

THE PROPOSED
SYSTEM OF TRADE
WITH
IRELAND
EXPLAINED.

[Price One Shilling and Six Pence.]

Houses of the Oireachtas

THE PROPOSED
S Y S T E M
OF
T R A D E
WITH
I R E L A N D
EXPLAINED.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY AND FOR JOHN NICHOLS;
AND SOLD BY T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND;
G. G. AND J. J. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER
ROW; AND J. SEWELL, IN CORNHILL.

MDCCLXXXV.

THE HISTORY

OF THE

ROYAL

ACADEMY

AND OF THE

PROCEEDINGS

LONDON

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MDCCLXXXIII.

Houses Of the Oireachtas

THE intended arrangement for a final settlement of all commercial points with Ireland is of too interesting a nature to the public, to render any apology necessary for an attempt to explain, briefly and fairly, the effect it will have on the interests of this kingdom. The Author of the following sheets has been induced to collect the matter therein contained hastily, in order, if possible, to clear the subject from misrepresentations, whether intentional or otherwise.

The Resolutions were no sooner received from Ireland, than they were printed with comments, accompanied with a part of what Mr. Orde is reported to have said, in opening them in the House of Commons there. These papers have been circulated with infinite industry, and at a consider-

able expence, all through England and Scotland. If this has been done, from pure principles of patriotism, merely to awaken the attention of the merchants, traders, and manufacturers of Great Britain to their true interests; those who have so employed their time and their money deserve commendation: But if all their exertions have proceeded from a desire to throw difficulties in the way of a permanent settlement with Ireland, on terms of equality and mutual advantage, or, if possible, to prevent it entirely, they will unquestionably merit the execrations of all honest and well-meaning men. The arguments on one side have been produced in declamatory pamphlets, hand-bills, essays, and paragraphs; in answer to those, a patient attention to a plain statement of facts is earnestly entreated;—the public will, if that is given, be able to form a fair judgement of a business, in which, from the nature of it, we must expect to encounter prejudices, as well as good sense and reason.

The opinions of those who object to the proposed system are so various, and appear to have so little foundation, that it is not easy to collect the substance of their apprehensions;—they must,
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however, mean to contend, that it will have a dangerous operation on the navigation and the commerce of this country. It is, therefore, proper to shew the present situation of Ireland, with the means by which she has attained it; the one she wishes to be placed in, and the probable effects which the whole arrangement will have, if completed, on our manufactures, our trade, and our shipping.

Ireland is, at this time, an independent kingdom, in possession of a constitution as free as the one we have the happiness to enjoy, with a right to trade with every nation on earth, which chuses to trade with her. The connection which subsists between her and this country induces her, however, to restrain herself in many instances, and to confine her consumption to the produce of Great Britain and her Colonies, for the mutual advantage of the two countries.

Ireland being, therefore, in possession of a right to a free trade with all the world, she complains of restraints still imposed on her by Great Britain, in whose favour she has restrained herself. Great concessions, it is true, have been made to her

within these few years, during a former administration; they were made, however, but as necessity compelled them; without system, without concert, and without even previously knowing what satisfaction they would afford her; much less was any attempt made to obtain the smallest advantage in return: nothing was ever attended to, but on the pressure of the moment; when her calls were loud and alarming, an expedient was to be thought of to stop them*; in that manner she obtained the acts of 18 Geo. III. ch. 55, and the 20th Geo. III. ch. 10. Under the last, she derived the most important benefit of all, a direct trade to the British Colonies, infinitely more valuable to her than every thing which, from that time, remained to be given to her. It is not intended here to cen-

* Mr. Fox said in the House of Commons in 1782, when Secretary of State, "The late Ministers never looked beyond the present moment; they never provided for what was to come; they never did things either finally or effectually."

Parl. Debates, 1782, vol. VII. p. 8.

And in another debate the same gentleman said, "When the late Ministers agreed to the extension of the trade of Ireland, they should have ultimately settled the claims, and fixed the situation; they ought to answer to the country for not having done it; that measures would be taken for this desirable end." The same vol. p. 12.

sure

sure that measure in the smallest degree, but to insist that it should have formed but a part of a final settlement, which might then have been concluded with infinitely less difficulty than now: Great Britain having thus relieved Ireland so far, by opening to her a free trade to the British Colonies in Africa and America, upon the same terms on which she trades with them herself; she now requests, as a completion of the measure, that Great Britain will remove the remaining restrictions which still fetter her trade, urging as the basis of her claim, **EQUALITY IN TRADE, FOR MONOPOLY OF CONSUMPTION.**

This equality was intended to have been proposed by Lord North, in the year 1779, if he had possessed energy enough to have perfected a system of any sort*; but as that could not be done

* Lord Hillsborough, in December, 1779, explaining what he meant in a former debate, said, “the obvious meaning of his words was, that, previous to his acceptance of the seals as Secretary of State, he desired to know the intentions of his Majesty’s Ministers, and the opinion of his Council, relative to future measures respecting Ireland; and received every assurance from them, that Government was thoroughly disposed to co-operate with Parliament in giving to that kingdom such an extension of trade as

done without an accurate investigation and minute inquiries, the decision was from time to time delayed till within twenty-four hours of the Irish business being opened in the House of Commons in that year, notwithstanding an unanimous address had been presented to the King at the close of the preceding Session, “ recommending to
 “ His Majesty’s most serious consideration, the distressed and impoverished state of the loyal and
 “ well-deserving people of Ireland; and to direct
 “ would put her on a footing with Great Britain on the
 “ scale of commerce; this was what he meant; he accepted
 “ the seals upon that idea, and no other.”

Parliamentary Debates, 1779, vol. XV. p. 94.

Lord Hillsborough’s meaning was afterwards further explained by Lord Beauchamp in the House of Commons, when Lord North was present: “ that an equal trade would
 “ be granted to Ireland, upon the broad basis of impartiality
 “ and justice.” Vol. XVI. p. 116.

