

T R A C T S

ON THE
S U B J E C T
OF AN

U N I O N,

BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

V O L U M E THE F I R S T.

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T R A C T S

ON THE
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U N I O N

BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

VOL. I. THE FIRST

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- IX. An Union, neither an Act of War, nor an Act of Peace, by Charles Hall, Esq.

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A R G U M E N T S

FOR AND AGAINST

A N U N I O N,

BETWEEN

G R E A T B R I T A I N A N D I R E L A N D,

C O N S I D E R E D.

E i g h t h E d i t i o n.

D U B L I N:

P R I N T E D F O R J. M I L L I K E N,

32, G R A F T O N - S T R E E T.

D E C E M B E R 1798.

ALBION

UNION

THE GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

COMPANIES

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THE GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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Houses of the Oireachtas

A R G U M E N T S

FOR AND AGAINST AN

U N I O N,

CONSIDERED.

IT appears from a variety of circumstances, that the subject of incorporating the Irish with the British Legislature, and forming a complete Union of Great Britain and Ireland, is undergoing a discussion by the leading characters of both kingdoms; and it is rumoured, that some measure may be proposed upon it to the two Parliaments.

The question is of such extent and importance, and applies so warmly to all the feelings, prejudices and passions of the human mind, that it cannot fail to be universally debated: the only fear is, that it will not be properly debated.

If it is to be decided by passion, or by force, there is no mischief which the agitation of the question

question may not produce; if it is to be determined on its merits, it cannot fail to be useful. In one case the rejection or adoption of it would terminate in discontent or convulsion; in the other, the result of conviction would produce satisfaction.

The object of the considerations which follow, is not to give an opinion upon any Plan of Union, which may be in contemplation, but to state the general arguments which respect the subject, and to prove that it ought to be discussed with temper, and that it deserves such a discussion.

Let us first view the question in the abstract.—Two independent states, finding their separate existence mutually inconvenient, propose to form themselves into one state for their mutual benefit.

Such is the Question of Union, than which no question can be devised more fit for sober and philosophical argument.

Again:—Every independent society or state has a right, consistent with its existing duties and obligations, to propose the means which appear most probable, for the attainment of the happiness of its people.

If it appears probable that such happiness can best be attained by remaining in its present state, separate and independent of any other country,
separation

separation and independency ought to be maintained at all hazards. If it appears probable, that such happiness can best be attained by a federal or an Incorporate Union with another country, such an Union ought to be the national object.

When the Seven United Provinces, being cruelly oppressed by the Spanish Government, separated from that Government, in order to escape from tyranny, and to secure liberty and happiness, they acted according to right, in declaring and establishing their independence.

When the Sabines found they could not maintain themselves any longer against the Romans, and saw, that by uniting with them, they had an opportunity of increasing their liberty, their happiness, and their power, they acted according to the principles of reason and right, in relinquishing their separate independency as a state, and by their Union laid the foundation of Roman greatness.

This reasoning and these instances, form a complete answer to all declamation upon the common topics of national dignity and national pride. Were any person to exclaim, "who shall dare to propose, that the independence of Ireland shall be annihilated?" I would answer him by another question—If the liberty, the conveniences, the happiness, the security of the people of Ireland, will

will be improved by an incorporation of the Irish with the British legislature, shall we not for such advantages endeavour to procure that incorporation ?

England was formerly divided into seven kingdoms, which were continually engaged in predatory wars with each other, and the island was a general scene of confusion and barbarism. A wise and sagacious prince united these separate kingdoms into one Empire. Did the people of the Heptarchy lose their independence by this Union ? Was a Mercian degraded by becoming an Englishman ? Were the people of the seven nations made dependent ; or were they debased and enslaved by abolishing the local regulations which divided them into separate and hostile societies, destructive of themselves and each other, and by associating and uniting under one regimen, one code of government, and one sovereignty ?

We might extend this reasoning, were it not too obvious, both to Wales and Scotland : How is a Welchman degraded by being represented in the British Parliament ? How is a Scot enslaved by becoming a Briton ?

