

No. 7

THE
FRIENDS
OF AN
UNION
THE ENEMIES OF
IRELAND.

Yet, oh what doubt, what sad presaging voice,
Whispers within, and bids me not rejoice:
Bids me contemplate every State around,
From sultry Spain to Norway's icy bound;
Bids their lost rights, their ruined glories see,
And tells me, these, like Ireland, once were free.

LATET ANGUIS IN HERBA.

CORK:
PRINTED BY J. CONNOR,
CHATTERTON'S-BUILDINGS, GRAND-PARADE.

1798.



Houses of the Oireachtas

THE FRIENDS OF AN UNION, &c.

A QUESTION of serious and eternal moment to Ireland, we understand, is about to be agitated, relative to an Union with Great Britain. Men eminent for political rank, and distinguished for legislative talent, seem silent on a subject that challenges every exertion of their powers. A few publications it is true have appeared, but not without escaping that fatal and pestilential taint of party, that with malignant breath withers every production of the land; and what is strange, though their tendency is to lessen Irish honour and diminish Irish power, they have been heard by Irishmen with a wish to find them true. “*Passion in its first violence controls interest, as the eddy for a while runs against the stream.”—Our endeavour would be to describe the effect which such an

* Taxation no Tyranny.

Union would have on the kingdom, and in the pursuit embrace those objects that will best promote and inform our design. Unconnected with party, and independant in principle, † we claim no other merit than impartiality. The novelty of the task must plead excuse for the errors of its execution; and travelling an unbeaten track we may now and then demand some indulgence for our wanderings. Affectation of ornament shall give way to an unstudied simplicity; and satire, however agreeable, shall be sacrificed to truth. The discussion we attempt may provoke abler men, and we shall obtain our fondest wish should we animate genius to exertion, and stimulate the talent of the island to come forward and assert its claims.

What better cause than when your country sees,
The sly destruction at her vitals aim'd?

THOMSON.

It may not be injudicious to bring to our recollection that body of men who first gave consequence to Ireland, by securing to her independence; a body of men who defeated political and religious tyranny, and gave to our enchanted vision the glorious prospect of Free Trade and brotherly Union. Ireland recovered from that long night of gloom and prejudice, in which it was fated we should forget our dignity and resources, hailed the Volunteers of 1779 as the saviours of the kingdom, and the

† *Nam neque Divitias, neque Honores petimus sed Libertatem quam nemo bonus nisi cum anima simul amittit.*—Ours would be the Liberty that would sustain, not the Licentiousness that would destroy.

assertors

assertors of those rights we were so formed to enjoy, but which Intolerance with cruel derision † had long denied to Irishmen. Pride, and even power, opposed feeble barriers to manly—well-conducted reason, and the whisperers of party were lost in the full-toned energy of the irresistible voice of truth. With solemn confidence we now appeal to the sense of the nation, whether we are to abandon for ever the advantages obtained by our countrymen? Are we, with worse than filial ingratitude, about, not only to forget, but to insult the fatigues and the successes of that ever to be respected Body? Shall we after witnessing the day of Irish freedom break in upon us, with unrivalled lustre, suffer it to be for ever clouded by those who, to use the words of Bolingbroke, “ would not have passed for conjurors, even in the times of “ darkness, superstition and ignorance?”—Who will assert that the Irish Volunteers armed for the purpose of one day, bringing about an Union with England? Has any man a head so weak, or a heart so depraved, as for a moment to lend belief to such an assertion? Certainly no man. Their generous minds grasped nobler objects, they pursued and obtained national Independence and national Honor. And is there in existence an Irishman—a disinterested man—a man out of the verge of the Court, and independant of its favors, who could on serious reflection advise us to give up, what was obtained by valor and firmness, to the solicitations of corrupt, or the stra-

† Was it not mockery instead of relief to give us permission to plant Tobacco, and encourage the growth of Hemp: yet they were granted as important favors to this Kingdom.—Rifum teneatis?

tagems of designing ambition. No, there is not a man who has judgment to discern, and boldness to act according to the dictates of that judgment, who could advise such a measure as an Union; on the contrary he would resist the delusion, and with contempt reject a measure replete with ruin. The question is not of a private but a general nature, involving every interest, and comprehending every situation, and demands the honest opposition of every man friendly to the interests of his Country, and desirous to maintain its independence and respectability.

The House of Lords, on whose judgment and integrity the nation particularly relies, are called upon in a peculiar manner to oppose an Union—general applause will give confidence to the opposition. They will not forget the famous Aylesbury case, where they were supported against the opinion of the national Representatives, though the favorite branch of the Legislature, because the Nobles acted in support of legal rights, and enforced the regular execution of ancient law. Their attachment to the good of the realm indisposed them to see old foundations weakened, or land-marks removed, though under the most plausible pretences, since by every such innovation the subject would be a loser.

