' Edition.'

In another place *Weisbaupt* speaks thus: 'The order wishes to be se-
' cret, and to work in silence; for thus it is better secured from the
' oppression of the ruling powers, and because this secrecy gives a
' greater zest to the whole.—*Robinson's Proofs* Page 132.'

feature of their design? Was it in human nature, thus deliberately to prefer *cowardly ambiguity* to *manly candour*, if it had not been felt that there was an indispensable necessity for such a procedure? And whence could the idea of such a necessity have arisen but from the consciousness of a purpose which would not bear to be disclosed? It is not less the result of uniform experience, than it is the maxim of divine wisdom, "that men love *darkness* rather than *light*, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS ARE EVIL."

The laws of nature have established an affinity between *ends* and *means*, which vice cannot, and wisdom would not wish to destroy. We might as well conceive the excellent *Howard* going forth on his mission of charity, covered with the mask, and armed with the dagger of an assassin, as suppose that a society, actuated by pure benevolence, and aiming at rational improvement whether civil or political, would have thought of carrying its point by affecting *gloomy ambiguity*, by exciting *uncertainty* and *expectation in the minds of surrounding men*, or by CONFOUNDING and TERRIFYING even its supposed enemies, by their *ignorance of the design, the extent, the direction, and the consequences*. Even the revolutionary *Godwin* asks, "Why spread a restless commotion over the face of a nation, which may lead to the most destructive consequences? Why seek

“ seek to bestow upon truth a weight not its own ?” * It is only a foul and villainous end that could be attained by such expedients ; they are instruments which have their specific uses legibly engraven on them ; the choice of them, alone, were there no other evidence, would prove, that *systematized insurrection* and *revolutionary despotism* were, from the first moment, the objects of the undertaking.

And for *such* objects, they were well chosen expedients. A *Cataline* or a *Cæsar Borgia* could have suggested none better. The idea of a secret fraternity, so formed as to proceed by silent and imperceptible, but at the same time, infallibly advancing steps through the great mass of the lower classes, and so shrouded in midnight darkness as to evade law, elude counteraction, and even defy computation, was itself a master-piece of revolutionary ingenuity. But the additional provision, that this fraternity should not only act as an engine for spreading terror and confusion over the public mind *without*, but should itself, by means of an high-raised enthusiasm, the effect of excited passions and “ affecting ceremonies,” be kept in a state of devotedness, at once the most implicit and the most active, to its own leaders *within*, implied such a refinement of despotism, over *mind* as well as *body*, over *friend* as well as *enemy*,

* Enquiry into Political Justice, Vol. 1. Book 4. Chap. 2. Sec. 3.

enemy, such an exquisite conjunction of the worst features of *priestcraft*, with the worst weapons of *tyranny*, as can be instanced perhaps but in one other case within the annals of the world.

The Reader will perhaps, himself, think of the case I allude to, that of the well known Nation of Assassins; between whose policy and that of the United Irishmen there seems to be but this material point of difference, that the former obeyed a single chief instead of a junto of leaders. In other respects the resemblance appears so close, (especially since we have seen the plan of the United Irishmen developing itself into actual practice) that the one institution might almost be considered as a studied imitation of the other.

The tribe of Assassins were at their height of power about the thirteenth century, and are much spoken of by those writers who have given the history of the Crusades. Their Sovereign, who resided in the fastnesses of Mount Lebanon, and from that circumstance was generally denominated the *Old Man of the Mountain*, was raised to that dignity by the majority of the votes of his subjects. "Being unable," we are told, "to defend his nation against his powerful neighbours by *open force*, he adopted a more effectual expedient for revenging, if not averting their attacks: He acquired such an *ascendant*

U

" over

“ over his fanatical subjects, that they paid the
 “ most implicit deference to his commands, esteem-
 “ ed assassination meritorious, and believed that
 “ by his orders the most shocking villainies were
 “ consecrated into heroic virtues. It was the cus-
 “ tom of this Prince, when he imagined himself
 “ injured, to dispatch secretly some of his subjects
 “ against the aggressors; and no precaution was
 “ sufficient to secure them from these subtle and de-
 “ termined ruffians. When seized and put to the
 “ severest tortures, they triumphed amidst their
 “ agonies, and rejoiced that they had been def-
 “ tined by heaven to suffer in so just and merito-
 “ rious a cause. From them the term *assassin* has
 “ passed into most European languages.”*

We ought perhaps to hope that when the
United Irishmen adopted so much of the spirit of
 this system, they did not deliberately accede to
 all the enormities of its practice. The Old Man
 of the Mountain, himself, only had recourse to
 these when milder expedients were unavailing,
 “ He piqued himself,” says Hume, “ on never
 “ beginning any offence, and had his regular for-
 “ malities in requiring atonement.” It was not
 until all such overtures were rejected, that he is-
 sued his last fatal orders. Possibly the *United Irish-*
men also, at least such of them as were under the
 influence

* See Vertot's *Knights of Malta*, Vol. I. and Hume's *History of England*, Vol. II. K. Richard I.

influence of "*professional prudence*," might have wished to effect their purpose by less desperate methods. They might have flattered themselves that by the dark and silent progress of their union, they would at length become completely irresistible; and be able at the moment of "manifestation," to rise with the equable force of a vast spring tide, rather than burst out with the violence of a cataract. But be that as it may, the discipline of the institution provided for other contingencies; the enthusiasm it inspired was formed, and the event has shewn it to be fitted, for the most horrible extremities; nor could we suppose for a moment that men who in the coolness of theoretic reasoning reckoned so much upon the influence of *confusion* and *terror*, would suffer themselves, in the warmth of practice, to be embarrassed by an over-scrupulous humanity.

I have mentioned but one point of difference between the tribe of assassins and the *United Irishmen*; but there seems to be another, not less necessary to be stated. Amongst the former no toleration was afforded to cunning without courage. It was indispensable that each of their society should be bloody, bold and resolute. Not so amongst the *United Irishmen*; in their plan there is an expressly opposite provision. "Secrecy," say they, "is expedient," for this amongst

other reasons, because "it will throw a veil over those individuals whose professional prudence might make them wish to lie concealed." It was not merely the principle of self-preservation which appears to have suggested this. With that mischievous insight into all the windings of human depravity which marks their whole plan, they seem to have concluded, that the sharpest and most efficient subtlety was for the most part accompanied by the basest pusillanimity; and dark intrigue being their sheet-anchor, it was *expedient* and *necessary* to indulge cowardice, that they might attach useful villainy. But at all events what a temper of mind does the sentiment manifest? Could the depths of Hell furnish any thing more revolting to justice, honour or humanity, than that men thus deliberately engaging in a conspiracy pregnant with every form of misery to thousands of their fellow mortals, should at the same moment be calculating, how, in effecting this infernal project, they should secure themselves, not against the gibbet or the axe, not against banishment or imprisonment, or the least of those calamities which they were preparing for so many unconscious victims, but (hear it gracious Heaven!) against any diminution of PROFESSIONAL EMOLUMENT!

ESSAY XVII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

“ All *Combinations* and *Associations*, under whatever plausible character, with the *real design* to *direct*, *controul*, *counteract* or *arrest* the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of the fundamental principles of Government; they serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force, to put in the place of the delegated will of the Nation, the will of a party, often a *small* but *artful* and *enterprizing* minority of the *Community*.”

WASHINGTON'S Farewell Address.

JUNE 1, 1797.

IT is not merely from the spirit which the *United Irishmen* breathed at their first formation, nor even from the means they adopted, striking and conclusive as these evidences are, that I infer their *original Treason*. By an unaccountable dereliction of that very *secrecy* which was so earnestly inculcated as a matter of indispensable observance, this same paper has opened to us, not only the *design*, but the *extent* of the scheme, and has enabled us to judge as fully of the *ends* aimed at, as of the *means* to be employed.

We are told, in words which ought to have been felt at the time, as an *alarm-bell* to the slumbering

bering vigilance of the country, that the " gene-
 " ral aim of the Society should be, to make the
 " light of philanthropy (a *pale* and *ineffectual*
 " *light*) converge, and by converging, kindle
 " into *ardent, energetic, enthusiastic* love for Ire-
 " land; that genuine unadulterated enthusiasm
 " which descends from a luminous head to a
 " *burning heart*, and *impels* the spirit of man to
 " exertions greatly good, or unequivocally great.
 " For this Society is not to rest *satisfied* in draw-
 " ing SPECULATIVE *Plans of Reform and Im-*
 " *provement*, but to be PRACTICALLY BUSIED
 " in their *accomplishment*. Were the hand of
 " *Locke* to hold from Heaven a *scheme* of Go-
 " *vernment*, most *perfectly adapted* to the *nature*
 " and *capabilities* of the *Irish Nation*, it would
 " drop to the ground a mere founding scroll,
 " was there no other means of giving it effect,
 " than *its own intrinsic excellence*.

" This Society," they go on, " is likely to be
 " a means the most powerful for the promotion
 " of a great end. What end? The *Rights of*
 " *Man in Ireland*; the *greatest happiness* of the
 " *greatest number* in this Island; the *inherent* and
 " *indefeasible claims* of every *free Nation* to REST
 " *in this Nation*; the WILL and the POWER to be
 " happy, to *pursue the common weal* as an indi-
 " *vidual* pursues his *private welfare*, and to
 " STAND IN INSULATED INDEPENDANCE AN
 IMPERATORIAL

“ PERATORIAL PEOPLE. To gain a knowledge
 “ of the real state of this heterogeneous country;
 “ to form a *summary* of the NATIONAL WILL and
 “ PLEASURE in points *most interesting to national*
 “ *happiness*; and when such a summary is formed,
 “ to put *this* DOCTRINE as speedily as may be
 “ into PRACTICE, will be the purpose of this
 “ *central Society* or Lodge, from which *other*
 “ *Lodges in different towns* will radiate.

“ The GREATEST HAPPINESS of the GREAT-
 “ EST NUMBER. On the *rock of this principle*
 “ let this Society rest; by *this* let it judge and
 “ determine *every political question*, and *what-*
 “ *ever is necessary for this purpose*, let it not be
 “ accounted *hazardous*, but rather our *interest*,
 “ our *duty*, our *glory*, and our *common religion*.
 “ The rights of Men are the rights of God, and
 “ to vindicate the one is to maintain the other;
 “ we must be free to serve him whose service is
 “ perfect freedom.

“ This is *enthusiasm*; it is so, and who that
 “ has a spark of Hibernicism in his nature does
 “ not feel it kindle into a *flame of generous en-*
 “ *thusiasm*? Who that has a drop of sympathy
 “ in his heart, when he looks around him, and
 “ sees how HAPPINESS is *heaped up* in MOUNDS,
 “ and how MISERY is *diffused* and *divided* amongst
 “ *the* MILLION, does not exclaim, *alas!* for
 “ *the*

“ *the suffering!* and *oh!* for the POWER to redress
 “ *it!* And who is there, that has enthusiasm,
 “ sufficient to make an exclamation, would not
 “ *combine* with others as honest as himself, to
 “ make the WILL live in the ACT, and to *swear*
 “ WE WILL REDRESS IT? ”*

In this the voice of men seeking CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM? Is it not on the contrary as outrageous a denunciation as could be conveyed in language, not only against the Constitution of this Country, but against the order of society in every Country? What is that decisive expression of *contempt* for all *speculative plans of Reform*, that boastful resolution of being *busied in accomplishment*, and that emphatic despair of succeeding in any measure, however useful or suitable, without *some other* means of giving it effect besides its own *intrinsic excellence*? Do not these declarations alone amount to a determinate rejection of every

* ‘What is the general object’ says *Weisbaupt*? ‘*The happiness of the human race.* It is not distressing to a generous mind, after contemplating what human nature is capable of, to see how little we enjoy? When we look at this goodly world, and see that every man *may* be happy, but that the happiness of one depends on the conduct of another; when we see the wicked so powerful and the good so weak; and that it is in vain to strive singly and alone, against the general current of vice and oppression; the wish naturally arises in the mind, that it were possible to form a durable combination of the most worthy persons, who should work together in removing the obstacles to human happiness, become terrible to the wicked, and give their aid to all the good without distinction. Would not such an association be a blessing to the world?—*Robison’s Proofs* Page 114.’

every constitutional idea, and as determinate an adoption of the worst revolutionary expedients? What are those *other* means? They are none of the resources of reason, none of the natural weapons of truth; these are all voted down and discarded for ever in that imperious decree on the futility of *intrinsic excellence*; for *these* are nothing but *intrinsic excellence* demonstrated, and urged with zeal and perseverance. What then are those means? They are *intrigue, cabal, conspiracy, TERROR*, (for there is no alternative) and of course every thing, however dreadful, to which *terror* relates, and without which it would become an unreal mockery, more contemptible than even *intrinsic excellence* itself.