The question of forming an Union between two countries, must never be confused with the subjection of one country to another.—The latter is supposed to be the result of force, the former
of

of consent; the latter is calculated to extinguish the power and independence of one of the parties; the former, by the communication of privilege and the Union of strength, to increase the power and independence of both. The one is therefore, never to be submitted to, but from necessity, the other may be the object of choice.

An Union may be compared to a partnership in trade. If a merchant finds, that from circumstances of situation, want of credit or capital, he cannot carry on his business alone, with advantage, will he not be wise to unite himself, if possible, to an extensive and wealthy firm, and to become a sharer in proportion to his contribution of industry and capital, in the secure profits of an established house?

If, therefore, the measure of forming an Union between two kingdoms, whose separate existence is inconvenient, is abstractedly agreeable to reason and philosophy; and if, in many instances, it has been attended with advantage to the contracting parties, it is plainly a subject for temperate discussion.

If an Union may be advantageous, in what cases is it likely to be most so?

An Union presupposes that, when it is completed, the contracting states shall be bound together by the same Constitution, Laws, and Government; and by an identity of interests, and equality of privileges.

When, therefore, one of the States, desirous to form an Union, is inferior in point of civilization, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, morals, manners, establishments, constitution; and the other State is eminent and superior to all the world in these advantages; it is evident, that an Union, in such a case, must be most beneficial to the former; for there is every probability, that the Union will communicate, by degrees, all its advantages and excellencies; and the inferior Society will be thus placed in a state of continual emulation, and improvement.

Let us compare then the situations of Great Britain and Ireland. The former enjoys the best practical Constitution and Government which any nation has ever experienced; the people are in general the most civilized, the most obedient to Law, the most honest in dealing, the most decent in morals, the most regular in Religion of any people in Europe. They have the best agriculture, the most extensive commerce, and have carried
 manufactures,

manufactures, arts, and sciences beyond any other nation. Their soldiery is brave and orderly; their naval greatness is unrivalled.

Now, in many of these particulars, we acknowledge and lament the inferiority of Ireland—our civil and religious discontents, jealousies and disturbances; the conspiracies, the insurrections, the rebellions which have disgraced us, proclaim our defects in civilization and policy—that the former is not sufficiently diffused to prevent irregularity and licentiousness; nor the latter strong enough to repress them. Our agriculture is by no means perfect; there is only one manufacture of great importance; and commerce, though it has been of late years increased beyond our hopes, is not carried to that extent which the powers and resources of the nation are able to reach.

Let these countries be united, and identified in government, in policy, in interest, what must be the unavoidable consequence?—Ireland will be gradually rising to the level of England; or England gradually sinking to the level of Ireland; and it is obvious which is most probable.

If any person has a son uneducated, unimproved, and injured by bad habits, and bad company; in order to remedy these imperfections,

tions, would it not be his first endeavour to establish him in the best societies, and introduce him into the most virtuous, the most polished, and the most learned company; and if he could once reconcile him to such companies, and teach him to relish their conversation, would he not be certain of his son's improvement, and of his finally turning out to his credit and satisfaction?

What can any sanguine Irish Patriot wish for his country, but that its inhabitants should attain the same habits, manners, and improvement which make England the envy of Europe? and by what means can he hope to attain that end so effectually, as by uniting with her Government, and binding be all her interests and concerns in the same bottom?

Supposing there were no other reasons which rendered the Union of the Sister Kingdoms desirable, the state of Europe, and especially of France, seems to dictate its peculiar policy at the present day. France has not only united to herself, and incorporated a great addition of territory, but has rendered absolutely dependent on her will, almost all the smaller states which surround her. Geneva is incorporated, Savoy is incorporated, all the Austrian provinces in Flanders, all the German states, on this side of the Rhine, are incorporated.