We do not assert, because uninstructed on the subject, that the House of Commons is not qualified to give up its own and the nation's rights, by consenting to an Union, but we will give the words of Mr. Locke on the subject—
 “ A Parliament cannot annul the Constitution — it is
 “ limited

“ limited to the public good of the society. It is a power
 “ that hath no other end than preservation, and therefore
 “ cannot designedly impoverish the subject; for the obli-
 “ gations of the Law of Nature cease not in society.”—
 Cap. II. on the Extent of the Legislative Power.

Patriotic men on every ground will oppose it: they perceive the consequence of it—Taxes encreased, Absentees beyond calculation, and provincial parties courting power but as the instrument of vengeance. A man who valued his country would hasten from a Junto of English Clerks, and English Agents, singing a Requiem to the repose of Irish Honour and Irish Independence: it would grate upon his ears, it would provoke his indignation.

Men in mercantile life, if not from motives of general good, at least from private interest, must reject a measure directly tending to erect British Commerce on the ruin of Irish Trade. We are told of the friendship the English Merchants would have for those of this country, but shall we for a moment place confidence in their hollow professions? Will our respectable and honorable Merchants believe, they should have an equal participation in English advantages and resources?—Never. Many, in case of an Union, would be the waters of bitterness that would spring from the spirit of English monopoly, and the unfeeling temper of its Trade. Hear one of their first Manufacturers, * a man of singular spirit and accomplish-

* Mr. Wedgewood, the proprietor and founder of the porcelain and earthen manufactories, at Burslem, near Newcastle, Staffordshire.

ment;

ment: " Mankind (said he) may as naturally expect
 " fancy in mathematics, as friendship in English trade."

What would the men of landed property derive from
 an Union, but the loss of Parliamentary honors, and an
 exclusion from all those advantages that give vigour to the
 pursuit, and ornament to the acquisition of Fortune?—
 What could they expect, but increased Taxation, and
 impoverished Tenantry?

What an injury would the Bar sustain, in its emolu-
 ments and reputation, by the removal of the Parliament,
 which would effectually exclude many of its most splendid
 ornaments from ever attaining success? We should then
 have but the Pioneers of the profession, heavily armed
 with black letter learning, and encumbered by precedents
 —unenlivened by genius, and undecorated by eloquence.
 Take away Parliament from the young men of brilliant
 and spirited talent, and we remove the direct road they
 could pursue to eminence. All men are not qualified for
 that patient, undeviating attention, that ensures success to
 the laborious professor: some prefer imagination to sci-
 ence, and would succeed by the wind when they would
 fail at the oar. It is our sacred duty, to be cautious how
 we suffer the young shoots of genius and talent, that, pro-
 perly sustained, might advance the boundaries of science,
 or enlarge the stores of wisdom, to wither on the ground,
 uncultured and unprotected: or, under pretence of salu-
 tary measures, indulge a malevolence that delights in de-
 pressing talent, because envious of its brilliancy. Was
 that accomplished child of nature, Hufsey Burgh, when
 living,

living, to hear of such an intended injury to that profession of which he was the brightest ornament, in indignation he would give scope to that seductive and irresistible eloquence that allowed him no competitor—and would animate the most languid to the rejection of a measure, menacing the extinction of every thing graceful and brilliant in oratory. He would never listen to the breaking up of the political hot-bed, in which every fertile variety of genius bursts into efflorescence. How would a noble Lord, † over whose tomb humanity and literature long will weep, was he an Irishman, reject with indignation an Union; his capacious mind, stored with literary treasures, and his luxuriant fancy chastened by a correct and liberal taste, would oppose with all their graceful energy, a condemnation of every thing dear and estimable to man. He would encourage and foster talent in its native land, and not suffer it to seek advantages abroad, it could so admirably enjoy at home.

Those men who easy in manner, and indolent in habit, pass idly yet not insignificantly through life, perceive at the first glance, how fatal an Union would prove to their societies, pleasures, and resources. In fact, as far as our views extend, we can perceive an Union but as a painted sepulchre to entomb our honor, opulence and comforts.

We are particularly called upon

“ To intermit no watch

“ Against the wakeful foe.”

† Lord Mansfield—Quando ullum inveniemus Parem?