And to what end are these dark expedients to be applied? We are not left to collect this from ambiguous hints; we are told in what might be termed the very language of Revolutions, that it is to break the tie which binds Ireland to the British Empire, to establish in this country Democracy in its boldest and broadest form, and to new-model property, so as to effect the widest possible distribution of it amongst the populace. What but the *first* of these can we understand, “by the *inherent and indefeasible claims of every free Nation, being made to rest in this Nation*; “and by the *power to pursue the common good as an individual pursues his private welfare*?”

What but the *second* can be meant, by forming "a fummary of the *national will* and *pleasure*, "in points most interesting to our happiness." And what but *both conjointly*, SEPARATION FROM *Great Britain*, and a DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, by that remarkable expression, "to stand "in insulated independence an imperial people?"

Farther; what idea but that of a new-modelling of property, a systematic plan of diffusion and division, can we annex to that proposed extension of *the greatest happiness to the greatest number*, which is to be the ruling principle of the whole system, and in pursuing which, nothing is to be deemed *hazardous*, but every thing, be it what it may, is to become *duty, glory, interest, religion*? What possible measure, except some such *equalizing plan* could bear even the colour of a *remedy* for the *evil complained of*, "that "happiness is heaped up in mounds, and misery "is diffused and divided amongst the million?" Nay, who does not see, that the very terms of the complaint imply not only a promise, but a direct intimation of the *mode* of redress? And yet, lest the slightest doubt should intervene, they seal it with an *Oath* "WE WILL REDRESS IT."

Instead of insulting the understanding of the reader by an attempt to illustrate, what can have but one possible meaning, I shall add one extract
more

more ; not so much with a view to strengthen the evidence of a Revolutionary purpose, for that I take to be impossible, as to give an additional instance of the deep insidiousness, with which those men provided for the dissemination of their principles amongst the unthinking multitude.

“ The first business of the Brotherhood” say they “ will be, to form a transcript or digest of
 “ the doctrine which they mean to *subscribe*, to
 “ *uphold*, to *propagate*, and *reduce to practice*.
 “ It is time for *Ireland* to *look her fortune in the*
 “ *face* ; not with turbulent ostentation, but with
 “ *fixed resolution* to live and die Freemen. Let
 “ then those questions be agitated (and *answered*
 “ *fully and fairly*) which have been *wilfully con-*
 “ *cealed* from us by *interested persons* and *par-*
 “ *ties*, and which *appear terrible*, *only* by being
 “ *kept in the dark*.

“ What are the *means* of procuring such a Re-
 “ form in the Constitution as may secure to the
 “ people their rights most effectually and *most*
 “ *speedily* ?

“ What is the plan of reform most suited to
 “ this country ?

“ Can the *renovation* in the Constitution,
 “ which we all deem necessary, be accomplished
 “ by the *ways* of the *Constitution* ? The evil,
 “ says Junius, lies too deep to be cured by any
 “ *remedy*

“ remedy less than *some great convulsion, which*
 “ may bring back the Constitution to its original
 “ principles, or *utterly destroy it*. Is this opi-
 “ nion still truer with respect to *this country* ?
 “ or is it false ?

“ Who are the *People* ?

“ Can the *right* of CHANGING the CONSTI-
 “ TUTION rest any where but in the *original con-*
 “ *stitutive power*, the PEOPLE.

Can the WILL of the PEOPLE be known, but
 “ by *full and fair convention*, to be constituted
 “ *on the plan* which shall come recommended on
 “ the most POPULAR AUTHORITY ?

“ Is there any middle state between the ex-
 “ tremes of *Union* with Britain and TOTAL SE-
 “ PARATION, in which the *Rights of the People*
 “ can be *fully established* and rest in security ?

“ What is the *form of Government* that will
 “ secure to us our rights with the *least expence*
 “ and the *greatest benefit* ?”

“ By the BROTHERHOOD, are *these* questions
 “ and *such as these* to be determined ; on this de-
 “ termination are they to form the chart of their
 “ constitution, which with honour and good faith
 “ they

“ they are to subscribe, and which is to regulate
 “ their course.”

It will be seen at once that almost every one of these pretended queries is so put, as to instruct the political catechumen in the answer he is to return; that each subsequent question proceeds upon the supposition that the foregoing one has been answered agreeably to the wish of the proposer; and that of course, though questions in appearance, they are in reality Propositions, only couched in a more insinuating form. In the first two questions the word *Reform* is introduced; in the next it is *Renovation*, CONVULSION, DESTRUCTION. Then comes the right of the multitude to *change the Constitution* by means of a *Convention* formed on the basis of *mere population*. Next follows *Separation from Great Britain* as essential to the full establishment of the National Rights; and last of all, the formation of *such* a Government as these secret, self-elected Representatives of the People shall be pleased to appoint. For let it be observed that after having asserted that the *Will of the People* can only be known by *full and fair Convention*, they tell us plainly, (as they had in effect told us before,) that they mean to take the leading functions of Legislation in the first instance upon *themselves*; that it is by them all the *great* questions are to be decided; and that consequently even a *Con-*
vention

vention is to be nothing but an apparatus for giving a popular colouring to their despotic determinations.

The reader is now in possession of what may be fairly considered as the United Irishmen's *own* development of their original design. And let it be observed, that it is a development made, not in the ferment of irritated zeal, but at the moment when it might be supposed their passions would be calmest and their reason least misled. Other similar designs have at first been but rudely conceived, and have owed their after-maturity to experience, and not seldom to accident; but this *Minerva* of the United Irishmen seems to have come forth at once from the head that gendered it, complete in every limb and lineament. The melancholy events which have taken place of late, imply no advance in the *Theory*; they are no more than that theory reduced in a very trifling degree to *practice*. By comparing *both*, every man may judge for himself whether all the enormities which we lament, and all that we can dread, were not as much contained in the *first idea* of this association, as a brood of living vipers, that now hiss and sting, were once contained in the bowels of the reptile which produced them.

E S S A Y XVIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONCLUDED.

“Towards the preservation of your Government, it is requisite not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts: One method of assault may be, to effect in the *form* of the constitution *alterations* which will *impair* the *energy* of the system, and thus to *undermine what cannot be directly overthrown*. In all the changes to which you are invited, remember, that facility in changes upon the credit of *mere hypothesis* and *opinion*, exposes to perpetual change, from the *endless variety* of hypothesis and opinion; and remember especially, that for the *efficient* management of your common interests, a Government of as much vigour as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty, is indispensable.”

WASHINGTON'S Farewell Address.

JUNE. 6, 1797.

IN the two last papers I have laid before my readers the statement given by the founders of the Society of United Irishmen, of their intentions and views; it only remains to shew, that when their Society was actually formed, no variation took place in their principles, nor any abatement in the violence of their purpose.

It is easy to prove this by the same incontestable evidence of their own declarations. One of their
their

their earliest publications, after they had announced themselves as the *Society of United Irishmen*, was a Circular Letter addressed to two similar Societies in the town of Belfast, and signed by the well-known *Tandy* as their Secretary. In this (wherein, it is impossible not to perceive the most striking marks of that same pen which has been already alluded to) the whole spirit of their first Address is condensed into two or three emphatic sentences: “The
 “object of this institution,” say they, “is, to
 “make a UNITED SOCIETY of the IRISH NA-
 “TION—to make ALL *Irishmen Citizens*—ALL
 “*Citizens Irishmen*. It becomes necessary by a
 “union of minds and a knowledge of each other,
 “to WILL and ACT as a Nation. To know
 “each other is to know ourselves, the weakness of
 “one, the strength of MANY. Union, therefore,
 “is POWER, it is wisdom, it must be liberty.
 “Our design therefore in forming this Society, is
 “to give an example which, when well followed,
 “must COLLECT the PUBLIC WILL and CONCEN-
 “TRATE the PUBLIC FORCE—the effect of which
 “must be RAPID, MOMENTOUS and CONSE-
 “QUENTIAL.”

Can any thing under Heaven be more astonishing than that after these expressions being in circulation from the month of January 1792, there should at this day be any necessity for using arguments

arguments to prove the *original Treason* of the *United Irishmen*? There is not an idea here, nor a single word, which is not pregnant with revolutionary horrors. What is that UNION of *minds*, that *knowledge of each other*, in order to WILLING and ACTING as a *Nation*? Can they mean any thing but DARK CONSPIRACY, *so extended* through the *populace*; *so secretly*, and yet *so powerfully* linked and jointed, as that at length the *whole mass* of the *lower classes* may be both *ready* and ABLE to *rise as ONE MAN*? Is not this the literal purport of *that example* which they design to give? "When *well followed*," they tell us, "it will *collect* the PUBLIC WILL, and *concentrate* "the PUBLIC FORCE." That is, it will inspire the ignorant, inflammable multitude with such a *frantic rage* for *Democracy*, that they will be ready to perpetrate whatever shall be proposed to them, and by that means secure to their Leaders a sort of POLITICAL OMNIPOTENCE.

They add that the effect of this must be RAPID, MOMENTOUS, and CONSEQUENTIAL; evidently implying, that if it were to be otherwise, it would not answer their purpose. Might they not just as well have said, that it would be *sanguinary*, *remorseless*, and *incalculably destructive*? Did they not know that in such a case, the latter epithets would be strictly explanatory of the former, and that when once their plan

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should

should commence, there would be no security against any misery which cruelty could inflict, or weakness suffer? Yes; they knew it well, as well from the dictates of common sense as from the experience of every age and nation. And yet, with *all this* in their view, with *havoc, assassination, massacre*, every horror at which nature shudders, every demon which hell sends forth to desolate life and harrow up the soul, standing right before them in their path, only waiting the moment of “manifestation,” to rush upon their destined prey, these men went on deliberately with their design, have pursued it without remission for nearly six years, and are at this day more desperately bent upon it than ever, though France itself, after the fullest trial of its effects, has already, solemnly and in the hearing of all Europe, renounced it, as the deadliest curse that could befall a country.

And yet these are the men who have been cheered and toasted by the *Whig Club* in England, and pitied and patronized by the *Whig Club* in Ireland! These are they who have been represented by the great Opposition Orator in the British Parliament, as looking for nothing but the full enjoyment of the British Constitution, and as ready to return to tranquillity, if this reasonable boon were but granted; and these are they for whom the *Paragon* of Irish eloquence

eloquence has offered up his fervent prayers to Heaven, that the same Providence which conducted another persecuted tribe through the wilderness, may lead these victims of oppression also through the horrors with which they are surrounded!

Are we to suppose that these good-natured politicians were caught, in the simplicity of their hearts, by that verbal bait of Reform with which the United Irishmen have covered their barbed hook of revolutionary Democracy? Did they really not know that *their* Reform was itself but *Democracy* under another name? That its essential features were *Universal Suffrage*, *annual Elections*, and *every Man* to be capable of being elected? And were they not well aware that such a mob-elected and mob-dependent House of Commons as this plan would create, would itself be the most infallible engine that wicked policy could devise, for beating down the two other branches of the Legislature? Were they ignorant of these self-evident facts, or did they wilfully sacrifice both their conscience and the safety of their country, to the desperate possibility of a triumph over their political rivals? On this question depends, whether we are to despise them for their infatuation, or to execrate them for their profligacy.