Spain

Spain is subject to her influence; Holland, Switzerland, Sardinia, and the new Republic of Italy, are occupied by her armies; to every country she extends her principles, and her intrigues, and on this kingdom her designs have been nearly successful. No continental power could resist her arms, Great Britain alone maintained the contest: but, in proportion as the power of France is increased, so ought the strength of the British Empire to be augmented. If, from the disunited state of the British Empire, any particular part of it has become open to the attacks of France, or of its republican faction in England, that avenue of disunion should be closed. How could it have been possible for England to have formed the barrier, which she has opposed to the French power, if Scotland as well as Ireland, at this day, had continued a separate kingdom, equally open to French intrigue? She would probably have fallen a sacrifice to France, and the liberties of Europe would have fallen with her.

France well knows the principle and the force of incorporations. Every state which she unites to herself, she makes part of her empire, *one and indivisible*, and will not suffer any mention to be made in negotiation of restitution. Whilst in her affected plans of policy for the liberties of the British Empire, she maintains the principal of separation, as essential to freedom, she considers the

Union

Union of England and Scotland as an usurpation of the former; and leaving England to her fate, would make Scotland and Ireland separate Republics. France well knows the adage, *dum singuli pugnant universi vincuntur*; and she has played that game successfully; but as we wish to check the ambition of that desperate, and unprincipled power, and if that end can only be effected by maintaining and augmenting the power of the British Empire, we should be favourable to the principle of Union, which must increase and consolidate its resources.

If an Union may be desirable between two independent kingdoms, it must be most desirable when such two kingdoms are united under one Sovereign, and have separate legislatures; for they have all the disadvantages without the advantages of an Union. The Sovereign must reside in one of the kingdoms: *there* would of course be the metropolis of the empire; *there* would be the real seat of the government; thence would flow all the counsels; and thither would resort those, who wished for favour and emolument. The kingdom, where the monarch did not reside, not having the origination of all counsels and measures, and having much of its rents carried away by absentees, would be in a perpetual state of jealousy and discontent; and being separate in all respects, but in the individual person of the monarch, would

would be a prey to foreign faction; and an empire, thus composed, could never be in a state of full security, for there never could be a certainty that all parts of it would pursue the same system.

The objections to this predicament were so strong in Scotland before the Union, that the Scots brought in a Bill of Settlement, to provide that their Monarch should never be the same person as the King of England; upon this the alternative of Union or Separation became inevitable, and at length they wisely preferred the former—What has been the consequence? The Scots, becoming entitled to all the privileges of British subjects, have greatly added to their own civilization and wealth; have enjoyed internal tranquillity and security; and enabled Great Britain, by the consolidation of the whole island under one Government, to reach that height of prosperity and glory which makes her the envy and the protectress of Europe.

In the situation which Scotland held previous to the Union does Ireland stand at present; except that the Crown of Ireland is by express statutes of declaration and recognition perpetually annexed to and dependent upon the Crown of England; so that whoever is King of England, is in right of that title, *ipso facto*, King of Ireland. The King of Ireland, as the King of Scotland before the Union, resides in another kingdom. The counsels for
the

the Government of Ireland are framed in the British Cabinet; the Government of Ireland is actually administered by a British Lord Lieutenant, who distributes the patronage of the Crown; the Irish Parliament is supposed to be in a great degree subject to British influence, and near one million of the rents of the kingdom are annually exported to Absentees. The jealousies upon these points are great and unavoidable, and form the perpetual topic for inflaming the minds of the people in newspapers, and the unvarying theme of complaint and invective by Parliamentary Opposition. Nor can this inconvenience cease whilst affairs remain as at present; for so long as we form part of the British Empire, we must acknowledge one Executive Power, one presiding Cabinet; and it is of indispensable necessity for that Cabinet to induce every part of the empire to pursue the same principles of action, and to adopt the same system of measures, as far as possible: and as the interests of England must ever preponderate, a preference will be always given to her, or supposed to be given, which has the same effect. The Irish Parliament is certainly in its institution independent; it may when it pleases act contrary to the policy of the empire; it may exhort the King to make war when the views of England are pacific; it may declare against a war when England is driven into one by necessity; and it has actually asserted a Right to chuse a Regent of its own appointment,

distinct

distinct from the Regent of Great Britain; it may also declare against treaties, and refuse to ratify commercial articles. Now if Ireland, having these powers, should at any time exert them in opposition to the conduct of England, the empire would be endangered or dissolved; and so long as the Parliament of Ireland, from motives of discretion and prudence, does not exert them, it will be subject to the imputation of being meanly and corruptly subservient to the British Cabinet; and the imputation being constantly repeated and always liable to be renewed, will have in future, as it has had already, a prejudicial influence on the public mind, leading the people to distrust and to disparage their legislature.