B

We

We are told it is indispensable to prevent a repetition of the disturbances that lately disgraced this country. It cannot be dissembled, that excesses have been committed, from the recollection of which humanity retires blushing; but Irishmen disown them, as ever having had birth in their land. An active and virulent enemy, ever on the watch to extend its wide-wasting calamities, successfully employed emissaries in this kingdom for many years past, disseminating doctrines, recommending the subversion of its Constitution, and the removal of the enemies of such doctrines, by secret treachery, as well as open rebellion. "In their brutal lust, neighing after the constitution of their neighbours, they first deflower the unwilling or half-consenting victims; and with their ruffian daggers stifle the voice and the remembrance of the pollution." † We will assert with confidence, that the natural temper of Irishmen in disgust would sicken at proposals of assassination, and warmly condemn what it strongly abhorred; it never had existence here, but came from a country, that by its arts would ruin the kingdom, it could never conquer by its arms.

And is it now, after defeating the most sanguine hopes of the enemies of our Constitution, after rallying around, and giving it new confidence, by shewing our attachment, when assailed on every side by enemies far from insignificant---is it now we are called upon to give it up, and transfer to others what has been defended by national valor, and by a generous profusion of national blood? Are we

† Pursuits of Literature.

too impotent for the trust of the government of our island? Has any delusive enchantment suspended the exertion of those powers we so lately and so successfully employed? I appeal to any man in calm and sober sense, whether it was for an Union the Irish Yeomanry embodied? Was it for an Union they yielded up domestic comfort and indulgence to become soldiers, at the expence of all those blandishments that soften and enliven existence? Men the most averse to arms, forgetting every suggestion of private gratification, inspired by valour and patriotism, were the foremost to come forward and attach themselves to the banners of the Constitution, with an alacrity that no man will assert was inspired and supported by the hope of an Union. No such hope sustained the Yeoman, nor the professional soldier, in the laborious and dangerous discharge of duty. The Constitution was attacked by domestic perfidy, it was menaced with foreign invasion; there were the claims on our exertion: the claims were not vain, the exertions were unequalled, and the consequence has been the total ruin of a Rebellion, planned with ingenuity, but pursued with temerity, and concluded in merited infamy and abhorrence.

In case of an Union a material disadvantage would result to us by the further increase of Absentees, already so injuriously numerous. What man, whose property would enable him to live in England, the seat of Government, Arts, Science, Commerce, and Pleasure, would consent to live in his native land, a daily witness to its degradation, its insignificance and poverty. England in that case would be the emporium for all that Ireland could derive from

other nations; whilst Ireland would have the painful reflection, that at the moment fortune was about to enrich her isle, by the return of order, and renovation of commerce, she rejected her favors, and gave to the guardianship of others, that honor and opulence she should perish ere she would abandon. Remaining as we are, our Constitution strengthened and invigorated, will extend to us the most beneficial effects; the instruments of rebellion being removed, the people become anxious to shelter themselves under the shade of their ancient and salutary laws. We are not ignorant, for it cannot be concealed, that from those convulsions that lately agitated our land, parties have grown up, much to the distraction of the public mind, and much to the injury of public prosperity: veiling their illiberal designs under the specious pretence of general advantage, they may endeavour to promote an Union between the two kingdoms, with as much fervency, but we trust, less success, than they have effected disunion in this. Party desires are impotent when opposed to general claims; and the narrow bigotry that characterizes a political, like that which marks a religious party, cannot bear the strong tests of truth and reason.

We are informed of the Scottish Union as an argument for consenting to an Irish one, but the fact is, it is a matter of rejection for Ireland, nor are we confident that it has been one of advantage to Scotland, at least it was by no means relished by the Scots; Scotland, laborious in the industry of its inhabitants, has by no means the fertile soil, nor genial climate of the country: its Courts of Law were entirely influenced by the desires of
the

the Crown, and that alone must have entailed innumerable miseries on the Kingdom. Every man is informed of the means employed to bring about that Union, and although *unrestricted* * on the subject, we should only fatigue by any detail. How well the Treaty of Union was observed appears from the conduct of the British Parliament, in a session or two afterwards. Ireland, separated by an extensive ocean from England, temperate in climate, and inhabited by a brave and hardy race, requires but the hand of industry and encouragement, to make it one of the richest of islands: it is our duty to be cautious how we deprive it of the motives that stimulate to industry, and remove from it the means of supplying encouragement. Entirely free from those circumstances that might have rendered an Union of advantage to Scotland, it is particularly so of any corruption on the legal Bench. The independence of our Judges (exclusive of any effect from their reserved and retired temper,) is secured by Parliament; and both the Laws themselves and the Professors are tinged with the mild and liberal character, which the progress of Philosophy and Science never fails to make.

