

A

LETTER

TO THE

KING,

ON BEHALF OF THE

IRISH NATION,

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE EVIL CONSEQUENCES

OF AN

UNION,

AS DESTRUCTIVE OF

THE BALLANCE OF POWER WITHIN
THE STATE.

BY HIBERNICUS.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR VINCENT DOWLING; AND SOLD AT
NO. 5, COLLEGE-GREEN.

1800.

Houses of the Oireachtas

P R E F A C E.

AMONGST the numerous publications of the day, offered to the public on the subject of an Union, it may appear somewhat extraordinary that none have hitherto been addressed to the Father of his People, our most gracious Sovereign. Whether this circumstance proceeds more from the various difficulties that attend the progress of any petition or pamphlet to the Throne, or from a false reverence and respect that sometimes attach themselves to those, who would willingly exhibit a fair picture of our affairs to the representative of the Majesty of the Nation, is more than the Author will take on him to determine; feeling, however, as he does; perceiving the ruinous policy of the measure, and considering, at the same time, the benevolence of his Majesty's disposition, and those characteristic virtues which so eminently mark and distinguish

tinguish his character, he entertains a warm animated hope that his Majesty will listen to the complaints and be guided by the voice of his People; and that he will never sanction so enormous a deed as that which must enslave, impoverish and oppress a warm-hearted, sincere and generous-spirited Nation. Impelled by such feelings, impressed moreover with a thorough conviction of the impolicy of the plan as going to overthrow all balance of power within the state, and to disturb the order of society, the Author feels himself called on by every principle of justice and morality, to appeal to the Sovereign of the Empire, in behalf of the Irish Nation, and the general interests of the three kingdoms.

TO
THE KING,
&c.

S I R E,

WHEN the numerous, loyal, constitutional and patriotic Addresses of the Nation to the ministers of the Crown and the Legislature of the kingdom, fail in making any impression or producing any effect:—when the voice of the People is disregarded, their honourable sentiments laughed at by a half-witted and degenerate cabinet, and their manly and spirited resolutions despised and derided, the next legal step which naturally occurs to the mind should be taken, is to represent to your Majesty the present discontents and grievous afflictions of your subjects of Ireland; to place the cause of such grievances before your Majesty, and humbly solicit your gracious and benevolent interposition in a question highly interesting in its nature, and important in its consequences,

to the very life and future well-being of both kingdoms.—I address myself to your Majesty with all that respect and reverence that is due to the Representative of the Sovereignty of a great and generous nation : no harsh nor indelicate expression shall escape from my pen : I trust no sentiment delivered will appear unworthy of the feelings, or unbecoming the honest pride and dignity of an Irishman.

I know I address not your Majesty in vain :—nought but a conviction I feel in my own breast of the purity of your royal intentions, and of your friendly and paternal wishes to see all your people free, flourishing and independent, could induce me at this awful period to sit down and appeal to your wisdom and authority in behalf of a brave, virtuous, but abused and insulted nation :—In the first place, I pray your Majesty to divest your mind of all prejudices and prepossessions in favour of any particular measure or person, for the present—let delusion cease—listen to the voice of truth—the moment is perilous and tremendous ! and when past, never to be recalled—it demands the exercise of the understanding ; it calls upon the talents and virtues of every branch of the Constitution, and of every individual in society.—Far be it from me to wound your feelings, or sound unfounded alarms in your ears ; far be it from me to insinuate the most distant reflection against your personal character and conduct—on the contrary I esteem, I know both ; but this is not a time for compliments ; the State is in danger,—
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the enemy at our gates—your sacred person endangered, and the Majesty of the Nation about to be degraded and debased—yes, your ministers are undermining the Constitution, and in undermining the Constitution, are secretly but certainly destroying your happiness and injuring your character—they are, I say, at this instant consulting on measures subversive of all government, in direct opposition to your Majesty's true interest, and contrary to the dictates of justice, nature, and common sense, and in open violation of all laws, divine as well as human—what I mean is, the project now in contemplation of an incorporate Union of this kingdom with Great Britain—a project desired only by the ministers of the Crown and the minister's corrupt phalanx of hirelings, pensioners and placemen, to gratify their immoderate ambition after power, and satiate their thirst of gold, at the expence of the liberties and comforts of millions of their fellow-men—It is a subject which might rouse the dead!—it is a measure full of iniquity—it was conceived in despotism, brought forth in corruption, nurtured and fed in the lap of wickedness and prostitution, and now stalks abroad, threatening plague, pestilence and famine to this ill-fated land!—a measure I say, which must finally end in a separation of the sister kingdoms, convulse both to their very foundations, and plunge all in anarchy and confusion. Your Majesty is beset by a daring and unprincipled set of men, who are rushing headlong into acts, without looking to, or even dreading consequences, or fearing the
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resentments of the nation—The present one for its audacity stands unrivalled, in its nature and importance, it cannot be equalled; the Constitution and the very being of the three kingdoms are embarked into it; and let it be carried with or against the voice and wishes of the people, it must in its consequences be fatal to your Majesty's happiness, and destructive of the liberties of your people—All balance of power within the state will then be totally destroyed—no bounds will be placed to the power of the Crown—the government will totter, and the Empire torn asunder by violent factions and contending parties, nought will be seen but outrage and confusion.—Yes, I say the ministers are following up a measure as well calculated to divide the Empire as could possibly be devised, and better calculated for the degraded subjects of some African despot or petty German prince, than for men accustomed to and enjoying the sweets of liberty—If they be so obstinate or so mad as to persist in it, it may involve the safety of your Crown, and plunge you, themselves, and their country in one common ruin:—let me beseech you, then, to look with a suspicious eye upon all around you—observe their actions, enquire into the motives of them, and awakened to the sense of the situation they are hurrying you into, suffer them no longer to deceive you by their false, but specious reasonings, their vile adulation, and their vain and empty professions of zeal and attachment. What faith or confidence can you place in such men? Who, at
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the same moment, are sacrificing the real and essential interests of the Empire; who are committing treason against the Constitution, and betraying the rights and happiness of your people, together with your own:—The Irish nation love and revere the private character and person of their Sovereign:—they cannot, for an instant, suppose your Majesty capable of giving your approbation or consent to a measure so full of fraud and iniquity, so contrary to your own interests and so repugnant to the feelings of Irishmen:—they despise and abhor the ruinous policy and ungrateful conduct of the Ministry, as much as they feel and applaud the honourable intentions of your Majesty, to see and know that your Irish subjects are independent and prosperous:—the voice of the nation you will never despise, on the contrary it will, as it ever should, influence and govern your conduct:—Irishmen then are daily and hourly expressing their marked abhorrence and disapprobation of a measure so destructive of their liberty and consequence as a kingdom, and so very inimical to their welfare; thousands have sworn solemnly to defend the King and preserve the Constitution, and thousands in the late rebellion, have taken up arms in the cause of both, have fought and bled, and finally have come off victorious; and with equal energy they will maintain their Constitution and support and preserve the honour and dignity of the Crown; and notwithstanding the present efforts of the Minister, to make