Add to this the melancholy reflection, that the Irish Parliament has been long made the Theatre for British Faction. When at a loss for subjects of grievance in Great Britain, they ever turn their eyes to this kingdom, in the kind hope that any seed of discontent may be nourished, by their fostering attention, into strength and maturity.—Incapable of beating the Minister on his own ground, they change the place of attack, and wound him from the side of Ireland. Need I allude to the Question of the Commercial Propositions, the Question of the Regency, and the Question of the Catholics; when we have seen the Leaders of the British Opposition come forward

to support the Character of Irish Rebels, to palliate and to justify Irish Treason, and almost to vindicate Irish Rebellion? If then, differing from Great Britain, in Imperial Questions, would dissolve the Empire, and if uniformly concurring with her must subject the Parliament to perpetual imputation of criminal subserviency to a foreign Cabinet; and if so long as an Irish free and independent Parliament remains, it must be subject to the Cabals of British Party; might it not be a measure of wisdom to incorporate the Parliaments together, and that Ireland should accept the same Guarantee for its Liberty and Prosperity, as satisfies the people of England?

It is notorious that, before the Union, Scotland had always a connexion and alliance with France; which, since the Union, has totally vanished. Her feelings, conduct and policy have, since that period, been entirely British. It is equally notorious that a correspondence was kept up with France, by a party in this kingdom, especially so long as the Pretender lived, who had the appointment to all the Irish Roman Catholic Bishoprics, and who disposed of them in concert with the Court of France. It is also manifest that a connexion with France has been lately renewed upon new principles; and it is obvious that the French will never cease to intrigue in this kingdom, whilst we remain in our present state, which presents

sents so favourable an opening to intrigue of every kind.

Now let us suppose that an Union of the British and Irish Legislatures were completed upon fair and equitable principles, what would be our new situation? The Monarch would remain in England as at present; the Absentee proprietors of land might in some degree increase; and London, as at present, would be the general resort for business, for advancement, for pleasure. But the British Cabinet would receive a mixture of Irishmen, and the counsels of the British Parliament would be much influenced by the weight and ability of the Irish Members; all our party contests would be transferred to Great Britain; British faction would cease to operate here; there would be no jealousy of British Influence on the Cabinet or Parliament; there would be no clashing of distinct interests, no fear of Ireland becoming too powerful to govern. France could no longer speculate on the nature of our distinct Government and Parliament; and hope to separate the kingdom, in fact, from Great Britain, as it is already separated in theory. The cultivation, the improvement of Ireland, like that of Scotland, would be peculiarly attended to, as the increase of our wealth, consequence, ability, and power, must tend to increase the security of the Empire, not to endanger it; and in proportion that we felt the benefit of an Union, our attachment to it would be strengthened.

All

All writers have agreed in condemning what is called *imperium in imperio*. It is this vice of constitution which has annihilated Poland, where every senator was a sovereign; and has enslaved the Seven United Provinces, where each province was a Sovereign. Franklin and Washington, the founders of the American Empire, had not courage in their first project of a constitution for the American states, to exclude this radical evil, but left each state independent. So soon as the pressure of necessity, which had confederated the states, ceased in consequence of peace, the fault of such a constitution became evident: it was clear to men of common capacity, that an empire, consisting of Thirteen independent societies, without one common Imperial controul, would soon divide into Thirteen independent empires. To obviate this necessary, though possibly distant consequence, the wisdom of the Americans projected a new constitution, in which this original vice was remedied; the separate independency of each state was wisely relinquished; a general legislative, and a general executive were formed for the government of the Union in every imperial concern; and each respective state was confined to local and municipal objects. At the same time, a just deference was paid to all the Test Laws and religious establishments throughout the Union; and each state being allowed to maintain its ecclesiastical arrangements, all religious struggle and animosity was prevented.