The most inveterate enemies of Ireland must allow that in the gloomiest days of prejudice, its inhabitants were ardent lovers of justice, and preferred the equal administration of English law, to the wild but venerable institu-

* 22nd July, 1706, Queen Anne issued an Order of Council, that all persons concerned in discourse or libel, or in laying wagers relating to the Union, should be punished with the utmost rigour of the Law.

tions of their own, or the flattering vanity of national independence. This is allowed by *Authors*, † certainly not favorable to Ireland, and whom nothing but conviction could have induced to make the assertion. And can any man have the confidence to assert that the sun of Science, shining with meridian vigour over Europe for some centuries, hung in sullen eclipse over this unfortunate land; who could be bold enough to hazard the assertion, who mad enough to give it credit. Let us look from one extremity of the Globe to another, take a broad and intelligent view of the different Countries that compose it, and where shall we find one that has prospered in the manner of Ireland? Notwithstanding the large sums drawn for the present war, all the discouraging circumstances attending apprehensions of Invasion, and all the unhappy consequences that ever must result from intestine commotion, have not our Commerce, Resources and Respectability attained an elevation, that twenty years since our most sanguine hopes did not aspire to? Have we not advanced more than gradually in the perfection of the Arts, Sciences, Elegancies and Refinements, that bless and adorn life, and best mark the advancement of a Country? Have not the People, even in the midst of the late Rebellion, proved their Loyalty, by crushing the serpent of Democracy, at the moment it was attempting to entwine around our Constitution? They supported, they maintained, they secured that inestimable *Constitution*, † when

† Sir John Davis, Stainhurst, Spencer, &c.

† A Constitution, says Voltaire, the wonder and the ornament of Europe.

Si Antiquitatem spectes vetustissima, si dignitatem Nobilissima, si auctoritatem amplissima.— Sir Edward Coke.

when its enemies were about to lay the axe to it, and with hideous ruin were preparing to overturn that beautiful Edifice, composed of but three orders, King, Lords, and Commons; under the shade of which Industry meets reward, and sorrow finds alleviation, and whose beautiful symmetry and venerable antiquity attract the admiration, and challenge the respect of admiring Nations.

For many years prior to the late Rebellion no art was neglected, no spring was suffered inanimate, that could by any means exasperate the People against the Government, but on the side of Loyalty all was voluntary, unexpected, valorous and rapid, and fortunately all has been successful. We have seen ourselves, and we have shewn to other Nations what exertions this Country is capable of performing, and what resources it possesses, to defeat even the best-planned schemes of its enemies. We have evidently evinced that the Nation is zealously attached to Law and Order, and acknowledges "that every jewel plucked from the crown of Majesty, would be made use of as a bribe to corruption, it might enrich the few who shared, but would in fact impoverish the public." || — But whilst thus attached to, and thus determined to support our present Constitution, we are, it is to be hoped, unanimous that such attachment, and such support, would prove more effectual, and certainly more honorable, when coming as the free and generous

|| Doctor Goldsmith.

offer

offer of an *independant Nation*, than when claimed and exacted as the proportion of a *province*. Has not the Nation sufficient energy and sufficient ability within itself, to remove every disadvantage under which it may suffer? Does it not in its own bosom possess power adequate to any necessary exertion? And for what purpose shall we solicit or admit the interference of others to execute, what we ourselves are so capable of performing?

We are informed, that in case of an Union, Ireland will be well represented in the British Parliament---*Credat Judæus Apella*. The representation of Scotland will serve as a beacon if we disdain not instruction. * What wise man would believe, that a few Irish members, elected probably from the influence of extensive fortune; residing at a distance from their native soil, and under the guidance of a British Minister, would consult Irish interest, and promote Irish independence. Would they not prefer British interest; especially when clashing with Irish.

Every man is acquainted with the fascinations that surround the Court; and that splendor which dazzles, and not infrequently corrupts those accustomed to its glare, would have no weak effect on those who from novelty would admire, and from admiration of its elegance, would gain desire to partake of its luxury. Should the British Minister then advance his proposals, what would become of the Irish supporters in the British Parliament? Where

* Although the tax on Malt in Scotland was opposed by every Scotch Peer and Commoner in either House, it was carried by the Minister, in direct breach of one of the Articles of the Union.

then

then would be the sworn defenders of our Laws, our Commerce, and advantages? They would remain silent, or their voices would prove too weak or too few to be heard in such an assembly. They were men, and did not resist corruption. Menander said, long since, "It is Man, his name explains the rest." Yet some men, from principle, from pride, from disinterestedness, or from that honor which is the protection and ornament of virtue, if not virtue itself, steadily and invariably pursuing the real advantage of their country, would, we make no doubt, reject with generous indignation all that ministerial profusion could bestow, or all that popular zeal could offer to the warmest advocates of its intemperance. Yet even the constant offers of temptation to an honest man would be disgusting, to a weak man dangerous. Historians inform us, the dogs of Egypt drink running, apprehensive of the Crocodiles of the Nile; the application I fear would then suit our worthy members at the other side of the water. Too few to make a formidable stand as a body, Scythian-like, their battles should be fought flying, and we might reasonably suppose, that in the course of eight years the bravest and the hardiest, unencouraged by hope, and unsupported by success, might forget their valor, and relax their resolution. Indolence and effeminacy would, in such a time, without any aid, prove sufficient to sap the foundation of those virtues, that instead of supporting and adorning their native land, lent assistance to its ruin, by becoming advocates for its dependence.