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them throw off all allegiance, and dissolve all connection with Great Britain, they are determined to remain the steady friends of the Empire, and defend your Majesty upon the Throne, and their own freedom, in spite of all wicked Ministers and evil agents. Let me here impress it on the mind of your Majesty as an infallible truth never to be confuted nor denied, that the happiness of your people is your happiness—their welfare your welfare—their power your power—and that it is impossible to separate your interest and security from theirs;—and blind to consequences, and illiberal indeed must that mind be that can think otherwise, or suppose that your Majesty's dignity, peace and consequence can proceed from any other source than the prosperity, strength and liberty of your subjects:—this is a truth unquestionable, the Minister of the day then, I say, or any other man who dares presume to hold out a different doctrine, and put such doctrine in practice by enlarging the power of the Crown at the expence of the liberty of the subject, is a traitor to his Sovereign and Country, the enemy of society and the curse of his fellow-man. Without recurring to ancient history for examples to prove the justness and propriety of the position above-mentioned, we need but look to our own, where we will find various instances of calamities happening to the great body of the people, and distress and misfortune to the monarch, when they acted upon different principles and pursued different designs—

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your Majesty is too well informed in the English history not to know that an Edward and a Richard were both deposed and cruelly murdered, that a Charles was brought to the block, and a James forced to abdicate the throne, from such unhappy divisions:—with such striking instances before us of the melancholy effects of variance existing betwixt the Sovereign and his Subjects—where is the man to be found daring enough to persuade your Majesty, that the peace and prosperity of the Nation, its freedom and independence, are inconsistent with the honour and lustre of the Crown, or derogatory to the dignity of the chief magistrate? They are so nearly allied and so closely connected that the measure which in its tendency will injure the one, must certainly and finally debase and destroy the other.

Your gracious Majesty is now most anxiously called on to exert to the utmost your wisdom and vigour in the cause of humanity and justice, in the glorious cause of the freedom and independence of more than four millions of your fellow-men doomed to slavery and wretchedness by an obstinate, desperate and abandoned Ministry;—you cannot surely then hesitate as to the part you are to take,—you are now earnestly solicited by the people of Ireland never to give your sacred sanction to so odious a project as that of a Legislative Union betwixt the two countries—they look up to you as their common parent, and feeling in their natures all the dignity of men, they act like men,
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openly and avowedly demanding your interposition and authority in their behalf, to ward off this undeserved, unprovoked and ungenerous attack on their rights and happiness and to screen them from inevitable ruin.