To

To the wisdom of this plan of Union the strength and happiness of the United States may be attributed—If each had retained to itself its separate independent Legislature, is it probable that the American Empire could have lasted to the present day? If French intrigue had at one time such influence in America as nearly to have overturned the existing Union, how could its efforts have been resisted, when the gaining of one state alone might have dissolved the Union? To injure America in its present form, a majority of the representatives of the whole Union must be seduced; to have destroyed her power under her first Constitution, the corruption of one state alone would have been sufficient.

What are the sentiments of Mr. Adams, the President of the United States, with respect to their first federal, and the present incorporate Union—"The former," says he, "was formed
 " upon the model and example of all the con-
 " federacies, ancient and modern, in which the
 " federal council was only a diplomatic body;
 " even the Lycian, which is thought to have been
 " the best, was no more. The magnitude of
 " territory, the population, the wealth and com-
 " merce, and especially the rapid growth of the
 " United States, have shewn such a government
 " to be inadequate for their wants; and the new
 " system, which seems admirably calculated to
 " unite

“ *unite* their interests and affections, and bring
 “ them to an uniformity of principles and senti-
 “ ments, is equally well combined to unite their
 “ wills and forces as a single nation. A result of
 “ accommodation cannot be supposed to reach the
 “ perfection of any one; but the conception of
 “ such an idea, and the deliberate Union of so
 “ great and various a people, in such a plan, is
 “ without all partiality or prejudice, if not the
 “ greatest exertion of human understanding, the
 “ greatest single effort of rational deliberation which
 “ the world has ever seen.”

If such are the sentiments of the present, let us
 advert to the opinions of their late President,
 General Washington. In the letter addressing the
 present constitution of America, for acceptance,
 he has these words—“ In all our deliberations upon
 “ this subject, we kept steadily in our view, that
 “ which appears to us the greatest interest of every
 “ true American, *the consolidation of our Union,*
 “ in which is involved our property, safety, per-
 “ haps our national existence. This important
 “ consideration, seriously and deeply impressed upon
 “ our minds, led each state in the convention to be
 “ less rigid in points of inferior magnitude, than
 “ might have been otherwise expected; and thus
 “ the constitution, which we now present, is the
 “ result of a spirit of amity, and of that mutual
 “ deference

“ deference and concession, which the peculiarity
 “ of our political situation rendered indispen-
 “ sible.”

When, therefore, an Union is proposed to our consideration, it may not be prudent for us to spurn at a principle, which the sagacity of Adams, and the virtue of Washington, considered as indispensable to the prosperity, safety, and perhaps the existence of America; a principle, which has disappointed the prophecy of politicians, that the American Union would split into separate and contemptible states; which has preserved her from the intrigue and corruptions and insolence of France; and which enables her to defy the menaces of that unprincipled power with conscious superiority.

Having considered a few general topics, which the question of Union naturally suggests, let us examine the arguments which result from the particular situation of Ireland, as to its property, its establishments, and religious divisions.

Nine-tenths of the property of Ireland are in possession of British Descendants. Their lands were taken from the original inhabitants, and confirmed to the present possessors, chiefly by the Act of Settlement; but a large part of them was held under British Acts of Parliament for a century. The possessors of these lands are of the Protestant religion,

religion, and acknowledge the King as the head of their church; whereas, the original inhabitants are Catholics, and acknowledge the spiritual jurisdiction of a foreign power. These Protestants, thus possessing nine-tenths of the property, are only one-fourth of the inhabitants in number, and they have been obliged to rely upon British assistance, for the preservation of their property and existence at different periods.

The established Religion is the Protestant, and the Church is, in Constitution, similar to that of England, and endowed with the Tythes of the whole kingdom, and with great property in land. The pastors of the dissenting Protestants are in a degree supported by grants of the Legislature.