Lord North, in the debate upon his bill for giving the Irish the direct trade to the Colonies, a free exportation of woollens, &c. said, “ he acknowledged this was but a rough outline of the general plan on the idea of an equal trade; it
 “ would demand much consideration, and require much modelling; it was a matter of infinite delicacy; would call
 “ for a great deal of detail and inquiry, &c. &c. &c.”

Vol. XVI. p. 183.

“ that

“ that there be prepared, and laid before Parliament,
 “ such particulars, relative to the trade and manu-
 “ factures of Great Britain and Ireland, as to enable
 “ the national wisdom to pursue effectual measures,
 “ for the common strength, wealth, and commerce
 “ of His Majesty’s subjects in both kingdoms;” and
 his Majesty’s answer, “ that he would give direc-
 “ tions accordingly;” a determination was then
 at length suddenly taken, to give the boon just
 mentioned, without the promised information.
 As soon, however, as the measure was resolved on,
 another of His Majesty’s ministers, who highly ap-
 proved of it, sent off the pleasing intelligence to
 Ireland; and it was actually known to the mer-
 chants of Dublin, Cork, and Waterford, before the
 Lord Lieutenant had advice of it. A benefit, so
 bestowed and communicated, was estimated by the
 Irish naturally enough, much below its real value,
 and the full effect of it was consequently lost.

While the ports of Ireland are open to receive
 from Great Britain every species of commodity,
 whether the produce of Great Britain and her
 colonies, or any other part of Europe, Asia,
 Africa, and America; Great Britain, either by an
 interpretation of the Navigation Act or subse-
 quent laws, by actual prohibitions, or by prohi-

bitions arising from duties, shuts her ports against Ireland in those articles of commerce which Ireland admits freely from her.

This inequality is complained of by Ireland, as unwise as well as oppressive; she desires therefore that she may be at liberty to import into Great Britain every species of goods, whether raw materials or manufactures, which Great Britain can import into Ireland upon equal terms reciprocally.

The articles in which Ireland is restrained may be divided into two kinds.

1st, All articles the produce of the British Colonies in Asia, Africa, and America; and

2dly, Certain articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture, as well of Great Britain as of Ireland.

Ireland is restrained in the first by an interpretation of the Navigation Act as explained by the twenty-second and twenty-third of Charles the Second, Ch. 26. and the Irish acts of fourteenth and fifteenth Charles

Charles the Second ; and in the last by actual prohibitions, or by prohibitory duties.

Let us suppose that all articles not the growth, produce, or manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland, should be admitted to importation into each kingdom from the other, upon the same duties to which they would be subject if imported from the places of their growth ; and that the quantum of duties not drawn back upon the exportation of those articles, should be precisely the same in both countries : That upon articles the native produce or manufacture of either country no prohibition should exist, but that all such articles should be importable from either country into the other ; and that the duties payable upon each article should be precisely the same in both countries.

The first proposition relates then to the articles of commerce not the growth, produce, or manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland ; and the last to those articles which are the native produce or manufacture of either country.

The fair way on such a supposition of examining how far such concessions may affect the trade of Great Britain, will be to state how the law stands at present upon each proposition, and how it will stand hereafter, pointing out the particular objects of produce or manufacture, which will be affected by the alteration, and then to consider each particularly.

Much contrariety of opinion has been held in Great Britain and Ireland about the interpretation of the Navigation Act, as to its permitting the produce of Asia, Africa, and America, to be carried to Ireland through Great Britain, but restraining the same produce being brought to Great-Britain through Ireland. The construction, however, in both countries, has invariably been, that, the words "foreign growth," &c. do not relate to goods, &c. the growth, produce, or manufacture of Europe; and the practice has always been accordingly to admit such goods, &c. from the one country into the other, upon the same duties as they

they would be subject to from the place of their growth *.

If the law is now to be altered, to put both countries on the same footing, it will follow that Ireland will apparently acquire a liberty of exporting to Great Britain the produce of Asia, Africa, and America!

The trade of Great Britain can, however, be affected only in articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the two last-mentioned quarters of the world; because she has by her own laws restrained her importation of Asiatic produce from all places except Great Britain, giving the East India Company a monopoly of her consumption; and the goods of Europe have always been admitted without interruption from the one country into the other.

With respect to Africa, there exists at present no trade or intercourse between it and Ireland;

* The fourth section, requiring goods to be brought directly from the place of their growth, refers to the countries aforesaid, Asia, Africa, and America, mentioned in the third section.

nor is there much prospect of any; as there is, however, a possibility of one, it shall be considered with the trade of America, which is of considerable extent with Ireland.

By the laws of both kingdoms, as they now stand, Ireland has a right to export all her produce and manufacture to Africa and America, and to import from thence all articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of those countries; and having imported them into Ireland, she can again export them to all parts of the world to which Great Britain can send them; which import and export trade is, as to duties and drawbacks, precisely the same in both countries. Nothing then is desired by Ireland, or given by Great Britain, as to the general trade between Ireland, Africa, and America; or between Ireland and the rest of the world.

The mischief therefore to be dreaded, is reduced to the apprehension, that the produce of the Colonies will be brought often through Ireland. This must arise either from Ireland becoming the carriers of African and American goods for the merchants of Great Britain, or from her being
able

able to import them upon her own capital, and send them into Great Britain upon such terms as to enable her to undersell the British merchants in their own markets.