This is not a period at which your Ministry can deceive you by misrepresentation or misinformation:—the voice of the Nation cries out aloud and with bitter invectives against the measure—they are shewing to your Majesty and all Europe by their patriotic and manly resolutions and writings that they are determined to continue free. Public spirit and a noble patriotism are diffusing themselves into every rank and sect:—religious animosities begin to die away, in the cause of freedom and country, all are unanimous, and never will Irishmen sink so low in their own esteem or be so lost to all sense of honour, as to surrender their natural birth-right, or allow Ireland to be expunged from amongst the catalogue of Nations. No, never, never, never; it is madness to attempt it: the very rumour is causing jealousies and resentments which no concessions will ever allay or compensations atone for, the Nation now plainly discovers that England is envious of her growing strength and consequence, perceives that she is anxious to overturn both, that she yet laments the period when forced to subscribe to Irish independence, and that the name of the brave Volunteers of Ireland still rankles in her bosom, and the spirit manifested by the Irish Parliament of 1782 still cuts her to the quick,

quick—in fine, they now observe that the people of England wish to reduce them to their former dependence, beggary and wretchedness—unnatural, unjust, ungenerous project! by a warm and poetic imagination, it might with truth be said to be a monster of hideous form and direful malignity—grim is its aspect—falsehoods fall from its lips—poison dwells in its tongue, and it carries in its train every evil that can torture or afflict, debase or degrade mankind :—

With all that respect which is due to the character of the Chief Magistrate and the wisdom of the Counsellors of the Crown, I do here solemnly deny any right or authority whatsoever on the part of the British Legislature or Commissioners deputed by the British Ministry, to treat with the representatives of Ireland for a surrender of the rights of Irishmen :—the servants of the Crown might with as much justice treat with the Parliament of Ireland for a surrender of the rights of Englishmen, or even to go farther, they might as well deprive your Majesty of every privilege and authority, declare your office useless, and then reduce you to the rank of an humble Citizen :—The representatives of Ireland can make no transfer of legislative authority—They are the trustees, the guardians, not the proprietors nor owners of the state :—They are the creatures of the people, not their masters—their power is supreme not arbitrary—this power is *delegated*, not *surrendered* nor *alienated*; the Parliament may make laws, not legislators, and in this doctrine I am supported by the first and greatest authorities that ever exercised their pens in
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the science of Government or the cause of Liberty. Grotius, Puffendorf, Locke—Junius—Montesquieu with many others of the present day, declare such sentiments, and which moreover are consonant to the laws of nature, to reason, and common sense.—It is not necessary here for me to tell your Majesty that as every law should express the will of the community, none can bind except those which actually and *bona fide* do express such will, and that as in the present instance, the people so far from consenting, do declare their enmity and detestation of it;—Is it not therefore manifest, if even our legislature should pass such an act, that it will not nor cannot bind the Nation?—Believe me the trial is rather hazardous: the precedent would be dangerous; an innovation of such a nature upon the Constitution, might encourage subsequent Ministers to proceed still further, till at length some one more daring than the rest, would go so far, as to abolish the rights of both King and Commons, and erect himself with a few nobles or some popular leading men, into an odious oligarchy:—When we examine into the design and original intention of all Government, and find that in every society, Government is instituted and laws framed with a view to the prosperity of the whole body of the people, and the safeguard of the good against the power and iniquity of the wicked; and then consider the merits of the question before us, which goes at once to annihilate our Constitution, rob us of all social happiness, plunder us of our wealth, and leave our persons and properties at the disposal of a
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partial, prejudiced and influenced English Parliament, we are shocked and astonished at the bare thought of so enormous and foul a deed:—the very idea is absurd:—it outrages every worthy feeling of our nature, and is repugnant to every principle of justice and humanity.

Much sophistry has been used and some ingenuity discovered by the advocates of Union, in order to persuade your Majesty and the Irish Nation, that it is a measure which must insure security to the whole Empire, and prosperity to Ireland, and I must confess that those Gentlemen who have exercised their pens in defence of the cause, have written with a good deal of plausibility, but it unfortunately happens, that when once their reasonings are laid open to our view, stripped of all finery and art of dress, we discover nought, but assertions without proof, examples without illustration, and assumptions without end.————

No man can persuade me, (I believe indeed I may say, any honest Irishman), that an English Parliament with a few Irish Members in it, will be more solicitous to promote the interests and welfare of this country, or so competent to make laws to bind its natives, and preserve connexion with Great Britain, as an Irish one, or that a set of men in Westminster Hall, totally unacquainted with the situation and the great natural advantages of this Country, and the views and dispositions of this people, will either grant us the blessings of freedom, extend our commerce, or improve our agriculture:

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No—No—Englishmen themselves are so candid as to allow that it is not our benefit or [the amelioration of our situation that is intended by this measure, but their own—and in this business they are somehow blindfolded, for were they seriously and attentively to look into it, and could they be prevailed on to open their eyes a little, and see what's most likely to be the fate of their children and Constitution, should it be carried, they would one and all petition your Majesty against it; but the delusion of the moment is great and unaccountable, and sore affraid am I, that direful experience alone will make Ministers less obstinate, and bring the people back again to the use and exercise of their understanding, and shew them in what their true interest consists.—