With the English Allies of the United Irishmen, I have at present no concern. But that the Chiefs of the Opposition in this kingdom have been sinning against conviction, that they were persuaded in their hearts of the direct reverse of what they have been so solemnly asserting, we need no other proof than their own former declarations. Never were the real views of the United Irishmen more clearly or more ably developed, than by that very man who has of late taken the lead as their advocate and their encomiast. "The friends of Universal Suffrage," says he, in his speech on Mr. W. B. Ponsonby's Bill in the Session of 1794, "repudiate the Constitution of England, which the wisdom of ages has framed, and introduce another system founded according to them on natural right. In my opinion it is founded on a violation of the most obvious of those rights. There is no natural right more undeniable than that every man has a right to the fruits of his own industry. Is it not a violation of that right, that the man who has neither industry nor property should tax him?"

"If," he adds, "such a principle were admitted, what description of people would suffer by it? The respectable Farmer and the wealthy Citizen. The Candidate, instead of applying to *them*, would apply to the *labourer* in the *stable*, he would apply to the *beggar* on
" the

“ the *bridge*, the *criminal* in the *jail*, and the *poor*
 “ in the *hospital*. The *mob* of Electors thus
 “ *raked* together would shoulder the *sober Citi-*
 “ *zen* from the hustings, and the shout of whif-
 “ key would return the Members of the Senate,
 “ and elect a *felonious Representation*. Annual
 “ Elections too! What mischiefs would they
 “ not induce? They would introduce a state of
 “ permanent intoxication, by which all the use-
 “ ful arts and labours of life would be super-
 “ seded. They would, in a word, lead direct-
 “ ly to the annihilation of Royalty and the esta-
 “ blishment of a French Republic.—If such
 “ were to be the Reform, I would infinitely ra-
 “ ther submit to the present abuses;—and if I
 “ could think that this bill went in the *most remote*
 “ degree to introduce such a system, I would
 “ instantly abandon it.”

Such was Mr. Grattan's language three years ago, when the dangers he alludes to were comparatively contemptible, when the party which he points at, had neither strength nor number; and now, when the very same party, by an indefatigable dissemination of those very doctrines, have increased the hazards, which he then viewed with horror a thousand fold; now, when that Society, to whose infant efforts he deemed it his duty to oppose his most earnest zeal and his most nervous eloquence, boast of having a revolutionary army of an hundred thousand men all ready to die rather

ther than desert their object, he is silent; he shrinks from enquiry; nay more, he supports and approves, and affects to coalesce with the very men whom then he reprobated!

And yet this man has talked of consistency! When, after the Report of the *Secret Committees* he could no longer plead reason, or justice, or expediency, for his still dissenting from every measure of severity against those who had decreed, a general confiscation and the massacre of thirty thousand, he tried to prop himself on the ground of consistency. But does he feel it no violation of consistency, to *flatter* and *defend* those traitors to whose suppression he was once ready (had it been proved necessary) to sacrifice even the attempt at moderate reform? What is such consistency? Is it not an improvement on Swift's notion of conscience, and still more, the counterpart of that piece of human drapery, which, as that author says, serves to cover both nastiness and vice, but is easily slipped down, for the accommodation of either?

But this is not all; the measures now recommended by this gentleman and his colleagues are themselves a refutation of their most solemn assertions. Their chief measure has been a *Reform Bill*. Why has this bill been presented *now* in so very different a shape from what it bore, when
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the same persons introduced it three years ago? Their cause would have gained strength with all thinking men, from its being seen, that after three years reflection they had found no room for material alteration. Whereas on the contrary, the radical change of features which it now exhibits, must suggest to every reflecting person, this powerful objection, that if Opposition had carried their point three years ago, we should have been no nearer tranquillity *now*; since even in their own judgment a still farther Reform would at this day have been necessary; and, by parity of reason, if the present plan were to be adopted, we should be equally exposed to the demand for still further alteration, and (from the principle, of change at the call of the multitude, being admitted,) still more liable to the necessity of indefinite concession.

It is self-evident that these gentlemen would not have shifted from so much stronger to so much weaker ground, without some irresistible motive. What then could that motive have been? Clearly no other than this, they knew that if they attempted to bring up their old Bill unaltered, the men they sought to conciliate, would have dashed it back in their teeth. It was obviously for this reason that the old plan of enlarging boroughs by annexing to them a surrounding district (which Mr. Grattan then maintained

tained to be the wisest and the justest medium between an overbearing aristocratic power on the one hand, and a dangerous democratic influence on the other,) has been given up, and this new scheme of a departmental topography, exhibiting as much of the semblance of a popular suffrage as could exist without the reality, substituted in its room. But what is the language of this conduct? Is it not the most direct contradiction, of all that they themselves had stated in their censures of the strong measures pursued by Government, and the most irrefragable proof of their own conviction, that the men whom they wished to gratify are obstinate Democrats, to whom no plan of reform would be acceptable, but in proportion as it departed even from the forms of the existing Constitution?

Men, whose sole object is place and power for themselves, let it cost what it may to their abused and injured country, may easily enough reconcile their hackneyed and callous consciences to such political debauchery. But if we suffer our lives and properties to be the stake of their infernal game, we deserve the doom which awaits us. We have but one rational object, the speedy and permanent tranquillizing of the country. The single interesting question to us, is, how may this be most certainly effected? If the United Irishmen could be considered as desirous merely to
correct

correct abuses, but still cordially attached to the substance of the Constitution, it might perhaps be rash to affirm that no conciliatory measure ought to be conceded: But if on the contrary, they are, notoriously and avowedly, implacable enemies both to the form and spirit of the Constitution, associated for the sole purpose of overthrowing it, and determined never to relinquish the contest, until that object be accomplished, then, what could be more frantic than to think of appeasing them by half-measures? and what more traitorous than to urge such half-measures as must incalculably increase the strength of our opponents, and at the same time deprive us of every means of resistance?

How far the Constitution which we have hitherto valued as our best inheritance, ought to be preserved, is a question for every man to determine in his own bosom. But if it be indeed an object, by what means under Heaven can it be secured, except by the most unqualified resistance to the wretches who have combined to destroy it, and the most unequivocal reprobation of their half-hearted, hypocritical, and if possible, still more hateful auxiliaries?

ESSAY XIX.

A R E P L Y
TO THAT PART OF THE
S P E E C H

SAID TO BE DELIVERED BY.

MR. FOX ON MR. GREY'S MOTION FOR REFORM,

WHICH RESPECTS THE AFFAIRS OF IRELAND.

Satis Eloquentiæ, Sapientiæ Parum.

SALLUST.

HARROGATE, JUNE 28, 1797.

BEING in a remote part of North Britain when the Speech ascribed to Mr. Fox, on Mr. GREY's late Motion for Reform, appeared in the Public Papers, I did not happen to meet it until a few days ago, when it was put into my hands in the form of a Pamphlet. Accustomed as I was to that Right Hon. Gentleman's statements respecting the affairs of Ireland, the representation given of them here, and the argument deduced from them in proof of the necessity of an immediate Parliamentary Reform in Great Britain, excited my astonishment. Never, I think,
tion

was a more unfounded and mischievous fabrication than the one, or a more desperate fallacy than the other, imposed upon the public.

I should be sorry to attribute the grossness of the contrivance to the Gentleman in whose name it is given to the world. Inflamed as he may be with the rage of party politics, I hope and trust, that that milk of human kindness for which he has ever got credit, is not yet so curdled and soured, and turned to venom within him, as that he could endeavour deliberately and of set purpose to help forward havock and massacre in one Country by his countenance, and excite them in another by his Councils. He must unquestionably have been deceived himself, before he could thus become the deceiver and betrayer of others. He could only know the situation of Ireland by the report of his friends in that Kingdom. It is therefore, not of his own falsehoods, but of theirs, falsehoods which, with all their callous effrontery, they dared not have sent abroad in their own Country, that this Gentleman is made, perhaps the unconscious, but still the dangerously seductive circulator through another community, a community, incompetent too generally for want of accurate information, to detect the imposture.

As an Inhabitant of that Sister Kingdom, and a not careless observer of the events which have

occurred in it, and as a sincere friend to the welfare of the Empire at large, I think it my duty, to contribute my mite toward guarding the public mind against the effects of this malignant libel. In doing this, I shall not pretend to speak with philosophic coolness; my feelings would not permit me. Till within these very few weeks, I have been almost in the midst of those horrors which the fabricators of these falsehoods have laboured to deepen. I have lost one invaluable friend* (and in him the Country an ornament and an honour) by that infernal plan of cowardly cold-blooded assassination which those wretched Politicians have helped to foster by their indulgence. I have trembled, daily and hourly, for the safety of many other dear friends, whose honest and active zeal put them in perpetual jeopardy. I cannot therefore but be warm. But I will not be unjust, I will speak of things as they are, nothing extenuate; nor, I appeal to Heaven, set down aught in malice.

The Right Hon. Gentleman is made to state from the Report of the Secret Committees of the Irish Parliament, that the Seditious Societies in that Kingdom were small in their beginnings, but have now increased to the number of an hundred thousand men. The following question is then

* The Rev. Dr. William Hamilton (author of the *Letters on the Giant's Causeway*) assassinated in the month of April, 1797.

then put, "By what means have they so increased; and who have been the converts and profelytes who have swelled their numbers to so gigantic a size?"—To this it is answered, "Obviously the men who had no such desire, no such feelings, no such design originally: obviously the persons who had no other object in view in all the Petitions which they pretend, and in all the applications which they made, than Catholic Emancipation and Reform of Parliament. This is admitted by the Report."

I must here interrupt the Orator for one moment, to observe, that in this instance he must have deceived himself. The Report certainly admits no such thing. It allows, for such was the fact, that they *professed* no other object; but the hollow hypocrisy of this profession was so self-evident as to impose upon none, except such as wished to be in error.

"The spirit of Reform," the Speech proceeds, "spread over the country: they made humble, earnest, and repeated applications to the *Castle* for redress, but *there* they found a fixed determination to resist every claim. They made their application to all the eminent and considerable characters in the Country, who had on former occasions distinguished themselves in the popular cause. But unfortunately they were so alarmed by the French Revolution, and by
" the

“ the cry set up by Ministers, of the danger of in-
 “ fection, that they could not listen to the com-
 “ plaint. What was the consequence? These
 “ bodies of men, who found it in vain to expect
 “ redress from the Government at the Castle, or
 “ from the Parliament, and having no where else
 “ to recur to, joined the Societies whom the Re-
 “ port accuses of cherishing the desire of separa-
 “ tion from England: and they imbibed and be-
 “ came converts to those notions of frantic am-
 “ bition which the Report lays to their charge,
 “ and which threaten consequences so dreadful
 “ and alarming, that no man can contemplate
 “ them without horror and dismay.”

Had the discretion of this Gentleman been but
 half as great as his volubility, he would have
 enquired into the grounds of this statement be-
 fore he made himself responsible for its truth;
 and still more, before he drew from it those ar-
 guments of alarm, by which he would urge his
 Countrymen to rush headlong down the steep of
 dark and desperate experiment. But let not the
 People of Great Britain suffer themselves to be
 frightened forward by a phantom, where they
 ought not to proceed a hair breadth but by the
 light of reason, and the guidance of experience.
 I tell them, and every honest Irishman who is
 acquainted with the state of his own Country,
 will tell them, that there is not an assertion in
 this

this plausible tale, which is not a flagrant violation of the most notorious truth.