To form a true judgement how far this apprehension is grounded, we must consider the present situation of the Irish in this respect. They can now import directly into Great Britain, in Irish ships navigated according to law, all the produce of Africa and America, exactly on the same terms as the merchants of England; they can also import these goods in Irish ships into Ireland, where they are subject to the same duties as here; can invoice any part of the cargo to be landed there, and the remainder to be sent to any part of Great Britain. How then can the carrying-trade be affected by the present question? because, whether the extension is admitted or not, Ireland can equally carry both directly from the Colonies, and circuitously as above stated, all the produce thereof. And this will tend equally to shew, that this alteration cannot enable her to send such produce into Great Britain upon cheaper terms than she imports it at present; for the only benefit that would arise to Ireland by it would be, that she might then
land

land the produce of Africa and America in her own ports; and, if at the time that her merchants should want to dispose of it, there should be a better market in Britain than in Ireland, she might send it there to a possible advantage; to a certain one she never could, as the prices of sugars fluctuate too considerably in the London market, for any reliance to be had on their keeping up long enough for a vessel to perform a voyage from Cork or Waterford to this city.

It appears, therefore, that the prospect of advantages to be derived to Ireland are not particularly flattering in this part of the arrangement. She may, however, be benefited without any injury to England, unless it can be shewn that it is a disadvantage to the latter, that the produce should not bear a price above its natural value in her own market; Ireland will, it is true, in future, have the same advantage of the English market as we have of theirs; and no good reason can be given why they should not, in perfecting a system of equality of trade. If that circumstance should ever have the effect of reducing the prices of colony produce, it will enable the exportation of it to foreign countries on better terms.

Great

Great stress is laid on the advantageous situation of Ireland for carrying on trade with Africa and America; and it is urged, that she can import articles from thence much cheaper than England, consequently that she will undersell Great Britain. Nothing, however, can be less true. Admitting even that she can import from thence for her own consumption on more favourable terms than Great Britain can for her's; yet it is demonstrable, that the argument does not apply to her supplying England, unless it is contended, that the shortest and cheapest way of importing goods from Africa and America to this country is, by carrying them first into a port in Ireland, and then bringing them from thence to a port here. Such reasoning is too gross for the blindest prejudice.

The truth is, that the price of freight and premiums of insurance from all parts of America, including the West India Islands, to the ports in Ireland, are precisely the same as to the ports in Great Britain. Whatever, therefore, is imported here from the Colonies through Ireland, must come in burthened with the additional charges of the usual freight and insurance from that country to this, and with the expences there attending the
landing

landing the produce, custom-house fees, warehousing, waste, &c. &c. &c.

In the Irish Channel Great Britain has ports nearly opposite to the Irish ones—Bristol to Corke—Chester, Liverpool, and Whitehaven, to Dublin and Newry: the ports on the West coast of Ireland, though nearer to America, are remote from England; and the voyage round the island requires a variety of winds, consequently is tedious and hazardous.

It is also insisted, that if Ireland is permitted to send the produce of Africa and America into England, she will undersell the British merchants, because, having a right to send her manufactures to the Colonies, and being able to make them up cheaper than England, she will be able, by exchanging them for Colony produce, to undersell England.

If this is true, why does not Ireland now avail herself of the advantage? as she can at this time send her manufactures to Africa and America, and can bring back directly to Great Britain all their produce, which has been plainly shewn to be her
cheapest

cheapeft way of doing it. It is, however, perfectly well known, that the Englifh manufactures meet the Irifh in their own markets, loaded with freights, duties, infurance, and commiffion; it requires, therefore, not much argument to prove that they will have no great advantage of us in thofe of America or the Weft Indies*. There does not occur a fingle reason for fuppoſing that Ireland will be able to procure the produce of the Weft Indies on better terms than Great Britain; but there are ſome obvious ones to prove the contrary.

The eſtates in the Iſlands are owned almoſt excluſively by perſons in this country, or having connections here; the Englifh merchants have advanced large ſums on many of them, which either ſecures or induces the produce to be brought

* This was argued by Lord North, in 1779, who uſed almoſt the ſame words: "It could hardly be expected that Ireland would be able to rival Great Britain at Foreign Markets, when, after the expence of land carriage, freight, infurance, &c. ſhe is able to underſell Ireland in her own markets, on the very ſpot, though aided by the advantage of low wages and taxes."

Parliamentary Debates, 1779, vol. XVI, p. 177.

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here: Great Britain is in possession of the whole of the African trade, which must of necessity give her a decided superiority in her commerce with the West Indies; she has also other considerable advantages, among which may be reckoned a numerous shipping, with the consequent cheapness of freights;—the large capitals of her merchants, and great wealth diffused through the country;—the long credits she is thereby enabled to give, and the assortments she is enabled to make up for cargoes, in which she is assisted by her monopoly of the East India trade;—these reasons will account for the prices of sugar and rum being often as low in Great Britain as in the places of growth, which induces Ireland to purchase here upon credit, rather than in the Islands. The state of the exportation of West India produce from Great Britain to Ireland in 1774 (previous to the smallest interruption of our commerce), and of importation into Ireland from Great Britain in 1784, together with a comparative account of the imports and exports of rum and sugar into and from England for two years, ending at Christmas 1764, and at Christmas 1783, will prove this more forcibly than any arguments, when it is considered that Ireland

has

has now been near six years in full possession of a direct trade to the Colonies*.

The advantages before enumerated must necessarily facilitate the purchase of produce in the Islands, or obtain the consignment being made here, as well as secure a certain market for it when it arrives.

* Exported from England to Ireland,
in 1774, of Sugar 172,406 Cwt.

Imported into Ireland from England,
in 1784, of Sugar 160,082 Cwt.

Exported from England to Ireland,
in 1774, of Rum 363,822 Gallons

Imported into Ireland from England,
in 1784, of Rum 944,479 Gallons

Imports into Great Britain.

Rum, 1764, 1,689,805 Gallons
1783, 1,885,407 Gallons

Sugar, 1764, 1,435,221 Cwt.
1783, 1,498,860 Cwt.

Exports from Great Britain.

Rum, 1764, 747,730 Gallons
1783, 1,380,257 Gallons

Sugar, 1764, 164,228 Cwt.
1783, 120,177 Cwt.

The Irish accounts of importation, in 1784, differ from the English exports in that year, which must be owing to their being made up to different periods.

The Irish merchant who trades to the West Indies must, on the other hand, buy produce there, either with his outward-bound cargo, which will not buy more than half a one home; or with bills, for which he must pay a commission to obtain indorsements.