If in private matters it be reckoned the height of folly and absurdity, for one man to give up the management of his affairs, and the direction and interest of his children and domestics, to the care and protection of a neighbour, who has a large family of his own to provide for and govern, and who is in no wise connected with him, except from selfish motives and worldly views; I can see no reason whatsoever why the very same language and doctrine may not be applied to any community or any number of men united in society:—individuals compose Nations, and the heads of a numerous family may be likened to the heads of Government, in each moreover, we find, that the object and design are the same, the security, happiness and prosperity of the family; how mad and ridiculous then

then would not Ireland appear in the eyes of all her neighbours, were she to give up the management and direction of her interests, the education and nurture of her children to her neighbour England, with whom she is as intimately connected, as is consistent with her own good, and on a more friendly footing than any in Europe?

Let us go a little farther, and suppose two men united in society by the ties of reciprocal interest and mutual security, one somewhat richer and more powerful than the other; each having a numerous family to provide for, and governing and directing it in the manner best suited to promote their respective interests, and pursue their different objects; at the same time, that each contributes in proportion to his strength and wealth for their mutual defence and protection; pray, in such an instance, would not the richer man be with reason considered mad, or justly suspected of some foul trick? Were he to tell his neighbour, who had long and successfully managed his own family and concerns, that he was no longer fit to govern his children, or provide for their protection and welfare; because, as often happens in very large families, they sometimes had petty quarrels, and pulled one another by the ears. and next endeavour by every sort of cunning and artifice to induce him to give up the direction of his whole affairs and dearest concerns to his peculiar care and kind protection; the other, no doubt, at the first moment of so strange a proposal, would appear somewhat astonished; and on a second's reflection

fection perceiving at once the cheat that was intended to be played on him, would answer him to the following effect :—No man, sir, feels so warmly for the interest and security of my family as I do—no man can be so capable of governing my domestic concerns as what I am—and I believe I may say, that if I don't exert myself in my own peculiar calling for the service of my children, neither you nor any other neighbour in the community would undertake so difficult and solemn a duty, except from the worst and basest of motives.—I spurn, sir, your proposal, —I fling it away with scorn—yet, true it is, such a doctrine has been held out to us, and supported by as much laboured sophistry and speciousness of language, as would puzzle the will or perplex the understanding of a plain rational man, with the view of robbing us of our head and only guardian, our Parliament.

It is in the body politic as in the body natural, deprive it of its head, and its body and extremities must quickly perish and decay : Ireland, robbed of her Parliament, loses her head, and into a state worse even than death will Ireland and Irishmen be precipitated, should the phrenzy and wickedness of ministers still continue, and at length succeed in depriving her of her exclusive right of Legislature. Never was there a project suggested so contrary to all law, divine as well as moral—religion abhors it—morality condemns it—human nature is shocked at it—and Irishmen, who are to be the victims, cry
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out aloud against it :—and sure I am your Majesty is too religious, good and moral a Christian, ever to sanction so immoral and unchristian-like a measure; no, no, you will never violate the precepts of holy writ, the dictates of morality, and the rule of right ;—it would be one of the greatest and foulest libels on your sacred person to suppose even that you could join with your servants in robbing an independent nation of her just rights and privileges, and ruining her commerce and manufactures: dismiss then from your councils and presence that unprincipled minister who dare presume to propose it—brand him with that infamy he has so richly merited—preserve peace and friendship with your people, and shew them by your manly conduct in the present instance, how great is your detestation and abhorrence of so nefarious a project.

Foreign mercenaries are daily embarking for this kingdom—I will humbly ask of your Majesty, with what intent?—Is it with a view to preserve the tranquillity of the country? No—rebellion no longer rages, the country is at rest.—Is it to oppose foreign invasion? No—the armed force here at present is more than equal to defend the nation from any external attack.—Is it then to hold inviolate the sacred right of liberty of speech in the people, and freedom of debate in our Parliament? No, no, no—What then are we to conclude? some might say the palpable and monstrous intention is, to deter the nation from speaking boldly its sentiments—to destroy
freedom

freedom of speech, and finally annihilate the independence and prosperity of Ireland, by frightening Irishmen into an Union:—but against this measure we are unanimous—and Ireland united in principle and in patriotifm is invincible—not all the troops in the fervice will be able to fubdue or force us into compliance with a project fo cruel and injurious, fo bafe and ungenerous.—And here let me pause for a moment, to fuggest to your moft excellent Majesty, that the principle on which the army is about to act, is not lefs dangerous in its nature, nor lefs fatal in its confequences, than the very meafure they are brought to enforce; the fhew and parade of a great and numerous armed body, during the difcuffion of any political queftion, how trifling foever, has its never-failing effect, that of exciting awe and terror in the breaft of the man who may oppofe it; and raifing jealousies and refentments in the minds of the people, deeply interefted in its fate. It carries with it every appearance of menace and invafion on the part of government againft the juft rights and privileges of the Senate and the whole community—it wears a woful afpect, the afpect of tyranny, (which ever has and ever will take the place of liberty in that ftate or country where the military power is not fubfervient to the civil:)—Suppofe even the army fhould fucceed in robbing Irishmen of their rights and liberties; let me afk, would that fame body hesitate in depriving Englifhmen

men of their's?—Give me leave to recal to your remembrance that period in the Roman history, when emperors were set up or dethroned, murdered or banished at the will and caprice of an insolent and intemperate army.—God forbid a similar æra should ever occur in the annals of English history ; but circumstances justify suspection—standing armies are daily augmenting—they are becoming daily more sensible of their power, and have of late in this country lost much of that discipline, good conduct and subordination so highly requisite to the well-being of the people, and the permanency of the Constitution.