But it involves much more than this. It is as gross a libel upon honest and respectable men as ever was circulated. The persons who first stood forward in Ireland as advocates and petitioners for Reform, might have been erroneous in their ends, and were perhaps still more erroneous in their expedients. Their Associations and Conventions, civil as well as military, virtually illegal beyond a doubt, but not then forbidden by any express Statute, too surely led the way, and furnished a precedent for the more dangerous combinations that have followed. But still they were at *heart* attached to the Constitution, and would not intentionally have pursued its supposed improvement by hazarding its downfall. They were not men made for coalescing with Conspiracy, or participating in Treason; and so far are they from having been proselyted by the wretches who call themselves *United Irishmen*, that I doubt much whether the name of one in a thousand of those original Reformists, was ever entered on the muster-rolls of the seditious. They have been much more disposed to drop their pursuit for the present, even of moderate Reform, persuaded that a hurricane season is not the time for unroofing an house. And many of them have gone still farther, and from conviction

tion have given a firm and unqualified support to the measures pursued by Government for crushing insurrection.

The absurdity rises yet higher, when it is stated in such piteous terms, that they who now form the great body of the United Irishmen, made *humble, earnest, and repeated applications to Government and to Parliament for redress*. The notorious fact is, that at least ninety-nine out of an hundred of these persons (I am sure I speak much within bounds,) never were concerned, directly or indirectly, in any Petition for Parliamentary Reform in the course of their lives; nor did they ever rise from the sluggish mass until they were maddened into murderous activity by the circulation of *Paine's Rights of Man*, and the pestilent suggestions of their own revolutionary Leaders. These last knew their business too well, to hope for much from those who had actually been Petitioners for Reform. After a few fruitless overtures, they shunned rather than fought them. "With countenance grim" they "glared on them passing," and skulked off to prowl for fitter prey among the dark places of society. It was to indigence and idleness, to wild desire and vulgar curiosity, to the giddy fervour of unthinking boys, and to the pride and avarice of successful Hucksters and Foretellers, that they
made

made their application. It was to the views and feelings of these that they fitted with infernal adroitness every circumstance of their system: and to the attraction that attended their seductive lures, in every one of these instances, but not to disappointment, or despair of any reasonable object in any instance, do they owe the gigantic growth of their execrable society.

But the cream of the jest is served up when we are told, that they who on former occasions had distinguished themselves in the popular cause, were then so alarmed by the French Revolution, that they could not listen to the popular complaint. I should be glad to know when this happened. I defy the Right Hon. Gentleman, with all the aid he can obtain from his Irish Instructors, to point out the period to which such an assertion is applicable. The United Irishmen did not exist as a society until December 1791. I am not positively certain that the question of Parliamentary Reform was taken up that very Session; but it is notorious that it was agitated largely and deeply in the next Session; and even brought forward once more in the next after that. And on that occasion (I think in March 1794) I well remember to have heard the gentleman who seconded the motion for the Bill being received and read, declare, that he and his friends had so little encouragement from the Public, that they

only brought the business on from a regard to their own consistency, “ For (said he) how can “ we hope to succeed when we are not supported “ by a *single Petition* ?”

The truth was, that not the usual supporters of Reform within, but rather the original promoters of it without doors, were so discouraged by the unusual circumstances of the times, and so embarrassed by the frantic propositions of the United Irishmen, who were just then beginning to speak out, that they were not disposed to take any step whatever; and as to the United Irishmen themselves, the Bill having any thing of a constitutional complexion, was sufficient to make them despise it in their hearts. Their opinion on this subject was very plainly declared some time after, by their mouth-piece, *Dr. Drennan*, “ That bill (said he) was dictated by a penurious and starveling policy: it seemed to proceed from a discouraged opposition wishing to obtain something rather than to suit a generous Administration willing to give all. By attaching the *oldest inheritance* of the *whole people* to certain round spots of earth, it gave a locality to Liberty inconsistent with nature, paling in, as with pieces of packthread, the liberality of the Constitution, and circumscribing, with brief authority, the principles of eternal justice.”*

What,

* Letter to Earl Fitzwilliam.—1795.

What, therefore, the Gentleman could mean by saying of his friends, that at one particular time they *could not attend* to the complaint of those who *petitioned* for *Parliamentary Reform*, I am utterly at a loss to conjecture, unless perhaps he alluded to that *brief period* of their own *abortive Administration*, and intended some sort of a lame apology for their gross inconsistency. *Then*, it must indeed be allowed, they dropped the business of *Parliamentary Reform* quite and clean. But shall we believe that they did so from any extraordinary alarm which the French Revolution just then gave them, when we know, that though the danger was precisely the same, they evidently felt no such alarm either before or afterward? Is it possible for dulness itself not to discover at once, that it arose solely from a little *official nervousness* which they contracted from the air of the Castle, but which they instantly threw off when they returned to a purer atmosphere?

But supposing that to be proved (which never can be proved), that the resentment of the Partizans of Reform, at being disappointed in their favourite object, had tended to swell the numbers of the United Irishmen, still the conclusion of this Gentleman respecting the crime of the Irish Government in refusing it, would not follow; because it might still be shewn, that on every ground of reason and sound policy, the

thing in question was impracticable. On the Gentleman's own principles, *one* great end of such a concession ought to be, *popular satisfaction*, to gratify the claimants, and attach them more firmly to the Constitution. But how could this end be secured until it was known *what* would gratify the claimants? And again, how could the claimants make this known until they had first made up their own minds on what they themselves would be at? When the people understand their own wishes, and when the obvious reasonableness of those wishes has wrought a general and fixed agreement of sentiment, it may be politic as well as just to concede, because it may then be hoped that the concession will produce satisfaction. But when the agreement of the People consists in nothing more than their common use of a cant term, which admits of, and actually bears, an hundred different meanings; when at the utmost they have merely settled, that they are to quit the ground they have hitherto occupied, but no two of them are united in their choice of a new station; when even the same men are never long of the same opinion, but think this the best of all possible plans to-day, and that the best of all possible plans to-morrow; amid this unappeasable anarchy of mind, this "discord with a thousand various mouths," what, in the name of Heaven, is to be done? Are they who are charged with that most awful and most delicate of all trusts, the safety of a Community,

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to rush forward, and act at random on the wild supposition that *any thing* that can be called REFORM, will charm down the tumult? Or are they manfully, but coolly, to withstand the madness, the *Civium ardor prava jubentium*, and refuse to make any change until there be something like unity of sentiment concerning it, and until the clear and steady stream of *common sense* can be distinguished from the casual torrents of preudice and passion? If *this* be the wiser course, then may the refusers of Reform in Ireland set those who accuse them at defiance. Nay, they may safely engage to acknowledge, not only that they have made the People traitors through despair, but that they are desperate traitors themselves, as soon as it shall be proved that they have rejected a single *specified* Demand for Parliamentary Reform, which any honest looker-on could have pronounced to be supported by a general and fixed agreement, I will not say of the *majority*, but of the *thousandth part* of the Community.

“ But,” says the Gentleman, “ will any one
 “ argue, that if Reform had been conceded to the
 “ eighty or an hundred thousand moderate Petiti-
 “ oners, you would have this day to lament the
 “ union of an hundred thousand men, bent on ob-
 “ jects so extensive, so alarming, so calamitous?”
 The chimera of the hundred thousand moderate petitioners has already been disposed of; to the
 spirit

spirit of the question I hesitate not to answer, that the Gentleman's *Nostrum* would be no sort of security against the disease. On this point, the case of the United States of America has more force than all the declamation in the world. *There*, all the infallible preventives of the Right Hon. Gentleman existed in their fullest extent. The People had themselves made the Government, that Government rested on the broadest basis, and the individual was identified with the State as much as was possible in the nature of things. Yet, *there* Jacobinism established itself in its rankest form, spread its deadly infection widely and rapidly through the community, and threatened (and perhaps still threatens) every calamity that Ireland has apprehended, without a possibility of recurring to equally effectual means of prevention. *There* it was found necessary (in a manner that Ireland has not yet been reduced to, and through God's good providence never may) to brave the "assertors" of the self-same principles "in the open field;" and a levy of fifteen thousand men (made indeed with difficulty from persons of the same spirit with the Gentleman's friends in Ireland, having instilled into their minds that they were called out to cut the throats of their fellow citizens merely in order to support the rich creditors of the State), and an expence of a million and a half of dollars were deemed but sufficient to repress the insurrection.

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But what followed? The venerable WASHINGTON returned from conducting this armament, not to enjoy his own highest happiness in the restored order of his country, but to face the same pernicious influence where he was far less able to combat it. He returned to be braved and insulted by the French Minister in his audience-chamber, and to be mortified and humiliated by the infatuation of his countrymen, in the Assembly of the States. From the *Congress* being precisely what this Gentleman would make our *Parliament*, "the faithful organ of the people's will;" it reflected and concentrated, instead of repressing and cooling, their *madness*. Nearly one half of the Lower House were found to be smitten with the frenzy; and the question which was to determine whether North America was to keep its place amongst the Nations, or to become the *minion* and the *slave* of imperious *France*, was decided on the side of reason, honour, and interest, by a *single vote*. It was no wonder that the hoary President revolted from the hazard of such another trial; that he resigned a Government for which he could no longer be responsible, and withdrew to his native shades to pass the evening of his illustrious life, thus dismally beclouded in weeping over the disgraces of his beloved, but infatuated country.

At the touch of this single fact, all the unsubstantial pageants of our political *Prospero* waste into

into thin air. In America, there had been no *unwise, unjust, impolitic refusal of Reform*, to turn *moderate Petitioners* into *desperate Insurgents*. They already possessed much more than perhaps even this Gentleman might be willing to concede, and no deviation from original principles could be proved against the Trustees of power. Yet the symptoms of disaffection were fiercer and more virulent than they have yet been in Ireland, notwithstanding all the supposed provocations. "The blaze," says one of the most sagacious American Writers, "did not indeed communicate itself with such rapidity as it had done in *France*, nor did it rage with so much fury when it had caught; however, such was the indefatigableness of the Democratic Club, that *more enmity* was excited to the *general Government* in the space of *six months*, than was excited against the *Colonial Government* at the time of *the Declaration of Independence*." But why was the blaze of Jacobinism less rapid and less furious than in *France*? "Not," says our Author, "because there was any want of art or malice on the part of the Incendiaries;" but because the matter they had to work upon was less advantageously placed. It did not, as in most European Nations, lie in close contact; nor was it equally fitted to communicate the flame. The population was thinly scattered over a vast space, and there was little *idleness* or *mendicancy*. If communication

munication had been as easy, indigence as general, and herds of vagabonds and ruffians as readily collected in America as in Ireland, can we hesitate to pronounce what would have been the event? If the Government (the object of all this rancour, notwithstanding its *perfection*,) was but barely able to keep its ground, as matters actually stood, what must have been its fate, if the speculative traitors in the Clubs and in the Congress could have found, in those dregs of Society which they had not, but which every populous *country must have*, hordes of ferocious men, a thirst for their doctrines, and prompt to execute their purposes? In that case, they would not have confined their vengeance to the *beheading* of a *roasted Pig**, as the emblematic representative of *him* who had helped them to Independence, the unfortunate LOUIS, but would have wreaked it on the living objects of their more intimate malevolence, the virtuous WASHINGTON, the wise ADAMS, and the other active opposers of Revolutionary profligacy.

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* The fact here referred to, is thus stated by the acute and well-informed Author of the History of American Jacobins. "Nor," says he, "were marks of *ferocity* wanting: At a dinner at Philadelphia (at which a *person high in office* was present) a *roasted pig* became the Representative of LOUIS the 16th, and it being the Anniversary of his murder, the pig's head was severed from his body, and then carried round to each of the convives, who, after placing the Liberty-cap upon his own head, pronounced the word *Tyrant*, and gave the poor little animal's head a chop with his knife."