The Friends of an Union further observe, that it would effectually secure this country from any future rebellion

C

or

or disturbance; but we cannot perceive on what ground it is urged: we do not find that the Union of Scotland prevented two dangerous Rebellions, that were nearly fatal to the repose of the country, nor prevent riots from taking place, in our own memory, that every friend to Scotland blushes at remembering.

Is it to be imagined, that removing not only the spirit but the emblems of the Monarchy from the kingdom, would tend to tranquilise domestic uneasiness, or awe the presumptuous darings of an enemy, that, to use the words of Shakespeare, “hath no more mercy than there is milk in a male tyger;” an enemy ever active in scattering its doctrines through every country of the globe, and promoting with fervid energy, the worship of the Genius of the rising Republic. Would not that enemy, in our then political night, endeavour to revenge with pikes and stiletos, the injuries sustained from cannon, and from intrepidity.

We are also informed, that an Union would effectually palsy the growth of those Parties that revive with malignant activity animosities which every friend to his country had hoped were never again to exist. We had never conceived, that the extension of privileges to a numerous, and, in general, loyal body of men, through the generous clemency of the Legislature, was again to meet opposition from the *Descendants of a Gordon*. † In the breasts of one
Party

† Quod genus hoc hominum, quæve hunc tam barbara morem permittit Patria? Hospitis prohibemur arenæ; Bella cient, primaque vetant consistere Terra.
Lord

Party we had believed no sentiment could operate but gratitude, in those of the other Party only liberality. In other countries, and at other times, parties have acted on general and broad principle—here, from private malevolence; not actuated by general good, but inflamed by individual malice. Passion or interest may create zeal among them, but what can give stability to error, or uniformity to illiberal exclusion: their opinions will soon be rejected in theory, where men can think, and in practice, where men can act, with freedom. Such parties tend to their dissolution from their birth; they are abortions, born only to scream, and perish, and leave those to contempt, whose kindness nursed them into mischief.”† In the present temper of the times we cannot expect to be heard with impartiality; but we shall not sacrifice Truth—we speak as men anxious for the independance, property, and present establishments of the Kingdom, and desirous to maintain them by unanimity, confidence, and a manly avowal of sentiment. We speak as men who cannot favor those parties, because they are corrupt, and cannot fear them, because they are impotent. We would ask, is it in a state of political convalescence that Party should exert ingenuity to gain influence? Is it not a prostitution of talent, to make use of it in such a cause, and at such a time? What can be derived from it, but political ferment, and private pique? The industry of the

Lord Bolingbroke, speaking of the bigotted temper of Party, said, he should not be surpris'd if the Plague was laid to the charge of the Catholics, as well as the Fire. Had his lordship lived in our day, he might probably not only find men liberal to assert, but intelligent enough to believe it.

† Taxation no Tyranny.

people

people, the best source of national wealth, is interrupted, minds are inflamed, and disabled from the exercise of their powers; in fact, in such a vortex is swallowed up every thing that can dignify or ornament our nature. Our picture is not imaginary; we have no field for the exercise of fancy, nor do we court the embellishments of eloquence; we would carry conviction to the unprejudiced, for Party is too sophisticated to admit any thing like plain, unvarnished truth.

The noble and distinguished Veteran who, bending under Laurels, accepted the Government of this Country, in times that demanded even the firmness and talent of a Cornwallis, has uniformly evinced his disapprobation of Party, by discountenancing its highest and warmest Leaders: the sterling Coin, not the counterfeit of Loyalty, pass current at the Castle. As was said of a much valued Predecessor of his—"his virtues are his arts." That Nobleman seems to reign in the hearts of his subjects, and his clemency invites even the disaffected to forget their schemes, and seek in the pursuit of industry oblivion of baffled disloyalty. Mercy was ever an attribute of valor, and we may say of him as was said of one of the most distinguished Warriors of antiquity: "Fortune did not give him any thing greater than the power of preserving the lives of such multitudes, nor Nature any thing better than the will to effect it.