Amongst the various causes which lead to the decline and downfall of empires and kingdoms, none appears to act so powerfully, though often slowly and imperceptibly, as the want of a proper attention on the part of the governors to preserve the balance of power within the state duly fixed and poised ; and when we contemplate the nature of the human mind, with its changes from light to darkness, and darkness to light, and the subsequent revolutions of human affairs, we will universally find, that never any people groaned under the fetters of despotism, who had previously enjoyed the sweets of liberty, without having first destroyed or overturned this very necessary balance. From a neglect in this particular, I would date the destruction of freedom—this is the source of all disquietude and anxiety to kings and princes—the origin of all discontent

content and misery to the people, and finally the cause of popular tumults, anarchy and sedition, which disturb and disgrace the order of society, and seem, at first view, to lessen and degrade the character of man. I will here lay it down as an invariable rule in politics that in every state where there is any real or even nominal liberty; the government must necessarily divide itself into three distinct and separate powers, among whom a real or apparent balance must carefully be preserved in order to hold out to the people even the semblance of freedom—when once this balance is overturned whether by great weights falling into either scale or into the hands of the king or chief, who may hold the reins of government tyranny will follow and rage inevitably either in the character of an individual or of the many; in this latter instance we commonly behold the most grievous and afflicting of all despotisms, such, for example, was the government of Athens under the thirty tyrants, after being subdued by Lyfander, and who afterwards admitted three thousand into a share of the spoils and plunder of the people—I might here likewise instance the Decemviri of Rome, and the Ephori of Sparta, or to come to a very late period, I would call to mind the nature of the government and the misery of the governed in Genoa and Venice:—with regard to the absolute power placed in the hands of the individual, and the necessary slavery and abject condition of the subject, various and innumerable are the examples

examples both in antient and modern history which I might here enumerate:—it will serve my purpose however sufficiently well, and it appears to me better adapted to the present condition and circumstances of the times to quote a few instances from modern:—when then I turn my eyes over the map of Europe, I can without difficulty though not without disgust, perceive many kings and princes at the present day ruling their people with a rod of iron, robbing them of their just and natural rights, and reducing them to a condition little better than that of the brute. Let us look to Russia, and what do we observe? The tyranny of an individual, the slavery of the people:—does the scene change in Spain? No; in Denmark? No; in Sweden or Prussia? No, no,—all is despotism of an individual on one side, and misery and insecurity on the other. Painful reflection! that so many of our fellow creatures with thousands of others in Italy and Germany, should at this day remain so degraded and debased:—but the period of retribution is fast approaching—knowledge, which ever takes the part of freedom, is rapidly disseminating itself throughout every state in Europe—and once that happy period arrives when the mind of man will appear enlarged and enlightened—tyranny must perish; superstition and priestcraft must die!

What further observations and remarks I may make on this subject, shall be with a view of representing this point in a still clearer light, and if I
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have the good fortune to succeed in shewing by what means other states formerly free, have degenerated into a cruel despotism, an useful lesson may thence be drawn to hold these kingdoms in which I find myself more particularly interested, long firmly connected; and long enjoying all the blessings of peace, freedom and independence.

In maintaining the balance of power betwixt several neighbouring independent states, it is agreed, that much care and precision, much caution and circumspection much sagacity and vigour are found extremely necessary; and how material an object it is to preserve it, the wisdom and conduct of our ancestors have sufficiently demonstrated, who spared neither blood nor treasure in its support, so well aware were they, of the various and numerous evils which would unavoidably happen to the states in the lighter scale, and to all mankind from the probability that it would give to some one of them the hope of aspiring at universal empire. Now if it required much wisdom and prudence to preserve this balance of power amongst several neighbouring independent states, in order to ward off those calamities which would naturally flow from neglect or ignorance thereof, I think it will appear manifest from several examples that may be brought forward, that it requires no less a degree of judgment and moderation to preserve the balance of power fixed and certain in the internal government of each particular state. We find that in all great communities where