What may be yet the fate of those excellent men, and of that vast Country which they are endeavouring to save from itself, Heaven only knows. It is long since ADAMS, the present President (raised to that dignity against the efforts of the Jacobins, by a majority of three voices), gave his opinion, as plainly as prudence would admit, that the American Constitution was but a fair-weather bark, and not calculated for political storms. "The United States," says he in the preface of his excellent work on *Republics*, "are large and populous Nations, in comparison of the Grecian Commonwealths, or even the Swiss Cantons, and are growing every day more disproportionate, and therefore less capable of being held together by simple Governments. Countries that increase so rapidly as the States of America did, even during such an impoverishing and destructive War as the last, are not to be bound long with silk threads: lions, young or old, will not be restrained by cobwebs." Enough, however, has happened there already, to teach all who are susceptible of instruction, that to undertake to conciliate Jacobins, is to "cast pearls before swine." They "will trample them under their feet," "as the Scripture says, "and *turn again and rend you.*"

But we not only can tell what this gentleman's specific of *timely concession* would *not* have effected;

ed; we can also ascertain its *positive* effects, from much stronger authority than the visions of his high-raised fancy. We have been informed on this subject by the United Irishmen themselves. The well-known Author of "a Letter to Lord FITZWILLIAM," already mentioned as the mouth-piece of that fraternity, very frankly declares, on behalf of his Brethren, "that *any kind of Reform*, sincerely put into execution, "would do *much to please*, but *not to satisfy*, "the People. *Any Reform*," says he, "once "made, would make *EVERY Reform* afterward "more easy; when adopted it would tend to "perfect itself. It may walk on as Catholic "Emancipation, from *gradual* to *TOTAL*."*— What *total Reform* means in the vocabulary of the United Irishmen, need not be explained. The Right Hon. Gentleman himself is aware, that it threatens consequences which no one can contemplate without *horror* and *dismay*.

Of the weighty truth of Doctor DRENNAN'S *candid* acknowledgment, the leading Members of the Irish Legislature were just as well apprized (however a *few* in that Assembly might have contrived to shut their eyes), as the United Irishmen themselves. Reason told them, that if they should once begin to alter the frame-work of the Constitution, merely in obedience to the call of Aggregate Meetings and Primary Assemblies,

* Drennan's Letter to Earl Fitzwilliam.—1795.

blies, it would be impossible to restrain the wantonness of speculation: that every concession would beget new demands, and furnish a precedent for their being complied with; and that at each step, the claimants must grow stronger, and they themselves become still less capable of resistance. They knew also from their own experience, that however proper it might be to adopt new measures on the ground of unquestionable utility, it was idle to expect much even from these, in the way of popular gratification. They themselves had done more of this kind than perhaps any cotemporary Government upon earth. They had raised the *Irish Catholics* from the wretchedness to which the severity of the Penal Code had reduced them, to every thing but Dominion. They had relieved the lowest classes from the only direct tax that they suffered, the Hearth Duty. They had complied with popular wishes of a more elevated kind, by adopting various Laws, tending to assimilate more perfectly the *Irish* to the *British Constitution*. They were even making arrangements in the *Election Laws*, which implied a degree of substantial *Parliamentary Reform* already, and which, by being gradually extended (as no one could doubt but they would be, if frantic turbulence would but leave scope for the free exercise of reason), would effect by safe, but sure degrees, every thing that the true interests of the Country could require. And yet

yet after all, they have seen the populace more agitated and restless than ever; the ignorant vulgar panting for they know not what; their infidious seducers burning for Revolutionary Power; and human Wolves and Tygers already bursting, in horrid herds, through the fences of the Community, to gorge themselves with the blood of the innocent and the spoils of the industrious. And ought they then, in the frantic hope of appeasing these implacable beasts, to have weakened those fences still more, or perhaps broken them down entirely? Ought they to have conceded *that* which the claimants themselves acknowledged, they only asked for hostile purposes, merely to disarm the Government and to arm themselves? The Right Hon. Gentleman asserts *they ought*, and imputes their doing otherwise to “short-sighted pride and obstinacy.” “In their “short-sighted pride and obstinacy,” says he, “they turned a deaf ear to the supplicant, and “they have now perhaps in the open field to “brave the assertor.”

To that *short-sighted pride* and *obstinacy*, as this Gentleman, with perhaps far *shorter-sighted pride*, and much more invincible *obstinacy*, is pleased to miscall it, it is to be ascribed, that we have at this moment less and less reason to apprehend the accomplishment of his gloomy predictions. It was this steady resistance to crude and incongru-

ous theory, which has kept the political power of the State unmutilated and vigorous, and by that means secured a resource for property and life, when the energy of the Law was cramped by that chilling dread, which made the coward perjure himself, and drove even the honest man from the Jury-box. Had they been less "*proud*" and less "*obstinate*," we never should have witnessed those salutary exertions, which have already obliged the combined traitors in the province of Ulster to deliver up those hidden stores of weapons which they had provided against the day of slaughter and themselves to come in, in crowds, to lay hold on the proffered mercy.* The opposition made to such measures, if any such measures could have been proposed at all, would not have been that silly contemptible display of malice mingled with weakness which we have lately witnessed, and which served only to remind us of the *viper* and the *file*. They would have been scouted at once by a mob-dependent majority. The Executive Government, unnerved by an overbearing Faction, would have been, not as *now*, the awe and dread, but the scorn and derision of high-crested Jacobinism. Sure enough there might have been no room for "braving its assertors in the open field." They would have obtained an easier and a speedier triumph by a
Parliament

* See the last Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons.—Pages 10 and 11.—Irish Edition.

Parliament formed to their wish or pliant to their Will. What the cast and character of *such* a Parliament would have been, we may calculate by the *few* who even now dare to pollute the Irish Senate by rank effusions of Sedition. What its most moderate measures would have been, we may also infer, from that late proof of vile succumbency to even the vulgarities of Democracy, their *new modelled Reform Bill*; an instance of departure from their own former principles and professions, at once so absurd, so mean and so hypocritical, that the mover of such a Bill, in order to be in character with his work, ought previously to have been *unpowdered* and *cropt*, and have named himself *Egalité*.

Houses of the Oireachtas

A P P E N D I X,
CONTAINING
THOUGHTS
ON THE
WILL OF THE PEOPLE,

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1794,

WITH A
POSTSCRIPT

NOT PUBLISHED BEFORE.

Houses of the Oireachtas

T H O U G H T S

ON THE

WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

IT has no doubt been frequently observed, that in the various publications, by which the Votaries of Democracy, whether in France, Great Britain, or Ireland, have laboured to spread their principles, and promote their schemes, there is no one expression which occurs so frequently as "The Public Will," or, "The Will of the People." Of *this*, we are sometimes told, that Law is, or ought to be the expression; of *this*, it has been said that the Legislature should be the organ; and in this country in particular, in order to convince us at once that Parliamentary Reform is indispensable, we have been assured, that the House of Commons in its present state "is not calculated to express our deliberate *Will* on any subject of importance."

That so many different persons should agree in using the same words, without attaching to them a determinate meaning, is incredible; nor can it be supposed, that they should repeat the expression, so very frequently as they have done, unless the sense which it conveyed was deemed to be of consequence; we may therefore fairly conclude that this term "The Will of the People," expresses a notion which those gentlemen have well weighed and considered, and that it constitutes a sort of foundation stone in their system.

What the friends of Democracy in this country mean by "The People," they have left us at no loss to determine; we know from their repeated declarations, that by this term they intend the whole aggregate of males who have attained the age of twenty-one years, vagabonds and insane persons excepted. Now as this definition is too plain to admit illustration, all that remains for us to enquire, is, what we are to understand by the *Will* of this numerous Body.

And here we can scarcely mistake, because if we take for our guide the use of words in common speech, which, in this instance particularly, is alone competent to direct us, we can only understand this term in one possible sense, viz. "The good pleasure, or optional determination of the People." And as in our common conduct

duct we never think of exercising our *Will*, except in those cases where we are at liberty to act as we think proper, it follows, that in order to make sense of the expression in question, it must be supposed to imply that the great Body of the People have an inherent right to act in all political matters *as they please*, without restriction or limitation.

Having thus fixed the meaning of the term, let us calmly inquire into its propriety. And here we cannot avoid observing, that persons in their *Reason* very seldom talk about their *Will*. A man of common sense, or of common politeness, finds himself so bound on every side, by the numberless claims and engagements, the greater and the lesser duties of social life, that scarcely in a single case does he profess to act merely as he pleases. If, in any indifferent manner, he actually uses this prerogative, his understanding or his modesty, makes him cautious in an avowal which might be more likely to evince the obstinacy than the dignity of his nature.

But, in matters of a moral nature, where the principles of truth or justice are in question, to talk of *Will* would be considered as involving an absurdity too gross to be tolerated. If, for instance, a Judge on the Bench should say, "it is my
 " *Will*

“ *Will* that such a sentence should be executed ;” if a jury should pronounce it their *Will*, that this or that person should be deemed guilty ; if even an Arbitrator between two disputants should declare it his *Will*, that the matter in dispute should be thus or thus determined, would not every person who heard it be shocked at the grievousness of the nonsense, and resolve it into absolute insanity ? And yet, if we consider for a moment, we must be sensible, that the rule holds equally good in every case where God or our neighbour has claims upon us, and that consequently it is equal madness to think or speak of using our *Will*, in any matter where we are bound by the laws of nature or of society to act in order to a certain end, and to adhere to certain determinate rules of conduct.

Now, whatever force these observations may have respecting individuals, they have infinitely greater force with regard to society at large. For it must be granted that an individual may sometimes use his *Will*, that is, he may in some cases act *as he pleases*. For instance, he may generally chuse the colour or the fashion of his coat ; or he may, for the most part, determine whether he will wear his own hair or a peruke ; or, if he does not live in the fashionable world, he may fix the hour of his meals, or of his rising up and lying down ; because these and such like matters

matters are compleatly indifferent, they terminate in a man's self, and are followed by no consequences. But in matters which concern society, nothing is indifferent. Every movement has its effects, every step more or less affects human happiness. Here, therefore, there is no room, no imaginable pretence for talking about Will, because in no possible case are we left to act *as we please*. In every instance we are bound by the most solemn and irreverfible obligations that the laws of our Nature can lay upon us, to pursue one determinate end, *the Public Good*, and in doing so, to adhere as uniformly to the guidance of reason, of judgment, and of conscience, as any Arbitrator, Juror, or Judge in the world.

To place this matter, if possible, in a still stronger light, let it be considered that the acting part of political Society never act merely for themselves. In all communities, even those of the most popular form, there must be a very numerous portion, who, either from age or sex, are incapable of taking any share in the management of the state, although they are as really interested in its concerns, as its most efficient members. Of these, therefore, the acting Members of the Community are the Guardians or Trustees; and they are not only under every obligation that can be supposed to exist in a common trust, but under infinitely greater ones; in as
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much as infinitely greater evils may arise from their misconduct. Now, what should we think of the Guardians of a Minor, or the Trustees of a Public Charity, who, in any matter relative to their charge, would talk of exercising *their Will*? Would we not instantly conclude that they had lost either all understanding or all conscience, and that, in either view, they were utterly unqualified for their functions? Is it then possible to conceive any thing more exquisitely absurd, than for one moment to admit such a sentiment, or use such an expression, in a case where the sanctity of the trust rises beyond all proportion, where the happiness of millions is perpetually at stake, and where consequently those who act are under the most awful responsibility to God, to their country, and to posterity?

If, however, the term in question was merely absurd, it might be suffered with a thousand other absurdities to pass quietly down the stream of time into the dark and silent gulph of oblivion; but it is much more than absurd, it is mischievous, because it leads directly to opinions and principles the most destructive to the peace and happiness of society that it is possible for the human mind to conceive.

It is somewhat extraordinary that gentlemen who hold themselves forth as the determined
 champions

Champions of Liberty, should at the very time when they are burning with zeal for the Rights of Man, rush into the very extreme of Despotism. Strange however as this may appear, it is neither more nor less than the simple fact, and whoever considers their system with candid attention will speedily be convinced, that while they declaim against the existing Government as oppressive and injurious, the principles which they themselves have adopted, tend directly to the most desperate species of arbitrary Government that ever the earth was cursed with.