Under these circumstances, is it likely that Ireland will supply her own consumption of sugars, rum, &c. much less send any of those articles here? Admitting, however, such a possibility to exist, what grounds of apprehension can there be of her supplying that of Great Britain from her stores, under all the disadvantages already enumerated, of double freight, double insurance, treble Custom-house fees, interest of money, waste, commission, storage, &c. &c.?

It has been urged by some persons, that the admission of the colony produce through Ireland will afford means to the merchants of that country, for a speculation which may be prejudicial to this. In answer to which, little more is necessary than to appeal to the merchants here, whether a speculation by a direct importation, made seldom but from necessity,

necessity,

necessity, answers once in a hundred times. If the prospect as to advanced price was, however, more flattering by keeping the commodities with a view to it; let it be remembered that sugar and rum, the principal articles, are both of a perishable nature, and that the loss of quantity is certain, though the rise of the price is doubtful. Great Britain not only supplies herself with this article and with tobacco now, but constantly exports large quantities for the supply of other markets. If then the British market is supplied with more than sufficient for its own consumption, how is Ireland to speculate upon the opening that market, except for the purpose of sending in such produce to be re-exported to some other country, where Ireland can at this day send it directly, and have that profit which she would transfer to England by sending it through her medium?

We are not, however, without means of forming a positive judgement on this subject. Cotton wool, which is not subject to injury or waste by keeping, is a considerable article of produce in our colonies, and has long been importable from Ireland into this country, furnishes a strong instance that the Irish will not be induced to try the speculation so

much apprehended. The prices of it have fluctuated within these four years from fourteen pence to three shillings and six pence per pound; of course the temptation must be greater to speculate in it than any other article; and yet not a single bag has ever been exported from Ireland, but, on the contrary, our export to that country has increased*.

The danger of introducing foreign sugars through Ireland has also been much insisted on, and it has very much alarmed the minds of the West India planters and merchants; who are not within a possibility of being affected by these regulations, as such danger is not certainly increased by them. Many of these gentlemen know perfectly well that the principal risk of introducing foreign sugars into this country is through our own Islands; the traders there procure them, with considerable difficulty it is true, in small quantities from the French; but when they get them on shore, they obtain the necessary documents with great ease to entitle them to obtain certificates from the Custom-houses, under which,

* In the year 1774 we exported to Ireland cotton wool of the British Plantation 510 pounds, and in 1784 we exported 14,253 lb.

they

they can just as well ship them for this kingdom as for Ireland. An effectual remedy may, however, be suggested for that evil, which, it is hoped, the wisdom of Parliament may adopt. The importation of foreign colony produce is as strictly prohibited in Ireland as here; and the revenue business is conducted with as much ability and attention there as in this, or probably in any other country: why then are we to apprehend the introduction of foreign sugars from thence, when it is quite as much their interest to prevent fraudulent importation of such produce as it is ours?

If however any man can possibly still suppose, after all that has been said, that there is a danger of foreign sugar being clandestinely introduced into Ireland; let him consider what a home consumption, besides the chance of a foreign export, they have to smuggle for, before they can find an advantage in sending them to this country; and then he must confess we can have nothing to apprehend on that score, even in ages to come.

It has been argued by two late Ministers, now happily united in their sentiments, that the most dangerous part of the whole system is the entrust-

ing the care of the Navigation Laws to the Irish, who, they say, will be inattentive in the execution of them, and will even countenance perpetual violations of them. If there is any thing in the argument, it comes very ill from them, who, by the acts of the 20th G. III. c. 10. and the 22d G. III. c. 53. put much more in the power of the Irish, with respect to the general navigation of the empire, than is now proposed: the first act left the trade between Africa and America, and Ireland, entirely under the care of the revenue officers there, which before that was dependent upon this country; and the last-mentioned act made Ireland perfectly independent of all our laws in regulating her trade with every foreign country. No proof has ever been offered of the relaxation of the Custom-house laws in Ireland; and very little was hazarded in the preceding assertion, that they are quite as well executed there as here.

There remains then nothing more in this part of the system to take notice of, but the arguments of the Irish being able to navigate cheaper than this country, on account of the low prices of provisions there; the answer to which is, that they are to be
bought

bought in London in sufficient quantities to victual merchant ships, cheaper even than in the Irish ports. But supposing small parcels of provisions to be bought so much cheaper at Cork or Waterford than in London, as whole cargoes may, a ship of 300 tons, carrying 20 men, would then be victualled for a nine months voyage to the West Indies for 40 or 50 shillings less at those ports than here. It will not, however, be denied, that even in that case the other articles required in the out-fit of a ship will be procured here to so much better an advantage than in Ireland, as to counterbalance the difference in the prices of provisions.

These are the reasons which have induced one who has considered the subject long and attentively to be persuaded that the fears and prejudices of those who imagine, that the proposed arrangement will enable Ireland to undersell Great Britain, are without foundation; that such concession can make no difference in any article of the produce of Europe; that its operation must be confined to the produce of Africa and America; that it can make no alteration in the direct trade which Ireland may now carry on between the Colonies and Great Britain, with every advantage she will have after such concession; that the only thing she
will

will gain, will be a liberty of sending the produce of the Colonies into Great Britain by a circuitous way, and loaded with much greater expence than she can now send them; and that of course such liberty cannot give her a better opportunity than she has at present, of underselling Great Britain in her own market in these articles. With respect to the markets of the rest of the world, no alteration is made; that point will remain just where it did.

It is impossible to dismiss the subject of the Navigation Act without remarking, that under that Act Ireland was on the same footing with England. Subsequent laws, passed soon after, imposed the first restraints on her, which are accounted for by contemporary writers, as originating in a jealousy of the growing power of the then Duke of Ormond. Others have since been added from a narrow policy; but it will surely be wise to remove the whole, when it can be proved to demonstration, that this country cannot suffer materially by so doing.