where there is any semblance of freedom that the government naturally divides itself into three distinct bodies; we find, moreover, from experience how essentially necessary it is to the well-being of the state and the happiness of the people, to prevent any one of those three bodies from encroaching on the rights or privileges of the other, and that as soon as an undue weight is thrown into either scale, the balance is destroyed and tyranny follows:—that this division has its origin in nature and common sense will appear evident, when it is considered that it takes place in the first establishments of civil society, in the rudest and most uncultivated ages, and amongst men untaught by experience or unpolished by refinements; such was that of Rome in its infancy, when the government was placed in the king, senate, and people—the same may be observed of the Athenian and Spartan governments, with several of the commonwealths of Sicily and Greece, and that of Carthage; but to come to a later period, which may appear better adapted to the intentions of the present essay; for examples adduced, some of which are fresh in our own memory, will strike more forcibly the imagination of the reader, than a relation of the governments of several centuries back, and which will go to meet the objections of some men, who willing to prostitute their talents for pay, and ready to pocket the wages of corruption, are wonderfully fond of con-

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demning and abusing the institutions of the several illustrious states above-mentioned, and of ridiculing the honest and liberal sentiments of the people of the present day, for holding them in admiration:—to the memory of such men then, I would call to mind, if their memory has not yet failed them, the history of the Constitution of Great Britain its rise and progress, in which, we can easily trace the marks of this division so far back as the reign of King John, or even farther:—in the states of Switzerland and Holland the very same held good before their recent revolutions, and finally, I will introduce America as a late and very striking instance of this natural division of all free governments into three distinct and separate powers. Hitherto, I have endeavoured to shew from the best and truest historians I could think of, or collect, that in all nations enjoying the blessings of liberty, a balance of power must carefully be preserved, and that when this balance is overturned, tyranny follows, that accursed evil, which all good men and all wise governments wish most anxiously to avoid. The next idea that naturally suggests itself to the understanding, is to enquire, by what means such balance is most generally lost; in the consideration of which, if we can find out those causes that seem to operate most powerfully; our very wise and provident governors will, no doubt, avail themselves of the sad experience of their ancestors, and avoid those
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rocks and shallows in the guidance and direction of our happy Constitution, upon which so many other nations have split, and preserve it long in all its native health, strength, and vigor. The history of all ages, reason and common sense tell us, that the immediate cause lies in the *encroachments* of the King or Chief, on the rights of his people, or the *encroachments* of the people on the privileges and power of their King, in both cases there is tyranny; in one, of the individual, in the other, of the many—Carthage and Rome are remarkable instances of two powerful republics, that were long torn to pieces by intestine tumults, and at length, destroyed by the innovations of the people.—In bringing forward examples of the despotism of an individual, I will confine myself to Europe. Spain was once a limited monarchy, it is now absolute and bigotted: the consequences are evident, the face of the country is naked, bare, and lies uncultivated—Manufactures are scarcely heard of, and notwithstanding the immense quantities of wealth drawn from her possessions in America, misery, discontent, wretchedness and suspicion are strongly marked in the countenances of the people:—the case of the Swedes and Danes is not much better—France is a dreadful and terrific picture of the direful consequences of encroachments made on the rights of a people—even in our own History, instances are not wanting of most terrible evils resulting from such innovation, and when we reflect on the various struggles betwixt different

ferent Kings of England and their subjects, we shall easily discover that for years before and after the signing of Magna Charta, many were the disputes and battles between the King's, Barons and People.

I shall pass over several exertions made on both sides, one for liberty, the other for absolute monarchy. I will come on to the reign of Charles the I, one of the most remarkable and extraordinary æras in British History, one of the strongest and most elucidating examples, that ever did or ever will appear in any age, of the doctrine I have just now delivered: here, we see the miserable effects of unjust encroachments made on the people by their sovereign; an unnatural, cruel and vindictive civil war was the consequence—every county almost in England was deluged with the blood of Englishmen, who feared not at that period to risque their property and lose their lives in the glorious cause of freedom.—In those days there lived a Hampden, a man fond of monarchy, but still fonder of liberty—A man whose name, conduct and character will, I trust, inspire the Irishmen of the present day; to a just sense of that sacred duty they owe their God, their Country, themselves, and posterity:—here, we behold a weak, tyrannical, ambitious and misguided monarch, brought to a most shameful and ignominious end—we behold moreover the rueful effects of the demands of the people, when advanced too far: we see that which most generally results from the government of the many—faction—cabal—tumult—
anarchy—

anarchy;—we behold the same men, who overturned monarchy, misguided, misgoverned, duped, and at length, a popular and aspiring demagogue, raised over their heads, who governed them with as absolute and uncontrouled a sway, as ever did Henry the VIII. History likewise tells us, that a James was forced to abdicate the Throne from his despotic, morose, and bigotted conduct;—but I have done with the subject: if a lesson cannot be drawn from the several instances already mentioned; if Kings and King's Ministers will not hence take warning, never to encroach too far on the rights of a free and liberal people, never to dare rob a Nation of its liberties, or plunder it of its commerce, let them abide the issue: this I say, “for a Nation to love liberty, it is sufficient that she knows it, and to be free it is sufficient that she wills it.”