The essential character of Arbitrary Power does not consist in the Government being in the hands of one, or of a few persons; it consists simply in its being *a Government of WILL*. And as the Government becomes more arbitrary in proportion as the Will on which it depends is less liable to restraint, so when that *will* is subject to no restraint whatever, then despotism has attained its perfection, it has arrived at that point which it cannot pass. Now, although it is undeniable that the subjection of a whole community to the *Will* of one or of a few persons is a very wretched degradation, yet in this case the evil, though severe, is seldom desperate. Restraints are felt by the Government, though they may not be acknowledged. The Political power is in some de-

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gree checked and counterbalanced by the physical force of the People; and in order to secure the permanency of the Power and the tranquillity of the People, some regard must be had to the laws of Justice, Humanity and Decorum. These, therefore, as well as other circumstances, which it would be easy to adduce, have at least a palliative operation; and we find accordingly, that at this day no Monarchy nor Aristocracy in Europe furnishes an example of pure, unmixed, practical despotism. But when the multitude in any country is unfortunate enough to possess itself of the Sovereign Power, when the People, instead of destroying despotism, actually assume the place of the despot, and in lieu of his Will substitute their own, there, arbitrary Government appears in its most finished form; there it admits of no correction, no palliation; its power is as unlimited as the will on which it depends absolute; it is physically as well as politically supreme; and not being under any necessity of attending to those principles which are binding upon individual man, it exercises almost the omnipotence of a God.

Let us for a moment picture to ourselves the state of things which in such circumstances must necessarily take place. Let us suppose the People, the mixt multitude, set compleatly free from every restraint which had been imposed upon them

them by the habits and customs of regular society, the gradations of rank, the institutions of civil polity, and the authority of Government, and in a situation not only to pronounce their *Will*, but when pronounced to enforce it. Let us suppose them to be fully possessed of the opinion that *the Sovereignty is in themselves*, and that *their Will is the Supreme Law*, and lastly, let us suppose them to know and feel their own strength, and to be satisfied that whatever they may determine upon, *must infallibly be submitted to*; (for the Sovereignty of the Public Will implies all these particulars, or it means nothing at all :) and then let us see whether we can form an idea of a state of society, in which the situation of individuals could be more hazardous, in which there would be less security for Property, for Liberty, or for Life, in which freedom of speech would be more completely annihilated, in which meek virtue and modest worth would be more helplessly exposed to the insults and injuries of savage ferocity and brutal violence; in a word, in which there would be a more calamitous conjunction of uncontrollable despotism and frantic anarchy.

In this Empire of the Public Will let us imagine a case not only probable but inevitable. A difference of opinion to arise on some subject of

importance. We need not ask with whom the power of pronouncing the Will of the People would reside; we know it would of necessity belong to *the Numerical Majority*. But it may concern us to enquire what might be the situation of the *Minority* on such an occasion? Would their opponents certainly confine themselves to the mere weapons of reason and argument? In case the unsuccessful few should be betrayed into any of those asperities of language, those figures of enraged rhetorick, in which disappointed opposition is prone to vent itself, would the *many*, triumphant in their success, and taught by the first principles of their system to *command* rather than to *reason*, be, notwithstanding, patient and liberal, and refrain from using the force of which they would be possessed? If in any instance they should so far rise above the common infirmities of human nature, it would be at most a precarious forbearance, to be admired rather than relied upon. But if, as might much more naturally be expected, they should yield to those passions, to which majorities are no less liable than minorities, and on which in their case there could be no possible controul; if in the insolence of elation, they should be led to consider the vanquished party as rebels against their *Will*, and traitors to their *Sovereignty*, and if in consequence, they should send them by hundreds to prison, or by scores to the Gibbet or the Guillotine; to what quarter

quarter under Heaven could the deplorable victims betake themselves, to what tribunal appeal, to what umpire commit their cause? Could they hope to move the Public Will by expostulation, or to soften it by intreaty? Alas! Mercy is no attribute of an impassioned multitude. The Majesty of the People is too much deafened by its own noise to hear the still voice of personal anguish. What then remains? Merely to submit, to imitate the Canadian savage, who caught in the vortex of Niagara and knowing that it is in vain to struggle, lies down in his canoe, and resigns himself without an effort to the headlong violence of the cataract.

To evince the justness of this melancholy statement, we need not unrol the volume of history. The principle itself, as well as the compleat exemplification of it, seems to have been reserved for our own times, and if we rush into the gulph, it must be with our eyes open. For to what source can we trace the matchless miseries of that wretched country, which is at this day both the detestation and the dread of all the thinking part of Europe, but to the prevalence of that execrable doctrine, *the SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PUBLIC WILL*? *This* their false philosophers had strenuously inculcated, and *this* their speculative politicians had still more unfortunately recognized and adopted. And when once this maddening principle

principle was sent abroad amongst the People, it was in vain afterwards to say, "it shall operate in this or that particular mode." When the Will of the People was acknowledged to be sovereign, it was nugatory in the extreme to tell them, you shall not act by yourselves but by your representatives. Who was competent to tell them this? The most ignorant fool in the community must have detected the grossness of the inconsistency, and have felt that if the Public Will was sovereign, no derived power could prescribe to it a mode of operation. He must at once have been sensible, that if law was nothing but the expression of that Will, and magistracy nothing but its agent, the one must be revocable, and the other dismissible at pleasure; and that consequently observance of the one and obedience to the other must be compleatly optional both with respect to degree and continuance. So much, I say, every illiterate savage was competent to understand, and prompt to practice. But the metaphysical niceties of general and individual Will, of the whole community and its parts, those cobweb threads, by which the Giant, after being turned loose, was to be bound to his good behaviour, these were objects too minute for the opticks of the populace to perceive. These, therefore, were sent back to the legislators, as raw materials for that bauble of a constitution,
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the elaborate work of years*, and the plaything of days, admired, as children do their toys, for a moment, and then torn to pieces. Here, therefore, in the inebriating force of this ardent spirit of false philosophy, we find the cause, the adequate, the necessitating cause of every thing that followed. Of the solemn adoption and giddy violation of engagement after engagement, and oath after oath. Of the rapid succession of faction to faction, each in its turn beginning its career in the plenitude of popular confidence, and terminating it in the murky dungeon, or on the ensanguined Scaffold. Of the domineering insolence of the galleries, and the vile and vicious submission of the senate. Of the more than Turkish despotism of the reigning demagogues, and the more than Cannibal cruelty of the insurgent multitude. Of the sportive carnage, the cold deliberate massacre, the mock trial, and the accumulated execution. In a word, of that series of unparalleled enormities at which a Nero or a Domitian might have shuddered, and which late posterity will be apt to consider, not as historic facts, but as the melancholy fictions of a dark and disturbed fancy.

And will any man in his reason pretend to assert that the populace of whatever country, if taught

* The Committee of Constitution was appointed July 6, 1789, and the Constitution was accepted by the King, September 14th, 1791.

taught the same lesson, and possessed of the same power, would not pursue the same, or nearly the same conduct? The populace of all countries is pretty nearly of that description which we commonly call *the Mob*. And to suppose that an Irish Mob would "bear its faculties more meek," or be one whit purer "in its great office" than a French Mob, is an assumption which neither reason nor experience will warrant. But in truth, whether it would or would not, must rest entirely with its own majestic self. It would be utterly impossible to draw any certain line between its actual sovereignty and the most extreme exercise of it. For as no earthly power could presume to controul the supremacy of its Will, so no finite wisdom could pretend to ascertain the particular line of conduct it might *be pleased* to pursue. Conjecture respecting the future would be almost as idle as complaint concerning the present, or animadversion upon the past. And if any rule of conduct approaching to certainty could be thought of, where irresistible power would be directed by capricious versatility, it would be this and this only, that knowledge, wisdom, industry and virtue, would on all occasions be out-numbered, insulted, and trampled on by ignorance, folly, idleness and profligacy.

To what has been said, I can think but of one plausible objection, viz. that when those gentlemen speak of the Public Will, they do not mean

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mere authoritative Will, but Will directed by reason. I apprehend this is pretty much the same as if they should say, that when they speak of Will, they do not mean Will but Reason. To this therefore I should make but a very short reply. If they mean Reason, why do they not say so? Reason is as ready a term, as intelligible a term, and an infinitely less dangerous term than Will, which after all must imply the *the optional irresponsible determination* of the party to whom it is ascribed, or it involves a palpable absurdity. But in truth, when we consider the nature and character of the party to whom in this instance it is attributed, we must conclude that it cannot mean Reason. Who would either think or speak of the Reason of the numerical multitude, the aggregate of males of twenty-one years and upwards, or even of the Reason of the majority of this mass? These gentlemen are certainly too wise not to know that a Multitude cannot reason. The comparing one proposition with another, weighing their respective pretensions to truth and right, and drawing conclusions is much too minute a work for so vast a body. Besides the certain incapacity of the greater part, the number itself is an insuperable hindrance. If ten thousand Solons were collected, their wisdom would be inoperative; it would be lost in the chaos of dissonant opinions, or the collision of jarring passions. Reason, therefore, in this case, it must be

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acknowledged, would have been the most improper term that could have been thought of; and, we must add, that *Will* is, on the contrary, the most apposite term imaginable; because what a multitude wants in *Reason*, it certainly possesses in *Will*. It may not be able to *argue*, but it is well and fully able to *command*; and it must be owned, that in the crisis of a Revolution, one word of command from the sovereign People would have more energy than ten thousand Reasons from a thousand Philosophers.

And might it not be suspected, that this obvious efficacy of the public *Will* is one reason, at least, why those gentlemen have preferred the term? They want to achieve great things; they have a massy structure to demolish, and will of course have ponderous ruins to remove or blow up. For these vast purposes, the slow cautious operation of *Reason* would be obviously unfit. It would be apter to embarrass and retard, than promote or facilitate. But the *Fiat* of the multitude would operate with as much expedition as the *hey-presto* of a conjuror. It would serve as a sort of political gunpowder, and be as useful to our projectors as the nitrous grain was to Sir Christopher Wren, when preparing the ground for St. Paul's Cathedral. At one burst it would be sufficient to rend in pieces the best cemented work of ages, and scatter the component parts

parts into distant lands. It might indeed be less applicable to the business of raising a new structure; but this is a remote, if not an unnecessary consideration, and evidently makes no essential part of the present plan. For it must be obvious to every person, that if the Public Will were once fairly established, it would effectually supersede the labour of Constitution-making. The simplicity of this principle would need no standard to direct its movements, and the supremacy of it would admit none. *Constitutions*, therefore, would be completely nugatory, mere systems of Resolves, rescindible *ad libitum*, and affording no sort of security to individuals against the sovereign power, nor to the minority against the majority. "The Will of the People," as *Rousseau* observes, with more than his usual consistency, "expressed by a majority of votes, which can enforce obedience to the Sovereign Power, cannot bind the Sovereign Power to itself—and there can be no fundamental obligatory law established for the Body of the People, not even the Social Contract*."—Constitutions, of course, however ingeniously constructed, could only serve the purposes of printers and pastry cooks, first employing the presses of the former, and then furnishing waste paper for the latter.

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* Social Contract. Dublin Edit. 1791. Book 1. Chap. 7.