The Irish have indeed always contended, that the same interpretation should be had of the Navigation Act in both countries; and have insisted upon

upon that more earnestly since the passing of Mr. Yelverton's Act in 1782, which provides, that no British Acts shall be of force in Ireland, but such as impose equal restraints, and give equal advantages to both kingdoms; but that point is not here insisted on, because it is wished the present proposals for a final settlement should stand or fall according to their own merits.

The second part of this system relates to articles which are the native growth, produce, or manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland; and it is desired by Ireland, that she may have a liberty of exporting to Great Britain every species of such goods which Great Britain can export to Ireland, and upon the same terms.

At this day every species of goods and manufactures, whether the produce of Great Britain or any other part of Europe, or of Asia, Africa, or America, which can be legally brought into Great Britain, or by her laws be exported from thence, may, by the laws of Ireland, be imported into that kingdom; and such has been the attention of Ireland to Great Britain, that wherever she has laid heavy duties upon any article, which could be produced

produced in Great Britain, she has almost always excepted from those duties such articles, if the produce or manufacture of this country. But the same conduct has not been pursued here, for there are some species of goods, the manufacture of Ireland, which are actually prohibited from being imported into this country, and other species which are virtually prohibited by heavy duties.

Let us therefore consider, how a mutual intercourse may be established, upon a footing of equality; and what injury is to be expected therefrom to England.

The goods, &c. now prohibited to be brought from Ireland are, besides the produce of Africa and America, already taken notice of in the first part, certain manufactures of Ireland.

The way to put things upon an equal footing is, first, to explain the Navigation Act to mean the same in both countries, notwithstanding subsequent laws in either country imposing restraints on Ireland; to take away all prohibitions in both countries, and to establish equal duties and drawbacks upon the same articles in each, except where an

excise or other internal duty exists upon any article in either country; in which case an additional import duty, equal to the excise, should be imposed upon such article.

The terms of equality as to duties may be settled either by importing reciprocally without any duties, or by payment of the duties now payable in Great Britain, or by payment of those now payable in Ireland, or of such equal and reasonable duties as may be settled on each article; or a general principle may be adopted, by reducing the duties in each country to the lowest duty payable upon each article in either country, except in the case above excepted.

This last is the mode proposed, and appears to be the fairest of all.

The importing without duties would not answer, because it would destroy a very large proportion of the Irish revenue, and would check the progress of the infant manufactures, as well as endanger the removal of some of the more established ones, in both countries; nor would the importing invariably, either upon the English or the
Irish

Irish duties, answer, because what would suit the one country, might not the other; but each kingdom mutually encouraging the manufactures of the other, by importing them at the lowest duties, consistent with the existence of them in the weaker country, appears to be the most conciliating and the fairest principle that can be adopted; for it appears that such duty will be in general about *£10 per cent.*; and it seems to be unwise in either country, to apply their capital and their industry to any manufacture, which, when brought to perfection, can be undersold to the other, paying a duty of *£10 per cent.* subject to the various expences which must necessarily occur in the sending such manufactures to market from the one country to the other, because the same quantity of labour, industry, and capital, applied to some other manufacture, would produce more profit. England and Ireland ought to be considered in this respect as two distinct parts of the same kingdom; it would be unwise in London to attempt a manufacture which York could undersell her in by *£10 per cent.* in her own market: why then should England or Ireland attempt such a thing?

This

This being the intention of the second part of the system, let us see how it may affect Great Britain; and this will best appear from a consideration of the articles now prohibited. Upon the extent of this list, and the nature of the articles of which it consists, depends the whole of this question.

There are three species of prohibition now existing: the first is that which arises from the construction of the Navigation Act; the second arising from actual prohibitions laid upon particular articles of manufacture; and the third, virtual prohibitions upon certain articles by means of heavy duties.

The first have been already discussed.

The articles prohibited by law to be imported from Ireland are,

Wrought silks.

Silk stockings.

Silk gloves and mitts.

Leather gloves.

Lace, fringe, and embroidery.

Works of copper or brass.

The

The produce and manufactures of Ireland virtually prohibited by duties, are,

All manner of woollen cloth.

Stuffs of all sorts, made of, or mixed with wool.

Sugars refined.

Beer of all sorts.

Cotton manufactures.

Linen and cotton mixed.

Linen printed.

Cotton stockings.

Thread stockings.

Hops.

Leather manufactures.

Candles of tallow.

Starch, and

Soap.

The only article of any consequence in the first species is silks, one in which, it is apprehended, England cannot be in much danger from the rivalry of Ireland.

The price of labour in this manufacture bears so small a proportion to the first cost of the raw materials,

materials, that whoever has the raw material cheapest, will have the advantage. England has a Levant trade, which Ireland has not, and has the monopoly of India silk, infomuch that Ireland now takes her raw silk almost entirely from England.

In Ireland the great bulk of the silk manufactured is made into plain flight goods, handkerchiefs, silks for cloaks, lutestrings, &c. and in those kind of goods, the labour bears a proportion of one in eight to the raw material; and in the finest kinds there made, such as damasks, flowered silk, &c. three to eight; so that the argument which is relied on in other cases, viz. the danger to England from the cheapness of labour in Ireland, will not hold good in the silk manufacture.

The first article which presents itself in the third species is the Woollen manufacture, the great article of jealousy in this country*.

It

* Mr. Burke, in 1779, said, it was for the interest of Great Britain to throw open even the woollen trade to Ireland;

It would be too tedious to enter into a full investigation of all that relates to it here. The report from the committee of Privy Council, presented to the House of Commons, contains a complete statement of it as far as England is concerned; it will from thence evidently appear, that this country has no reason to fear, or be jealous of Ireland, in respect to the Woollen manufacture. Let us, therefore, consider the state of it in Ireland; the quantity of wool there, is for various causes, but particularly owing to the great increase of inhabitants, and improvement of the country, so decreased, that she has not now wool enough of her own to supply her own market; if, therefore, she should export any part of her wool manufactured into such goods as she may be able to work up cheaper than England, the consequence must be, that she must import an equal quantity of finer woollen goods to supply their place, which she can import only from Great Britain.

