

TO THE  
PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

Houses of the Oireachtas

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**I**N a discussion that agitates a whole nation, when all the passions are in tumult, some debating from principle, some from prejudice, and some from interest, the auditor must possess extraordinary sagacity who can detect the subtleties of sophistry and the arts of dissimulation—he will be biassed by declamation, imposed upon by hypocrisy, perplexed by prevarication.

IF

If the love of country, so perpetually the patriot's boast, was really the motive that actuated him, he would no longer inveigh against a measure that was neither repugnant to his conscience, nor contrary to his judgment; he would not, for any sinister purpose, impede Ireland's aggrandisement, and the amelioration of the condition of it's citizens.

We are tenacious of our independency, we cannot consent that a nation which traces it's fancied monarchs up to the antideluvian era should surrender it's honors, and consolidate with England; but let us investigate the real existence and advantage of our boasted pre-eminence. Who enjoys this independency? Does it reign in the metropolis or in the country? Is it among the citizens, or with the peasantry? The cabins know no companions but want  
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and despondency; it is an intolerable aristocracy of a few individuals; a tyranny towards inferiors, and a venal subserviency to superiors.

We are a bold, an impetuous, and a sanguine people; but our energy is transient as it is fierce; we have not the experience nor the perseverance of the English. Our ports are central and commodious, but the tides ebb and flow without vessels or trade; a stupendous custom-house beautifies the city, and astonishes strangers, but scarcely receives any duties; and no traffic enlivens its spacious compartments—as if magnificence of architecture was affluence, and the arrogance of aristocracy was happiness.

Our error and folly has become proverbial, there seems no amendment in  
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our character; we get experience without benefit, and grow ancient without improvement. The arts which once duped us are repeated with impunity; the richness and fertility of Irish soil has been pompously founded, but the agricultural knowledge of Englishmen has rendered their country more prolific than ours. Without their spirit and perseverance, our trade has languished, and our local advantage become ineffectual. Our jealousy paralyzes progress; but the prudent English borrow from all nations, and improve on every invention.

Has a union brought on discontent and tumult? Has it caused rebellion and desolation? Has it occasioned that universal indigence that afflicts every cabin, and from generation to generation kept it's ponderous and irresistible hand on the wretched Irish peasantry? These  
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calamities have anticipated the union. Can any change or experiment plunge the country into greater misery than it has suffered under the management of those brawlers that clamor for the preservation of their dominion? If their government had made us prosperous and happy, they might with reason advise us to continue under it; but what audacity and outrage is it to expect us to bear a power from which we know no effect but tyranny on the one side, and want and misery on the other!

Is there no philanthropy in the breasts of those hypocrites, whose outcry of patriotism has no other design than private interest; who mock our miseries by their pretended lamentation, and perpetuate them by their dissimulation; whose sordid oratory perplexes every argument, and frustrates every effort?

effort? We are incapable of combating artful reasoning, but we would ask, if a union is so pernicious, how came the English so prosperous under their present mode of legislation, and we so wretched under ours?

The freedom of the people of England is ascribed to the decay of the feudal power, which once shackled and oppressed them. The progress of commerce rent the predominance of the ancient system, and equalized the condition of the inhabitants; a union will invite them to this country, and their industry and spirit will produce a similar effect.—Our aristocracy will no longer tyrannize over Ireland, and our populace be no longer discontented and wretched.

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The country of Ireland seems composed but of two classes—of insatiable landlords, and their cabin-tenants. The peasant has starved on the sod he fertilized; whole generations, deprived by their poverty of loco motive power, have died on the spot that gave them birth. But the riches of traffic will annihilate this barbarous dominion, manufacture will occupy their numerous offspring, and render the people independent of their relentless masters.

When a vehement speech is delivered, furious gesticulation and great vociferation made, we imagine the orator affected and sincere; we are not aware that the first rudiments of eloquence are to feign what he does not feel, and to seduce the hearers by a various display of the passions. But what would be the consternation of the idolizers of this Proteus,

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teus, if they were to trace him from the rostrum to the Castle, and see him converting the honors of popularity into a provision for younger children, sacrificing the interest of the nation for individual benefit? They never study what is prejudicial or advantageous to the people; but make obstreperous opposition when there is no interest in acquiescence, and accede when there is private remuneration.

An orator's eloquence is the barometer of his Castle negotiation; it is vapid and lifeless when his petition is successful, it is florid and passionate when it is rejected. There is no other meaning in the rhetoric of modern times. The Sydneys, Pym's and Hampden's are no more. Their spirit has evaporated, and their principles are perverted.—Theirs, were days of enthusiasm and simplicity,  
these

these, of artifice and ~~impertinence~~. But is juggle and hypocrisy to delude us for ever? Are we never to be out of trammels, and judge for ourselves? Shall we trust assertion against fact, and declamation against our own observation?

Let us look round to Scotland, and see experience against hypothesis, and proof against speculation. Let us avow a truth, let us acknowledge that though we possess a prolific soil, our agricultural knowledge does not keep pace with nature's bounty. Though we are surrounded with a navigable ocean abounding with safe havens, yet we are almost strangers to commerce; and though we are robust and healthy, we know not manufacture or industry—while England seems like a magnet to attract all the trade of Europe, and, like

like the magazine of the world, supplies every nation with her stores.— Their diligence, like magic, has made a sterile soil exuberant, and compensated for a partial element.

Why should our rulers require longer time for experiment?—If their superintendance has so many ages produced failure, disappointment and wretchedness, what prospect of amendment is there under the same system?—Let us have recourse to a change that promises affluence and happiness.

A Union removes jealousies of inequality. There will be no longer the invidious discriminating appellations of Irish and English. United by the same interests, possessing equal privileges, there can be no cause for distrust or murmur.—

A King and Parliament residing alike  
over

over both countries can have no motive to preference or distinction. The two countries will be no longer divided and distracted by opposite objects and views, but be consolidated into the same interest and pursuit. The enemies of one island must be the enemies to both: the adversary that menaces destruction to England will not be credited for profers of fraternization to Ireland.

ATTICUS.

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