But there may be another, and perhaps not a less powerful motive to the use of the term in question. To every person who has read the publications of the United Irishmen, it must be apparent, that, be their intent wicked or charitable, they are always labouring *ad captandum vulgus*. They make their appeal, uniformly, to the great mass of the people; they adapt their arguments to the views and feelings of the lowest class; and they even intreat the individuals of that class to hang up their Plan of Reform (as they are pleased to call it) in their respective cottages. All, it is evident, to rouse this numerous body to make use of its natural energies, in order to extort from the monopolizing few (i. e. from those who have been more industrious, more prudent, or more fortunate) a due proportion of power and property. Now, on this stimulative plan it must be acknowledged, that the *Public Reason* would be the most unfit term, and that the *Public Will* is the properest term which the copiousness of language could furnish. Talk to a day-labourer of Public Reason. If he understood you at all he would form an idea of a principle so cold in its nature, and so slow in its operation, as to give him no prospect of that near and sensible advantage, which alone is adequate to rouse those minds to action whose views extend little beyond the present hour. On the other hand, talk to him of *the Public Will*;

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he will think immediately of something which is as rapid as it is irresistible, which is fully equal at once to melt down "the happiness which is" now "heaped up in mounds and to diffuse it "amongst the million."* Again, the cottager, ignorant and illiterate as he is, would be apt to perceive, that if the *Reason* of the People were to be the standard of Law and Government, the state of things would be nearly as distant from that beloved *Equality* which he has been taught to expect, as it is at present; because even he must be sensible that intellectual ability is almost as unequally distributed as wealth itself; that those who possess it in any degree, are almost as limited in number as those who at present govern the state; and that consequently he and his brethren of the multitude, would be as completely distanced in the political race, as they are at this day. On this plan, therefore, the honest man could hardly be induced, to exert himself he knows not why, and to gain he knows not what. But speak to the same person of the *Public Will*; he finds every thing in that idea which his heart can desire; he feels that in *Will* there is complete Equality; for he is conscious that he could be as obstinate in his *determinations*, and as imperious in his *commands*, as the wisest man in the community. He, of course,

* See Essay xvii.—Page 149.

course, takes fire at the thought; he rises in his own estimation, feels himself already an integrant part of the Sovereignty; and glowing alternately with indignation at his visionary wrongs, and with delight at the no less visionary happiness which presents itself to his view, he looks forward with impatience to the hour, when he is to grasp the Bludgeon or the Pike in support of his indefeasible claims.

One reason more, and perhaps not the least influential, may still remain. Those Gentlemen must be perfectly aware that after every change in the political system which the genius of versatility can suggest, some kind of government must still remain, and that government must be necessarily managed by a Few. But in case they could carry into practice their plan of reform, they cannot entertain a doubt that the populace, indebted as they would be, to *their* exertions, would not fail to put into *their* hands the superintendence of the public rights, and the administration of the public sovereignty. Now it is certain, that no man or men, who at any time have either been possessed of power, or hoped to possess it, ever harboured the thought that that power was too summary or too extensive. It is therefore the most natural thing in the world that those worthy patriots, conscious, as they must be, of their own *upright Intentions*, and *pure love of their*

their country, should have an eye, in their present language, to their future situation; and carefully avoid even the verbal adoption of any principle by which their own hands might be tied up, or those of their enemies armed against them. To errors of this kind, both the *Constitutionalists* and the *Brissotins* in France fell a sacrifice; and perhaps their Irish copyists have learned wisdom from their example. I by no means affirm that those Gentlemen have actually such an intention; but this I will say, that if they have, they could not have adopted a mode of expression more perfectly suitable to such a design. For if, as I have endeavoured to shew, the Sovereignty of the Public Will implies the most absolute and uncontrollable power, and if (as every person will allow to be likely) those Gentlemen should become the Agents and Trustees of that Sovereignty, it will follow that those Gentlemen would then be in possession of a power compared with which the Dictatorship of *Julius Caesar* would be a trifle. And the only possible obstacle to the complete exercise of this power would be the introduction of the notion of *Reason*. For this, as has been already observed, would directly militate against the idea of complete equality. It would of course excite jealousy and suspicion, and would assuredly leave room for another class of Demagogues to come forward,

forward, who, by using a more palatable language, would catch the ear of the multitude, first supplant their predecessors, and then trample them down. But by adopting at once the simple idea of the *Will of the People*, they possess themselves of the very Palladium of oligarchick Despotism. They go at once to the extreme of theory, where they are equally safe from suspicion, controul, or supplantation. They leave no room for any Rival to go beyond them, and the more bold and overbearing they are in their language, and the more summary in their conduct towards those who may happen to be obnoxious to them, the more fully will the populace be persuaded that the power which they see exercised is a direct emanation from themselves, and that those who actually manage both it and them, are but the Eagles who bear the Thunder of the Sovereign People.

On the whole then, let me intreat the sober, moderate, intelligent Part of the Community, who, I humbly hope, will attend to these remarks, and of whose approbation alone I am ambitious, to ask their own understandings, to consult their own feelings, whether the *Sovereignty of the Public Will* or the *Will of the People*, is not a principle in every point of view ruinous and detestable. Whether it is not a monster in politicks, which even poetic fiction is inadequate

inadequate to describe a blind and shapeless thing, which adds, to the mutability of Proteus, the hands of Briareus, and the heads of the Hydra? And whether those men, who knowingly and wilfully persevere in disseminating and inculcating it upon the ignorant and the unthinking, may not justly be considered as candidates for the priesthood of that Bloody God, to whom weakness and innocence were offered up in sacrifice, amidst the clangour of Drums and Trumpets.

Houses of the Oireachtas

P O S T S C R I P T
TO
T H O U G H T S
ON THE
W I L L O F T H E P E O P L E.

Nov. 1, 1795.

IF the reader does not consider the half hour, he has given to the preceding Pages, as wholly thrown away, I entreat him to accompany me through a few Paragraphs more. They are the result of subsequent reflection, and may perhaps tend both to throw additional light on the subject, and to render the remarks which I have offered, more applicable to the actual circumstances of the day.

It is generally acknowledged, that nothing has contributed more to excite the revolutionary *Mania* by which Europe has been agitated, than that well known work of *Rousseau*, the *Contrât Social*. The leading principle of this Book, which *Rousseau* lays down as the foundation of his whole system, is the very doctrine which I have combated, viz. that the general or public Will is the only legitimate source of law, and the very Essence of Sovereignty.

Considering *Rousseau* therefore, as the Apostle of modern democracy, I attended particularly to his positions, and most of all in the definition of terms; at the same time not losing sight, either of the *practical* Elucidations of his Disciples in France, or of the Comments and Paraphrases of his equally willing, but (thanks be to Heaven) less able followers in our own Country and in Great Britain.

The People I stated to mean, in the Democratick Vocabulary, the numerical aggregate of Males in a Community. My readers will recollect how fully I was warranted in this, by the repeated and wide-spread publications of the United Irishmen; and, let me now observe that I was equally supported by the Doctrines of their Political Patriarch. "In order" says *Rousseau* "to the Will being general, it is not necessary that it should be unanimous; but it is necessary that all the Voices be counted, for every formal exclusion breaks the generality of the Will."* I said also, that in order to make sense of the expression, the Public Will, or the Will of the People, it must be supposed to imply, that the People have an inherent right to act as they please, without restriction or limitation; and this too *Rousseau* maintains in still stronger

* *Contrât Social.* Book II. Chap. 2. Page 44: Note, Paris Edition of 1790.

stronger terms. "In every state of the case, says he," (i. e. be it right or wrong) "the People are
 "Masters of their own laws, and may change
 "even the best laws; for if they chuse to do
 "themselves an injury who has a right to pre-
 "vent them?"†

Now, what is to be inferred? Evidently that the Will of the People, as expressed by the numerical Majority is, according to the Democratic Creed, paramount to every thing, to individual and social happiness, to the principles of reason and justice, to the laws of nature and the commands of God; and it follows on the whole, that I have not attacked a Phantom of my own Creation, but on the contrary, a real political monster, and precisely in the form in which it issued from the perturbed brain in which it was gendered.

But, after all, it is fair to remark that although *Rousseau* discovers all a Father's fondness for this wayward offspring of his fancy, his mode of managing it proves that he was somewhat jealous of its tendencies. Almost at the moment of its production, he sets himself to swathe its gigantic Limbs with multiplied restrictions, and places it within the windings of a logical Labyrinth, perplexed as that of *Crete*; intending perhaps little more than that it should serve as a sort of Bugbear to keep Kings and Statesmen to their good
 behaviour

† Book II. Chap. 12. Pages 94 and 95.

behaviour, as nurses scare unruly children by telling them of Hobgoblins. Little did he imagine that the period was just at hand, when his frantic followers, smit with strange love, would penetrate his Labyrinth, dissolve his Ligatures, and turn loose the full grown Fury, horribly hissing, and burning with the thirst of blood, upon a devoted World.

The simple truth is, that *Rousseau*, though as I have observed, the father of these new doctrines, held them himself with strange inconsistency. At one time we see him (as in the above cited Passage,) exhibiting the Supremacy of the Public Will not only in all its strength, but in all its horrors. At another time he would fain restrain its exercise with infinite Limitations, in order to do what he himself had declared, no one had a right to do, to keep the many-headed Sovereign from injuring itself. Sometimes we are told the general Will is always right, nor can it even have the inclination to injure the subject;* it is in effect every man's own will,† and therefore in obeying it, a man only obeys himself. Again, nay on some occasions almost in the same breath, the Public Will may err under the influence of deception;‡ through the predominance of a powerful faction it may degenerate into the mere Will of an Individual

* *Contrât Social*. Book II. Chap. 3. Page 47. and Chap. 4. Page 51. † Book II. Chap. 4. Page 55. and Chap. 6. Page 64.

‡ Book II. Chap. 3. Page 47.

vidual; § and even the Will of All may not be the general Will, because the former is not necessarily more than a collection of the Wills of Individuals. || Once more, in order to the Will being general, it is necessary that the People shall have no previous communication with each other, but that each speak his opinion entirely from himself; * and yet we are assured on the other hand that all have need of Guides some, to make their Wills conformable to their Reason; and others, to teach them what it is they wish to obtain. † Nay on some occasions it may be necessary to trepan them into happiness, by pretending a divine commission from Heaven; and to do this effectually is, in the Judgment of *Rousseau*, the mark of a magnanimous and comprehensive mind. ‡

Had the French Philosophers delayed their political experiments, until they had assimilated all these jarring Elements, their projects would have been as inefficient as the golden dreams of the Alchemists. They therefore went to work in another way. It was no difficult thing for their master to combine contradictions; he had only to form a theory and write a Book; their grander destiny was to regenerate a nation. What therefore they could not apply simultaneously, without defeating their own Design, they seem to have resolved, with exquisite sagacity, to make use of in succession. The leading Principle taken by

§ Book II. Chap. 3. Page 49.

|| Page 48.

* Book II. Chap. 3, 48, and 49.

† Chap. VI. Page

66, 67.

‡ Chap. VII. Pages 73, 74.

by itself would be infallible for destroying the System then in being; and the various restrictions might be no less serviceable, when they should have established their own System, and wished to defend it against those who might assail them with their own Weapons.

I will not positively assert, that this was their precise mode of reasoning; but, certain it is that such has been their practice. We have beheld the first part of the Scheme; we have heard the Public Will declared supreme; we have seen its sovereignty in perfect exercise, and we have shuddered at its horrid efficacy. We have now also witnessed the latter part. We have heard the most distinguished Revolutionists, eager no longer to demolish the power of others, but possessed of power themselves, and anxious to retain it, declaiming against Anarchy and Insubordination, insulting by the most opprobrious epithets, what they had just before decked with the attributes of Majesty; and determining on that very means of resisting popular violence, for which *La Fayette* had been proscribed, and a deadly charge exhibited against their unfortunate King. We have seen Clubs and Associations, the very nerves and sinews of the Revolutionary System, indiscriminately torn asunder. We have seen the Sections of Paris, so lately had in honour, as the only visible head of the unwieldy Sovereign, beaten down and trampled on. We have seen the Primary Assemblies, (the body
of

of that same Sovereign) restricted and coerced, to ensure their concurrence with the predetermination of their nominal Servants but real Masters. And we have seen this wonderful influence, compared with which, all that has ever been asserted by the most enraged Demagogues, of the power of a British Minister over the return of Representatives at a general election, is a trifle, a shadow, a thing not to be named, we have seen this influence, I say, passively submitted to, and the two-thirds of the Convention triumphantly reinstated. In a word, we have seen the Empire of the many, sink down, loaded with the Curse of God and Man, into that Sea of Blood which its own Murders had produced; and we behold arisen in its room, the dominion of the Philosophic Few, cemented by intrigue, guarded by military force, and resting on the inertness of an exhausted people.