Nihil habet nec Fortuna tua majus, quam ut possis, nec natura tua melius quam ut velis conservare quam plures.
—Cicero pro Lig.

Many

Many would have the Lord Lieutenant of this Kingdom armed with the instruments of vengeance, and extending desolation; they would have him resemble Hell's grisly Tyrant, who rules

“ O'er silent subjects and a trembling train.”*

But such dominion would ill suit a mind expanded by valour and benevolence, it would be despised by one who unrivalled as a Soldier, never forgot his feelings as a Man: those feelings will prove his best reward, they gave added lustre to the brilliant eclat of his youth, they will prove the ornament and consolation of his years. Borrowing the language of Longinus—“ He will now resemble the setting Sun, he will lose his vivid splendor, yet retain his general warmth, and please more though he may dazzle less.”

In taking a view of the Trade of Ireland, which of late interrupted, seems now on the recovery, we immediately perceive how great has been its increase within the last twenty years. This appears from the large sums which of late have been laid out in inclosing, manuring, cultivating and adorning the general surface of the Country,

* I cannot conceive under Heaven (which in its wisdom tolerates all sorts of beings) a more contemptible wretch than one bloated with pride and arrogance, without civil knowledge, or military skill, calling for battles he shall never fight; courting dominion he shall never exercise, and satisfied to be cruel and contemptible, that he may make others wicked and miserable.

EDMUND BURKE.

not only by the Proprietors, but even by the Tenants themselves, who contrive, in general, to support, and sometimes enrich a numerous offspring. It is incontrovertible that the Farmer and Peasant now live in a better manner, and possess more of the conveniencies of life than at any former period, which must arise from the produce of their lands, so cultivated and improved. What sums of money, in every Man's memory, have been laid out in forming and opening the New Docks in Dublin, in cutting Canals, and carrying on Works of utility and Trade? —What an appearance of profusion and opulence even in the Houses of middling Life, not only in the Capital, but in the provincial Towns?

War certainly has shut many of the avenues leading to opulence, but from the recent and brilliant victories of our fleets, we may naturally imagine the enemy has lost some of its haughtiness, by losing much of its strength, and is disposed for peace from inability to pursue the war. “ France with all her conquests is like a rotten garment
 “ whose owner consoles himself for all its filth, patches,
 “ and rottenness, in an embroidered border, though its
 “ weight daily adds to the wear and tear of the miserable
 “ drapery it adorns.”† It is our duty to shew we are animated by a Roman spirit, and perceive the justice of its martial maxim—*Ostendite Bellum Pacem habebitis.*

We naturally wish for Peace, but would extend every resource for War; and cheerfully and vigorously will this

† Plain Thoughts of a Plain Man.

kingdom, as an Independant Nation, support England's honor, by preserving her own. Peace, on its return, will bring Trade into most of its former channels; we shall again witness the prosperity which for a time had been interrupted, and return to the pursuits and occupations that sustain, connect, and enrich society.

In case of an Union, say its partizans, you will participate in all that opulence and commerce that are the visible features of English fortune and industry. We venture, with solemn yet unpresuming confidence, to assert, so far from it, we should be the Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water to the English. Irish productions would be encouraged but as would suit English advantage, indulge English luxury, or flatter English caprice. Irish Manufacturers, unable to vie with English Purchasers, would consequently fail. Irish materials would not be purchased, nor would their credit subsist. The Manufacturers at present, a respectable class, would in a short time be forced to toil in subaltern situations, employed, perhaps, as servants, where they should be masters, and aiding the formation of English fortunes on the ruin of their own. Every Irishman should detest a measure that would bring such misery on his countrymen. Every man of feeling and spirit will exert his influence to prevent the Manufacturer from breaking, the Husbandman from starving, and the Kingdom (as Ireland) from being depopulated. What would be the situation of Dublin should an Union be formed? The prospect is too gloomy to view even for a moment—it is without hope—it could admit no consolation. If even the sorrows and miseries attending a depopulated city,
and

and ruined establishments, should make no impression on his callous heart, perhaps self-interest would rouse the wealthy Absentee to oppose a measure threatening the very existence of that wealth. Every man knows, what immense fortunes are drawn from Dublin, and none can be ignorant that an Union would almost destroy them. We are informed, indeed, Ireland would not be without a Viceroy, but, gracious God, what Nobleman distinguished for rank, spirit, or accomplishment, would accept a station where he should become acquainted but with its painful offices; where he would have the responsibility, with but the mutilated power of a Lord Lieutenant, possessing all the "invidious duties, without the means of softening or dignifying them."† The friends of Monarchy would be pained to see its Representative in a state of degradation, with "authority curtailed, and energy diminished."