Howsoever the sentiments now delivered on the necessity of preserving a balance of power within the state, may be received by your most gracious Majesty, or represented by your Cabinet, be assured, they are delivered with the most reverential and respectful deference, and solely with a view of increasing the common strength, and promoting the mutual wealth, happiness and tranquillity of these kingdoms. And when your Majesty attentively considers the fate of those crowned heads that have suffered so severely from insulting the rights of man, and abusing the power placed in their hands as chief magistrates, I trust in God, from the goodness of your
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heart and the splendour of your virtues, you will never concur with your Ministers in plundering and oppressing a generous, loyal, and noble-minded people ; and that you will at length see that your *real* and *permanent* interest, is to preserve the balance of power betwixt the three estates scrupulously exact, that you will declare that Minister who may advise measures, which will increase to too great a degree, the influence of the crown at the expence of the rights of the people, no less an enemy to the safety of your person, your welfare, and the dignity of your crown, than a set of infatuated factious demagogues, who would rob you of your just and rightful authority, and fix you as a cypher in the management of the Empire:—Your Majesty must now be thoroughly convinced, that the man who may offer such evil council, is not your friend, that he studies not the good of the people, nor the good of his country—No—No—he consults but his own immediate wishes and designs.—Ambition is the goad, aggrandizement the object, and full willing are some people to sacrifice all that man holds dear or is dear to man, if you but gratify them in their unprincipled, unnatural and monstrous pursuits—Believe me you are grossly imposed on, when you are told that your happiness is distinct from that of your subjects, or that it derogates from your dignity or the brilliancy of your situation, to listen with attention to the cries of your people, to soften their sorrows and cherish their hopes, or that a King can
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be only truly blessed and happy by becoming absolute and placing his vicious Ministers beyond all power of the law and responsibility to their creators. Wealth, pomp and grandeur on the side of royalty, can never gain you the confidence, esteem and support of subjects, enslaved, debased and plundered—No—No—to rest with ease upon your pillow and walk in safety, you must make your people free and independent—You must make the true spirit of the Constitution your only guide, and assume no greater share of power than the peculiarity of its nature will admit of:—You are wisely considered in the eye of the law as the common parent of all, act then, I conjure you, like a kind and friendly guardian—make your Subjects free, secure, and prosperous—you will then indeed be truly happy, and derive from your generous conduct, a source of satisfaction, ease and felicity, such as you had never before experienced, then, indeed, will you reign in the hearts of your people—their gratitude and affection towards you for your manly and noble spirited feelings—their respect and veneration for your sacred person and character will render you more secure and free in your dominions, than ever was a Philip of Spain, a Louis of France, a Charles of Sweden, a Cromwell of England, or any Prince, Emperor, Protector or Ruler, that kept his subjects in awe, and governed more by terror than by Clemency and moderation. Before I close this short essay, I would first beg leave to apply some of the historical facts
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and reasonings already produced, to the peculiar and very critical situation of these countries ; a very few observations are requisite ;—the inferences are so clear and obvious, as to require no illustration. Should this measure then, of an incorporating Union with England be carried into effect, its manifest and immediate consequence will be, the overthrow of all balance of power within the State :—the undue and mighty weight will fall into the hands of the Crown, when, indeed, it may justly be said, the King is every thing in the scale of power, the People nothing !—The immense patronage of Ireland in the church, the revenue, the magistracy and the army, will then be at the disposal, and under the sole direction of the Minister.—The prodigious increase of influence that will hence necessarily accrue to the already too great influence of the Crown, must appear in the highest degree dangerous and alarming ; the authority of Lords and Commons will then avail but little. The boundless fund of corruption furnished by this measure, will undermine their powers, and destroy every noble and virtuous feeling in the State, and ultimately induce that evil which all honest men and all wise governments wish to avoid—Tyranny ; but whether it will be the tyranny of the King or the People, or of some hot-brained demagogue, or popular orator raised from among the people, it appears somewhat difficult to determine ; as the natives of this country, however, are not yet so corrupt in their morals, nor so debauched in their manners,

manners, as to be incapable of distinguishing vice from virtue, and as there yet glows in the hearts of Irishmen a spirit of patriotism and national liberty, we may reasonably expect that the power of the People will at length prevail, and which, as commonly happens to all popular governments, will most likely end in the despotism of some one, obscure, unworthy, but ambitious tyrant: In any view of the question, there is danger, there is ruin, there is false ambition, there is oppression, and end as it may, it will end, I say, in the overthrow of the Constitution, and the destruction of these kingdoms.