Yes, when the business was completely done; when the Revolutionary Comet had accomplished its disastrous round, and had shook "from its horrid hair," death, devastation, and havoc, on every quarter of that doomed Country; when the Demons of envy and avarice had been glutted to satiety; when rank had been degraded, opulence pillaged, the social fabric overthrown, and its very foundations ploughed up; when *Patriots* once mendicant and meagre had grown sleek with confiscated abundance; and *Statesmen*,

unknown before, or known only by the profligacy of their Pens, and the Prostitution of their Talents, had risen to the height of power, and fallen again as rapidly, undermined by more subtle villainy; and when at length all had known and felt that they had deadly weapons for each other, as well as for Royalists and Aristocrats; then and not before, they acknowledged the force of those eternal truths, which common sense and common honesty might have taught them from the beginning. "Then," saith *Louvet*, (for it is impossible to find expressions more directly in point, or more clearly dictated by imperious conviction) "I was obliged to own that of
 " all species of slavery that which Anarchy produces is the most intolerable; for when it is the
 " ignorant and deceived multitude that reigns,
 " crimes multiply in proportion to the rulers." *

But mark the unwillingness of this confession. Stretched and distorted as the mind of *Louvet* was on the rack of desperate disappointment, still he utters with reluctance this equal dictate of his understanding and his feelings. And why? Because he felt that in making such an acknowledgment, he renounced what he had once held as the first of all Political truths; he felt that he renounced Democracy; that he gave up at once, what he and his brethren had contended for, at the expense of crimes unknown to the fiercest nations,
 the

* See *Louvet's* Recital of his Perils.

the ruin of his Country and the risk of the World. But having brought himself thus far, he does not stop; one extreme leads, by the laws of nature, to another; and *Louvet* indemnifies himself for his Democratick delusion, by adopting a principle of the most outrageous Aristocracy. "Oh why!" exclaims he, after an enumeration of horrors unparalleled in the annals of barbarity, "was nothing short of this melancholy experience sufficient to convince me, that without distinction of poverty or opulence, of grandeur or obscurity, I will even say in general of vain knowledge, or absolute ignorance, and under the sole exception of virtue, which appertains but to a few privileged philosophers, men *ought to be Slaves*, because they are either wicked themselves, or are ready to crouch before the wicked?"

Did *Louvet* speak thus from the mere impulse of the hour, or did he alone hold this opinion? He has taken care to convince us that neither was the case. The short passage from the then unpublished manuscript of *Madame Roland*, which stands as a Motto on his title page, and which conveys precisely the same sentiments, only in a milder and more plaintive tone, proves both that *Louvet* was not singular in the doctrine he had embraced, and that he considered it not only as incontrovertible, but as a most important truth. "Righteous Heaven," says she, "illuminate this wretch-

“ ed people for whom I desire liberty. Liberty !
 “ Ah ! it is for exalted spirits who despise death,
 “ and who know when it is right to inflict it. It is
 “ not for those corrupted men, who emerging
 “ from the bed of debauchery, or the mire of in-
 “ digence, rush forward to bathe in the blood
 “ which flows from from the scaffolds. It is for
 “ a wise people who cherish humanity, practise
 “ justice, despise flatterers, know their true
 “ friends, and respect truth. So long as you are
 “ not such a people, oh ! my fellow Citizens, in
 “ vain will you talk about liberty. You can
 “ only have a licentiousness, to which each of
 “ you will fall a victim in his turn ; you will ask
 “ for bread, and they will give you dead bodies ;
 “ and you will finish by being enslaved.”

Now, was there ever such a people as Madame
Roland here declares to be alone fit for liberty ?
 Was there ever an instance of the numerical
 multitude in any full grown community being
 wise, humane, and just, despising flatterers, know-
 ing their real friends, and respecting truth ? Or is
 it imaginable that mankind in the mass can be
 any other than that weak, sensual, passionate
 thing, which she describes, and which she pro-
 nounces to be utterly incapable of liberty ?
 What then is the result of Madame *Roland's*
 doctrine ? evidently that liberty is only for society,
 as, in populous states at least, it never was, nor
 ever can be ; and that in the mean time, men may
 talk

talk of liberty, but cannot possibly enjoy it; they may create licentiousness, but must themselves be slaves.

That the leaders of the Jacobin party were always of this opinion can scarcely be doubted; and when the Girondists, once the only real Republicans in France, had also adopted it, it is not strange that the affairs of that country should have assumed their present form and colour. It is easy to see that this doctrine furnishes a complete clue to all the proceedings of the Convention during the formation of the new Legislature. When they were convinced that man is incapable of liberty, and that the few philosophers being alone possessed of virtue, were alone qualified to possess power, and when they were no less certain that they themselves were the privileged few, their civism united with their ambition to engage them by every means to perpetuate their own supremacy, and to reduce the people to that impotence which alone befitted the weakness and the wickedness of their nature.

And it is but justice to acknowledge, that after what they had done in the first instance, some such procedure was unavoidable. In order to achieve their primary object, they had turned their country into one great Bedlam; and
 frenzy

frenzy, once excited, is not to be reasoned down. Men in their senses may be led by argument, but Maniacs must be chained. A severe discipline was necessary to restore the philosophers themselves to their understanding; but when this was once effected, the principle of self preservation alone, was sufficient to produce what followed. They were convinced by arguments which addressed all their senses at once, that society could not exist without Government; and common sense pointed out that the strength of a government must be increased in proportion to the licentiousness of those to be governed. In a word they felt that the politicks of *Machiavel* furnished the only antidote for the poison of *Rousseau*, and they yielded to the conviction with the impetuosity of Frenchmen.

But in allowing the suitableness of the new French principles to the circumstances of that wretched country, let it not be imagined that I acknowledge their general truth. After all that *Louvet* and his brethren can say, there is no general necessity for man being either Tyrant or Slave. Desperate diseases in the social as well as in the natural body may require severity of regimen; and no disease incident to society, can be more dreadful than the dissolution of all order, and the uncontrouled dominion of the frantic multitude. In this case the only adequate remedy

medy is the equally unlimited authority of One or of a Few. Rome, even in its best days, was subject to occasional paroxysms of Anarchy, and the temporary despotism of a dictator was the stated resource. But still the social body is capable of health as well as sickness; and we are authorized to assert that rational liberty is as suitable to the former, as rigorous restraint is to the latter. We have learned this comfortable truth from the actual and long experience of our own most happy Constitution; under which, with the most ample scope for the exercise of reason, the indulgence of peculiarity, and the very sportiveness of whim, effectual means have ever been at hand, for the protection of person and property, as well from the attacks of undue power on the part of the rulers, as from the depredations of individuals, or the madness of a mob.

But one cannot help enquiring how those of our own country who have affected to despise British Liberty, and have been so long bestowing invidious praises on French politics and French patriotism, will relish these new doctrines. Will they put their intellects to the torture in order to reconcile flat contradictions, and devise theories to shew how the same men at the same time may hold the necessity of Universal Slavery and yet be labouring to establish Universal Liberty? Or
will

will they fairly give up their apostate brethren; and send out their fancies to circumnavigate the Globe, in hope of finding "some happier Island" "in the watry waste," where the vision of Democracy may yet be realized?

It is astonishing with what pertinacity men sometimes resist the evidence of truth. Common sagacity alone might have taught before hand that a popular revolution was of all imaginable expedients the least likely to produce rational liberty. it might have been seen without the aid of experiment, that such a revolution must necessarily imply a dissolution of all law and government; that law and government being once destroyed, anarchy with all its horrors must succeed; that society could not long exist in such a state; that at length any government would appear preferable to none; that those who should happen to stand highest, be they who they might, whether they had been thrown up by accident, or raised by their own villainy, whether, as Madame Roland says, they had emerged from the mine of indigence, or crept from the bed of debauchery, that these would grasp the reins, and when they had seized them, would be impelled alike by the natural love of power, and by the exigencies of the country, to manage them with all the rigidity of Despotism; so that after a course of blood and devastation, of private and of public misery, the

the only termination that reason could expect, would be the very point, or something worse than the very point from which the business had commenced.

And let it not be thought that a successful mode of conducting revolutions can be learned from experience, or that the miscarriages in one may possibly be corrected in the next that occurs. Common sense alone will teach any man, who is not deaf to its suggestions, that when once the cement of society is dissolved, and general insurrection carried successfully into practice, resistance, management, and direction are totally at an end. Every future movement is at the mercy of accident. The power which is at work is as irresistible as the mountain torrent, and the directing principle as versatile as the whirlwind. Wisdom may seek to convince, or eloquence to charm; but one only influence can be built upon as certain, the magnetic attraction of superior villainy.

“ I had seen men, !” saith the same *Louvet*
 “ in a body in their public life, and had de-
 “ tested them. I had reason to know them
 “ too well individually in their private life, and
 “ hatred was changed into contempt; since even
 “ in a country which I thought about to be
 “ regenerated, the good are so pusillanimous,

“ and the wicked so violent, that every aggre-
 “ gate of men, pompously called the *People*,
 “ by fools like me, is in reality but a feeble
 “ herd, happy to crouch to a master, whether it
 “ be a *Robespierre* or a *Massaniello*, a *Marat* or
 “ a *Nero*.”

What then have the French gained by resorting to a popular revolution? Have they gained rational liberty? No; their present rulers pronounce them to be incapable of it, and only to be fit slaves. Have they gained wealth, happiness, or peace? Alas! many years must revolve before their country will recover what it has lost. “ Our manufactures,” saith the “ most eloquent of their orators, “ are languish-
 “ ing, our maritime trade is destroyed; whilst
 “ our victories render us illustrious abroad, dis-
 “ order shakes the very foundation of society at
 “ home.”* What, I ask then have they gained? They have gained what every large country must gain in similar circumstances; they have gained misery in all its forms, they have gained a load of guilt, at which nature shudders, they have gained a rigid and despotick government, the highest praise of which is that it is better than no government at all, for the continuance of which there is no security, and against whose incroachments there is no one possible remedy, but a recurrence to that desperate expedient found already to be even

* See Essay IV.

even worse than the disease, *General Insurrection*.

If then the bloody Drama of the French revolution were to be acted over again, can we imagine that the men who make these acknowledgements would support the same characters, and exhibit the same conduct as before? Would *Lowvet*, after having discovered that every aggregate of men is a feeble herd, and that therefore they ought to be slaves, again proclaim the sovereignty of the Popular Will, and again utter that pompous nonsense, for which he here pronounces himself and his brethren *fools*? Would *Boissy D'Anglas*, after being convinced that that country only where "men of property govern, is in a state of society, and that that where men without property govern is in a state of nature," * return once more to the naked Rights of Man, and the rule of the numerical multitude? Would *Pelet*, after deploring that for "five years past they had been oppressed and severely smarted, and that the erroneous system of their political economy was the source of all their sufferings," have recourse a second time to the same economy, and retrace that career of calamity, from the retrospect of which he revolts with horror? Shall

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* Report to the Commission from the Committee of Constitution 23d of June, 1795.

we then who have witnessed both their conduct and its consequences, and who now hear their extorted acknowledgments receive no benefit from so instructive an example? We have those amongst *us* also, who would willingly precipitate their country into the same extremity of wretchedness, and who would as certainly seek a remedy for that wretchedness in the same desperate expedients. Let us then, keep perpetually in view the whole horrors of that system which is not more hateful for the anarchy with which it commences, than for the degrading despotism to which it necessarily leads. Let the happy Constitution which secures us equally from both these evils rise in our estimation in proportion to the miseries which we see others suffer; and the genuine liberty—the safety both of person and property, which we and our fathers have uninterruptedly enjoyed; and let it be the object of our most active vigilance and zeal, to transmit to our latest posterity, this invaluable inheritance, preserved alike inviolate from the frenzy of enthusiasts, and the malignity of traitors.

F I N I S.