We had before occasion to observe, that no Man whose fortune and situation permitted, would remain in this Country after an Union: we would then find a rapid sale of Irish property, which would be principally purchased by English settlers, and the purchase money vested in English and foreign securities. The immense sums drawn for the support of those Absentees, would prove a constant drain to the resource of the Kingdom, without the least consideration or return, and in searching History we could not discover an instance of any Country, or conquered Province, paying such an annual tribute to another as we

† Prince of Wales's Letter to Mr. Pitt on the Regency business.
should

should then pay to England. Countries abounding in Mines of Gold and Silver are sustained by the bounty of nature, in the exportation of their Bullion, but we wanting such natural produce, and dependant on Industry and Commerce, could derive only calamity from encreased Absentees. Cynical Men would say, the evil will cure itself, for if the demands of your Absentees greatly exceed your gain, there will soon be nothing for them to draw, and they must be forced to return to their native Country, unless they fancy it more agreeable to starve abroad. In no possible instance could those Absentees contribute to our interest, by the exertion of any influence at the other side of the water, in a short time; had they even the desire and the power to be of service, they would be ignorant of the means. Such Deserters would be our worst enemies, laying us under a continual pillage to their vanity, luxury and profligacy. Money consumed at home may injure the individual, yet enrich the Public, but drawn from a Kingdom without any return, must ultimately prove its ruin. What would the absence of the Men of fortune and influence be, but an inducement to every Rebel to execute his schemes, when no longer deterred by their presence. Hear Sir John Davis, in his Historical Relations:—“ The absence of the Nobility,
 “ who having great estates in Ireland, yet kept their re-
 “ sidence in England, was the principal cause of the slow
 “ progress made in the reduction of Ireland, and of the fre-
 “ quent Rebellions of the Irish, who were thereby encou-
 “ raged to make encroachments upon the English, and dis-
 “ possess them of their Lands; and that the Kings of Eng-
 “ land were thereby put to the necessity of sending armies

D

“ over

“ over from time to time, to reduce and re-conquer several provinces thereof.”—Our Ancestors in their wisdom saw the evil, and took precaution against it. The Statute of Absentees, 28th Henry the VIII. expressly notices—“ that two parts in three of the yearly profits of the Lands of absent Persons did, by reason of their absence, belong to the King, by virtue of the statutes for that purpose provided.” And by an act passed 10 Car. I. cap. 21—“ It is enacted that all persons dwelling in England, or elsewhere, who shall obtain titles of honor among the Nobility of Ireland shall, though resident in England, or elsewhere, contribute towards all public charges, taxed by the Parliament, rateably and in such manner as others of their rank, resident in this Kingdom, are or shall be liable unto.”—Our Ancestors sagaciously prevented Absentees, and are we called on to give our Labour, our Talent, and Resource, to the aggrandizement of Britain, by supporting her Settlers in our Country, and pampering innumerable Absentees in hers: as long as such a wasteful export of our Treasure continued, and carried with it every acquisition we could make, vain would be every offer of expedients for increasing our Manufactures, lessening our Imports, or improving our Trade: every inlet of wealth, Industry could form, would be insufficient to satisfy a devouring drain, ever fated to keep us wretched and miserable. If we are to remain poor, let us remain so as a Nation, rather than consume ourselves in pursuits without hope, or indeed without any other effect than that of supporting Men abroad, who, afraid or ashamed of their Country, affect

to

to treat it with contempt, but do not hesitate to ruin it without remorse. If, however, notwithstanding all the consequences that would result from an Union, consequences ever to be dreaded, as not only injuring the present, but tainting future Generations, and involving not only our own degradation, but that of unborn millions, * who must curse the Authors of a Measure that for ever damped Irish spirit, and for ever clouded Irish honor; if we say, in obvious defiance of the interest of the Nation, the Question is to be agitated, in the Name of God, let it be fairly, seriously and deliberately: let the present Parliament, if it remains, take the sense of the Nation on a subject so nearly affecting its interest. Let aggregate Meetings of the Freeholders in the different Counties be held, to give their opinion on its effects with regard to their particular situations. Let Addresses be received from all quarters, conveying the general desires of the Kingdom. Let the great landed and mercantile Men declare their wishes on a subject, so nearly affecting their Property and Commerce. Let the Professional Bodies be consulted, and particularly let the sense of the Guardians of our Laws be taken, how far it is proper or salutary to suffer any alteration in them. We may be told all this would be improper, because as yet the ferment that so lately disturbed us has not quite subsided; then we answer, the time is improper for a Question that demands every exertion of Talent, Firmness and Deliberation.—

* No people, says Locke, can alienate the rights or revenues of posterity: it was by a violation of this rule that the Spanish Cortes were rendered useless.