In the sacred name of God! I now call on your Majesty, to relieve us from this perilous and tremendous conjuncture:—I appeal to the sanctity of your office, to the justice and humanity of your temper, to save us from the impending storms which now hover round, threatening to overwhelm all in one horrible ruin. If it be with reason we are told that Ireland is the brightest jewel in the English Crown—if it be well and fully ascertained that this kingdom is essential to the support and dignity of the Throne, suffer our connexion with Great Britain to remain on its present footing.—Listen to the voice of nature and of justice:—Ireland calls out for freedom, give it her, 'tis but her birth-right. Are her children's affections worth preserving? Resign this hated and baneful project—yield to her cries—jealousy, revenge, resentment, will no longer rage in her breast, all will be concord, peace, and amity.—Be deaf to

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her supplications—despise her sentiments—disregard her petitions—all, all will be discord and animosity. Allegiance may be dissolved—harmony destroyed—and all those bonds of friendship and of blood which have long united the two kingdoms, be trampled upon and torn asunder: In such a situation, what part is a wise and good monarch to take? To call his whole council together, to warn them of the evils of the measure, to disclose to them the real and genuine feelings of the nation, and to demand the assistance of their wisdom and advice. After mature consideration, they will declare to your Majesty, that those men are your enemies and the enemies of the empire, who still obstinately persist in its adoption;—that it ought to be given up, because it has no one principle of equity or justice, of virtue or morality to support or defend it, not even on the score of policy or expediency, they will say, can it be defended, because, a nation which must be held by the bayonet is not worth possessing, because, in fine, 'tis a measure radically and fundamentally rotten, and every good which Ministers pretend to be derived from it, can be obtained more readily, more securely, and more certainly from a resident, internal, and independent legislature.—People of every rank and sect are disgusted and provoked at it, and are daily and hourly expressing their detestation and abhorrence of the Minister's conduct; and sure 'tis not necessary to tell your Majesty, that it never was, nor ever will be, your interest or your honour to despise or neglect the

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the voice of your people ; on the contrary, as a kind and generous parent, you will hearken to their complaints, soften their sorrows, gratify their wishes, and ease their sufferings.—Dismiss then, I pray you, such servants from your presence and the service of the public for ever.—Shew to your People that you are no longer to be abused or imposed on ;—We are loyalists—we are constitutionalists—we are men who have fought and are still ready to fight in your defence ;—We are ready and willing to give you our men, our money, our provisions, but in the name of God, let us have the liberty of bestowing those favours ourselves.—Why take away from us the power of managing our own domestic affairs, and regulating our own peculiar concerns ? Why consign us over like beasts of the field to the dominion and direction of another kingdom ?—Justice and honest dealing forbid it.—Impossible ! it cannot be.

Suppose now this measure carried, a great armed military body must remain here to put it into execution—what follows ? A military government of this kingdom—a Constitution overturned in the other—all balance of power within the state destroyed—future monarchs may then indeed, supported by standing armies, act as a Nero, a Caligula, or a Domitian ; and as I cannot see any reason why similar causes should produce dissimilar effects, they may meet with the same misfortunes, and atone by their lives for whatever cruelties or enormities,

enormities they may have committed.—May God in his kind mercy towards us, avert such evils far from our land, may he in his goodness turn the hearts of ministers to righteousness and some good works, or speedily dismiss them from those situations and offices of government, they have shewn themselves every way so unqualified to fill, and from those places of trust and honour they are so incapable of doing credit to.

I cannot conclude this highly interesting and momentous subject, without endeavouring once more to impress on the mind of your Majesty, the necessity of a firm and lasting connexion betwixt the two countries, and the policy and expediency of holding the affections and esteem of Irishmen; which, this measure if carried, must for ever alienate from the Crown and Great Britain; and that once we are robbed of our just rights and natural privileges, you can no longer place any confidence in, nor look up to us for support or assistance in times of difficulty or danger;—and believe me, this is a circumstance that ought to be duly and seriously considered, as well as that England may again labour under misfortunes, and suffer disasters, similar to those she experienced during the American war; and surely no man can be so wild or visionary as to suppose that she will again find in this country, plundered of every thing dear to her, the same spirit and wish to support and preserve the integrity of the Empire, and the honour and lustre of the Crown.

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I have now done with the subject :—what effect the observations I have made may have on the mind of your Majesty, I know not :—my reverence and respect for the noble and gothic Constitution I live under, now likely to be destroyed—my love and affection for my native and generous land, could alone have induced me to undertake this work :—I have fulfilled my duty—I have addressed the Father of his People on behalf of my faithful, virtuous, grateful and beloved fellow-countrymen, with whom I now join, in one common petition, to pray your Majesty, never to give your assent to this odious and unconstitutional measure of Union.—The People of Ireland now look up to your Majesty as their last peaceable resort, in this hour of peril and extremity—they look up to you with fondness, anxiety and expectation—they conjure you as their common parent to save them from anarchy and ruin—they appeal to the humanity of your character, and call on you to act with the firmness of a man, the spirit of a gentleman, and the dignity of a King; they beseech you to hurl from you with scorn and indignation, a measure which must be ruinous to your Majesty's happiness and family, destructive to the interests of the Empire, and overwhelm the three kingdoms in blood, deadly hate and contention.

That you may long continue the King of a free People, is the second wish that animates my heart; the first is, that the People may be free.

F I N I S.

Houses of the Oireachtas

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