In considering this subject it must be always recollected, that the Woollen trade is one that

land; and if it was not done now voluntarily, the French would soon oblige us to do it.

Parliamentary Debates, 1779, vol. XII. p. 178.
limits

limits itself; that there is a certain line beyond which there is a natural impossibility of going; viz. the quantity of Wool which is grown.

To see how this stands, we need only observe, that all the wool grown in Ireland is either consumed at home, or exported either raw, or in some stage of manufacture. That which is consumed at home is out of the question.

The quantity of raw wool exported from Ireland in two years was, in

		Stone.	lbs.
	1782	2965	14
	1783	2063	10
Of worsted yarn or bay yarn	} 1782	83,821	8
	} 1783	66,677	
The quantity of old drapery imported into Ireland.	} 1782	Yards.	
	} 1783	362,824	
And of new drapery	1782	547,336	
	1783	420,415	

Now, if the whole of the raw wool and bay yarn exported from Ireland was manufactured into ultimate perfection, it would not supply the quantity.

tity imported; so that if Ireland should export more of her wool completely manufactured than she does at present, she must also import a greater quantity of woollen manufactures from England to supply such export.

It must likewise be observed, that all the cloathing wool of Ireland is worked up at home, and consumed there; and yet she imports 375,871 yards of old drapery from England: she therefore cannot decrease in this import; because, if she exports any of that which she now consumes of her own, she must increase, and not decrease, her importation. All therefore that she could do would be to work up her own wool and bay yarn, which she now exports, and by that means lessen the quantity of such species of woollens as that can be worked up into: but as all the cloathing wool grown is already worked up into old drapery, that which is exported could only be made into new drapery; the loss to England would therefore be in the new drapery, which is the cheap stuffs; and the valuable part of the trade, which is the old drapery, would still remain to her. By stating that the valuable part would remain, it is intended only to express that the old drapery is
more

more valuable than the new; the old drapery being valued at 14s. the other about 2s. 6d. Consequently 371,871 yards of old drapery is of more value than 420,415 yards of new.

The following accompts will shew how the proportional consumption of Irish wool has increased at home, so as to lessen the export and increase the import of manufactures, observing only that the average is four years, and the periods are those when there happened any material change.

An accompt of the quantity of wool and woollen and bay yarn exported from Ireland, on an average of four years to 1778, and in every year since.

	Years.	Stones at 18lb.
Average on 4 years to	- 1703	- 361,491
ditto to	- 1714	- 283,795
ditto to	- 1729	- 132,398
ditto to	- 1778	- 102,336
Export in year ending	- 1779	- 104,817
	- 1780	- 87,045
	- 1781	- 82,961
	- 1782	- 86,786
	- 1783	- 68,740
D 3		From

From this account it appears, that the export of wool and woollen and bay yarn has been gradually decreasing from the beginning of the century, and that it is now reduced from 361,491 stone, to 68740. It remains then only to state accounts, to shew that the Irish importation of the woollen manufacture has increased as fast as its exportation of the raw material has decreased.

An account of the quantity of old and new drapery on the same averages, and at the same periods.

Average on		old drap.		new drap.
4 years ending	1703	- 15,490	-	27,821
ditto	- - 1714	- 10,927	-	25,719
ditto	- - 1729	- 24,855	-	47,846
ditto	. - 1778	- 332,750	-	653,835
Import in the				
years ending	1779	- 176,196	-	270,837
	1780	- 64,346	-	159,428
	1781	- 326,578	-	433,198
	1782	- 362,824	-	547,336
	1783	- 371,871	-	420,415

These accounts prove, that as the export of Ireland decreased, the import increased; which certainly

certainly ascertains either the great increase of home consumption, and the decrease of wool, or, at least, that the quantity of wool did not increase in the same proportion that the number of inhabitants and the consumption did.

If it should be urged, that the state here given shews clearly the advantage which Great Britain has reaped from the present system, and the danger of changing it; let it be considered, as a truth very generally admitted, that Ireland will find an infinite difficulty in increasing the breed of her sheep, from which, and the before-going statements, it is evident, that little is to be feared by England on account of the rivalry arising from the manufacture of the native Irish wool.

It may be asked, if Ireland cannot import Spanish wool on as easy terms as England, and as labour is to be had so much lower there than in England; whether she cannot work it so much cheaper, as to rival England in that branch of the manufacture which depends upon Spanish wool?

The answer to which is, that Ireland has not been able, with all the encouragements which have been given to the manufactures, to get for-

ward in this branch of the woollen trade, so that, instead of rivalling England in a foreign market, she has not been able to keep her ground in her own.

The Dublin Society, in the year 1772, established a woollen warehouse in Dublin, to which they gave the benefit of a retail trade, and paid for it all expences of house-rent, shopkeepers, &c. the proprietors of the cloth selling for ready money only. No greater encouragement could well be given to any infant trade, and it has been persevered in for 12 years, during which time the sales have been 9 parts in 10 of superfine cloths; and yet the importation of Spanish wool has not increased beyond what it was 40 or 50 years ago, as will appear from the following account of the quantity of Spanish wool imported into Ireland, upon an average of 11 years, to the following periods.

		Cwt.
Average upon 11 years ending	1739	461.
Do.	1750	523.
Do.	1761	443.
Do.	1772	330.
Do.	1783	476.

The

The average of 11 years is taken, because that was the full period of the existence of the encouragement of the Dublin Society, for which the public accounts of import could be had.