We may by some be conceived to speak with more freedom than the temper of the Times admits, but we conceive apathy on the present occasion a crime, which the Children of remotest Generations might call us to an account for, we consider it an imperious duty to scorn any temporary advantages, or court any influence contrary to affection and duty to our Country. Our Constitution gives us the privilege to assert our opinions, and though some late Acts of Parliament, in some measure, militate against it, we still have Liberty to express our sentiments loyally, firmly, and we trust effectually. We find it a sacred bounden duty to warn of the danger, and point out the degradation of such an object as an Union. Let us investigate whether the Proposers of it have made any discoveries, that escaped the honest sagacity of our Ancestors formerly, and it is now above the narrow conception of all others than themselves? Is the wisdom of the Nation less now than it has ever been? Is it less proper that we should maintain the Government of our Land now than formerly? It was the boast of Augustus, that he found Rome made of Brick, and dying left it entirely Marble: may we never be induced to reverse the saying with regard to this Country, by giving consent to what would do it effectually. It would be a melancholy prospect to behold our Country domineered over, perhaps by the meanest, certainly the worst of Men, who would unhesitatingly erect their elevation on the spoils of a Land, beggared by their rapine. It would be afflicting to perceive our Government the work of many Centuries, the effect of much Wisdom, and the price of much Blood, transferred

transferred to Men too mercenary to consult its Honor, and too ignorant to perceive its Advantages. What should we be in the eyes of surrounding Nations but scorned when we should be revered, and pitied when we should be dreaded. Such is the state Ireland, once proudly respectable, will be reduced to, if consenting to the destruction of that Independence, which can never be destroyed, unless tamely suffered. Hear an able but versatile Statesman †—“ If we suppose a case so extravagant as the two Houses of Parliament concurring, to make at once a formal cession of their Privileges, and those of the whole Nation to the Crown, and ask who hath a right to resist such a measure? I answer, the whole Nation hath the right and the means.”—We have softened the words because we wish to prove, not illustrate: the plain sense of the Nation needs little aid in discerning its Interest. Our sensations on this occasion sometimes gloomy, are in general confident: we trust that every distinction of People forgetting private pique, and disdainng private advantage, will consult the general good, by the unanimous and decided rejection of an Union, that in giving away our Independence, would destroy our Riches, our Power, and our Glory. If Men are to be known by their Works, the Works of those who desire this Union denote them sufficiently; corrupted men, who court private safety, in opposing public good; impotent Men, who vainly imagine they represent the Nation by stigmatizing it, and pretend to pass for the Friends

† Lord Bolingbroke.

of

of the People, by becoming advocates for their ruin. With undiminished vigour thote Men should be opposed, who are eager to prostitute our Dignity, sacrifice our Commerce, and exhaust our Treasures. Against such a daring and dangerous Innovation we shall be proud to enter our firm, although perhaps unavailing Protest ; conceiving it injurious to every thing dear to us as Irishmen. Desiring and assisting such a measure is lending aid to our Destruction, for in fact what is it but a stalking horse, creeping under which our enemies may securely effect their fatal purposes. Should it take place no Friend to Ireland can ever mention it without a sigh:—

Infelix ! utcunque ferunt ea facta Nepotes.

We trust it will prove but a child of fancy—yet should attempts be made to foster it into existence and strength, let it perish by the voice of general detestation.

We have delivered our sentiments on this occasion, not from a vain belief that in themselves they possess merit, but from an eager desire to induce men of ability and experience, to warn the nation of those rocks, on which its Honour may for ever be wrecked.

Fuis ces Rochers couverts des debris de l'Honneur.

We have no more right to give up our present Constitution, than we would to yield the privileges of our great Charter,

Charter, of which it was said, “ were Liberty extinct, “ Magna Charta would alone prove sufficient to revive “ its sacred flame, and re-establish a free Constitution.” From the prejudiced we claim no attention, it is from a very different quarter we desire it—how should those who read with malignity decide with justice—*Neque enim soli judicant, qui maligne legunt.* To the decision of an impartial Public we submit what has been composed, but with a view to defend their interests, convinced that in the rejection of an Union, Irishmen will prove their real attachment to English connexion, by maintaining their present Independance, as best enabling them to support the sister country in those pursuits that have hitherto prospered with unrivalled fortune. Her fleets and her armies have been ably nerved by Irish firmness, and Irish valour claims no small share of British laurel. As Independent Irishmen we will shew, how superior in strength and firmness is the grateful animated attachment of a *fortunate Nation*, to the constrained and treacherous professions of a *dispirited Province*.

F I N I S.

Houses of the Oireachtas