From this account it will appear, that the very great encouragement given in the last period of 11 years has not been able to increase, much less establish that trade; for the quantity of Spanish wool imported between 40 and 50 years ago was equal to, and between 30 and 40 years ago superior to, the quantity now imported; and were it not for the agreement for the non-importation from England, which took place in Ireland in the end of the year 1779, the last period would have fallen far short of any of the others. This agreement caused speculations to be made, and in consequence the importation in the two following years greatly exceeded the common average, and then fell again in the two succeeding years greatly below it; to shew which, the following account of the import of Spanish wool into Ireland in the following years will be satisfactory.

In

	Cwt.
In the year 1780	952
1781	1716
1782	76
1783	262

Even of this quantity imported upon speculation, there was exported to England, as appears by our Custom-house books, in the year

	Cwt.
1780	156
1781	678
1782	12
1783	6

Great Britain has very considerable advantages over Ireland in this branch of the woollen manufacture; for, besides the circumstance of Spanish wool being much cheaper here than in Ireland*, there is a considerable quantity of English wool,

* The present price there is understood to be more than four shillings a pound for the best;—the prices here are two shillings and three pence, to three shillings and nine pence: nine-tenths of the quantity used in this country is of a sort which sells from three shillings and two pence to three shillings and nine pence.

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the growth of Herefordshire and Suffex, that is nearly equal to, or answers to be mixed with, Spanish wool; the Herefordshire wool, which is the best, fells at, from 2s. 4d. to 2s. 6d. a pound; the wools of the South Downs in Suffex, which are the next in degree, and are mixed with Spanish, fell from 1s. 8d. to 2s. a pound. This circumstance alone would give a decided advantage to England in the manufacture of fine cloths. Besides, the wools of Shropshire, Surrey, part of Somersethire, and some of the fine forest wools in various parts of this kingdom, which are nearly equal in quality to the Suffex, fell for about 1s. 8d. a pound, and answer to mix with Spanish wool for the second-priced fine cloths. There are also several other places which produce fine wools in England; whereas there is not a stone of wool grows in Ireland which will answer the purpose of making cloths worth more than eight shillings a yard. And it is to be further considered, that the materials for dyeing, which are the produce of the East Indies, the Brazils, Africa, and the West Indies, are at present, and are likely to continue, cheaper here than in Ireland.

From

From these circumstances, it may be judged how far England has reason to be jealous of Ireland in this branch of trade, or indeed how far it is worth the while of Ireland to pursue this manufacture, by turning her small capital to a trade, the first material of which is foreign, and is in value more than 60 *l. per cent.* of the manufacture. A yard of broad cloth requires two pounds and a half of Spanish wool, which is now 4s. per pound in Ireland, that is 10s. for the wool a yard, which yard, to find sale in a foreign market, must be sold for 16s.; and for the payment of even this sum, time must be given, so that it would be twelve months before a return would be made. She would indeed have other rivals to contend with in foreign markets for this branch of trade; with the Dutch, who have money at 3 *l. per cent.*; with the Flemings, who have it at 4 *l.*; with the French, who have labour in their Southern Provinces as cheap as Ireland, and who, as well as the Dutch, have wool and oil cheaper than she can have them; in many parts of which countries, the manufacture still exists.

It would have been superfluous to have enlarged so much upon the woollen branch, if the examination before the Privy Council had a chance of being universally read, because the manufacturers themselves express hardly any apprehensions. Those who spoke with the least certainty of there being nothing to fear from Ireland, closed their evidence with the following answer to a question about being rivalled by that country; "At present we should not fear a competition. We cannot speak to futurity, but we hope the English manufacturer will have too much liberality of sentiment, to wish to deprive the Irish of any fair and equal advantage, in working up their own materials, arising from their skill and industry." This is stated in their own words, to do justice to so generous a feeling. The same spirit has been discoverable in different degrees, in the evidence given by other manufacturers. The observation made by Dr. Adam Smith, respecting the avidity of our great manufacturers, has not been justified by the present inquiry. The Doctor is as little inclined as most writers, to impute improper motives to others; but it is certain that those who know the British manufacturers best,

will

will not accuse them of selfish motives, or narrow prejudices.

Refined sugar is the next on the list. The raw material being the produce of the West Indies, observation has been already made on what occurred respecting it; it is necessary only to add, that while Ireland imported Raw Sugar at 1 s. 8 d. a hundred, and England at 5 s. 6 d. she was able to supply a considerable part of the consumption of Ireland in refined sugar, and to undersell her in her own market, after paying the expences of the carriage to Ireland, and a duty of 12 s. *per* hundred. How then is Ireland to send refined sugar to England, when she pays a duty now equal to that paid in England upon the raw material, and certainly buys it at as high if not an higher price? The Irish duty, however, on that article, which will probably regulate the future duty here, *must*, in any event, afford sufficient protection to the Refiners here, even against foreign sugars manufactured in the country.

With respect to beer, Ireland cannot contend with England. She imports an eighth of her consumption from England; and, to make her best
malt

malt liquors, she has imported yearly, upon an average of the last seven years, 38,539 quarters of malt, and 17,145 hundred weight of hops. She cannot then, surely, contend with England in a manufacture, the raw materials of which she imports from her, and one of which she always must continue to do *. For hops, Ireland must depend upon us : she cannot grow them ; nor has she a proper climate for saving them : the season for picking them is generally rainy there ; and they have no wood for poles.

The cotton manufacture, including cotton, and linen mixed with cotton, and cotton stockings, has been stated as an important one.

This is in its infancy in Ireland, and it is difficult to say much concerning it.

It has been argued, that as Ireland can have the raw material upon the same terms as England, and has labour so much cheaper, she will probably be able to under-sell England even in her own market.

* Irish malt must ever be inferior to English, on account of the wet seasons.

Ireland can certainly get any quantity of cotton; but whether on the same terms as England has not been ascertained, on account of the prices having fluctuated so much. It must be confessed, that in general, labour is cheaper in Ireland than in England; but it does not follow from thence, that any manufacture can be carried through its several gradations to perfection cheaper in Ireland than in England; for although labour may be cheaper in some part of the process, it is actually dearer in others. In many instances, the rude part of the process is certainly cheaper in Ireland, but the finer parts, and whatever depends on art or machinery, is cheaper in England. The progress of the woollen manufacture is a striking instance of this, for raw wool is much higher in price in Ireland than in England, owing to the high price and great demand for her bay-yarn here, because the labour of the spinner, and the price of the wool in Ireland, added together, is not so high as in England *; large quantities of bay-yarn are therefore

* This is accounted for by the Irish yarn being particularly adapted for the warp of certain manufactures to mix with English yarn, and that Ireland cannot get English yarn for their weft, as well as by the spinning being done by persons in Ireland, who could earn nothing in any other way, and are content with very trifling gains.

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sent over from Ireland, and sold for more money than it would produce at home. This yarn is loaded with heavy expences; it is spun in various parts of Ireland, from whence it is carried to Dublin and Cork by land-carriage; it is charged there with storage, package, commission to the exporter, post-charges, custom-house fees, insurance, freights, and four-pence a stone for licence of exportation: Upon its landing in England, it has most of those charges to pay a second time; a new carriage to Manchester, to Yorkshire, to Norwich, or wherever it is to be worked up; when manufactured, it must pay a third carriage to Ireland, with freight, commission, storage, port-charges, fees, postage, insurance, &c. with an impost duty there of six-pence a yard upon old, and two-pence a yard upon new drapery, with an addition of 5 l. *per cent.* on that import: And yet, with all those expences, England undersells Ireland, in her own market, in those articles manufactured with her own yarn; which shews, to a demonstration, that in some steps of the process, by some means, England manufactures much cheaper than Ireland.

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If it is feared that Ireland will undersell Great Britain in her own market, it must be observed in answer, that of the various species of articles made of cotton, none are rated but fustians, janes, millians, and bar millians; of these only the two first are now known: that all other species are new inventions since the Acts of Customs and Excise, and must pay 10*l.* *per cent.* upon their real value, with the expence of conveyance from Ireland. With respect to the West Indian and African markets, they are already open to the cotton manufactures of Ireland.

The printing branch, either of cotton or linens, can be in no great danger, because the duty of 10*l.* *per cent. ad valorem*, in addition to the one for equalizing our Excise duties, will afford a sufficient protection.

In the manufacturing of leathers, Ireland labors under many disadvantages. She uses foreign bark in tanning, at a great expence; she pays, however, no Excise on the article, and her workmens wages are lower than here: but what is desired is only the liberty of sending this manufacture into Great Britain,

Britain, as she can now send it every where else: and in coming here it must pay an import duty, besides one equal to our Excise, which must afford a sufficient security, when the high charges of tanning are considered.

Starch cannot be manufactured so cheap in Ireland as in England: the raw material is dearer, and Ireland has no advantage.

Tallow used in making candles and soap is certainly cheaper in Ireland than here; but our manufacturers can and do now import much of that raw material; and duties equal to our Excise will be imposed upon the importation of the articles themselves.

Iron is an important branch of the manufactures of this country; the duty on the importation of the raw materials into Great Britain is 2l. 16s. *per* ton, and into Ireland only 10s. Irish; which occasioned a stipulation with the Irish, when they were admitted to a direct trade with the Colonies, more than five years ago, that they should impose a duty of 3l. 3s. 11d. *per* ton, on all manufactured iron ex-

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ported to those Colonies. They have since complained of this as unequal, alledging that much of the iron manufactures, sent to the Colonies from this country, is made of native iron, paying no duty. The Irish have, however, iron-ore also of their own: it will therefore be necessary they should increase the duty on the importation of iron, to the same rate as the British, or equalizing duties must be imposed on Irish-manufactured iron imported into this country.

With regard to corn, and other grain, Ireland desires nothing more than the reciprocal preference given by her to Great Britain by the Act of the last session there. The fourth Resolution does not affect the question; the point must be arranged, therefore, separately. If the prices stated in the above-mentioned Act are not found adviseable for this country to adopt, there can be no difficulty in altering them.

We have thus gone through the several articles most likely to be immediately affected by the Resolutions if adopted in both countries: those who wish for more particular information re-

specting the possible effect they may have on several branches of our manufactures not enumerated here, must be referred to the Report of the Committee of Council, and the examinations of the manufacturers themselves annexed thereto. It remains, therefore, only to observe, that, in return for the equality of trade, Ireland not only agrees to secure to this country a monopoly of consumption, but to assist us in supporting the general expence of the empire; by applying the surplus of her hereditary revenue, above its present produce, to naval services, the particulars of which may be ascertained and fixed by the bill to be passed in that country for appropriating it. The slightest attention to the articles which compose that revenue will shew, that it is utterly impossible for the trade, manufactures, or population of Ireland to increase, without a proportional augmentation of that revenue in particular. The two countries will then, under the proposed system, be united in the strongest bonds of mutual advantage: they will hereafter have one common interest; and all ground of future disputes, jealousies, and animosities, will be prevented. The Resolutions are such as Great Britain may agree to consistent with her honour,

honour, and with perfect safety to the interest of both kingdoms. Let us not then, by denying to accede to them, drive Ireland into acts of violence, and lay ourselves under the necessity of adopting measures which may perhaps ultimately terminate not in a nominal, but an actual separation, of both kingdoms, by forcing them into different interests, as rivals and competitors for the advantages to be derived from trade and commerce, which will be so much better secured to us by a free and liberal intercourse.

It is a duty every man owes his country, to look attentively and seriously to our present situation. A former Minister, in opening his proposition respecting the Colony trade with Ireland, stated, what he will not now deny, “ that as the *superlu-*
 “ *cration* of all the commerce with Ireland, let
 “ it arise from the profit of which branch of trade
 “ it might, would necessarily center in the seat of
 “ empire; if not the whole, at least much the
 “ greater part; and might well be estimated as
 “ forming a part of the accumulating wealth of
 “ Great Britain.”

F I N I S.

Houses of the Oireachtas

Houses of the Oireachtas