The Catholics having shewn great power in the contest at the Revolution, were long subjected to a severe code of laws, which kept them in subordination; that code has, within these few years, been almost entirely repealed; but, though they enjoy a complete toleration, they are by no means contented, but demand political equality with the Protestants, and such an alteration in the Parliamentary Constitution, as will give their numbers proportionate power.

The Protestants, recollecting the struggles which were made by the Catholics in the reign of Elizabeth,

Elizabeth, in the reign of Charles the First, and in the reign of James the Second, and possibly fancying that they discover similar views in the present unhappy contest, act with distrust and caution. They plausibly argue, that those who have the superiority of number, when once they can obtain the power, will not long want the property of the state. They guard therefore with vigilance their Ecclesiastical and Parliamentary Establishments, and look to Great Britain as the guarantee of their safety and importance.

The Protestants state, that when the Catholics were restrained by severe laws, the kingdom continued in tranquillity for a century; but so soon as national confidence, the result of that tranquillity, induced them to repeal the restrictions by which the Catholics were bound, the ancient spirit of rivalry revived, and the Catholics demanded such a change of the Constitution, as would gradually transfer to them all the power of the state.

The Protestants feel likewise other causes of distrust, suggested by recent circumstances, on which it is desirable to cast a veil, when accusation on one side, and justification on the other, tend more to exasperate than to conciliate, and to prolong our distractions than to heal them.

Would to God it were possible to bury all that has passed in benevolent oblivion; but such a con-

summation, though devoutly wished, cannot be suddenly expected. Whilst the opinions of Europe are afloat; when all the foundations of society are, as it were, broken up and torn asunder; when all the old principles and notions, which bound us together in subordination and peace, are loosened or dissolved; when it appears dubious and uncertain what turn the public mind will assume, and in what system it will ultimately repose; the expectation of any quick return to former dispositions of confidence, and habits of amity, are possibly chimerical.

In the mean while, under the present temper and feelings, it is not to be hoped that Protestants will consent to surrender their political powers, much less can they be persuaded, that they could do it with safety.

At the same time, whilst Ireland continues a separate kingdom, the Catholics will not drop their claims, nor the argument of numbers in their favour. So far from dropping their claims, they have already renewed them; and the Catholics of Waterford, in an address to the Lord Lieutenant, have repeated their demand for political equality, and advanced it on a plea of merit. They have still, and will ever have electioneering partisans in Parliament, and speculative
advocates

advocates in England to feed their hopes; and they will be supported by every open opposer, or secret ill-wisher to the government.

If then the separate Constitution and Establishments, and Test Laws of Ireland, are to continue as at present, the kingdom must remain in a continual state of irritation. The numbers of Catholics compared to Protestants are as three to one. Modern political writers upon Religious Establishments lay it down as a principle, that every state ought to establish that religious sect which is most numerous; but as it happens that, in Ireland, the most numerous religious sect does not acknowledge the supremacy of the state, but professes itself to be subject to a foreign jurisdiction; their religion could not be established, without destroying the Constitution, which is founded on the principles of Civil and Ecclesiastical Liberty, and the exclusion of foreign interference and jurisdiction.

But suppose, at length, that the Protestants, worn out by importunity, concede to the demand of political Equality made by the Catholics—what are the consequences?

In the first place, the present Parliamentary Test Oaths must be repealed, and a new Oath framed to meet Catholic feelings, and admit the jurisdiction of the Pope.

In

In the second place, the Act of Supremacy and of Uniformity must be repealed. For nothing could be so absurd, as to make men who deny the supremacy of the King, and the competency of Parliament in Ecclesiastical Concerns, members of the supreme power, viz. the Legislature; and at the same time, to subject these very men to the penalties of Premunire and Treason for denying that supremacy and competency.

In the third place, you establish the principle, that the state is indifferent in religious concerns, and that it is of no consequence to the state, what is the religion of its subjects; from which it follows, either that there ought to be no established religion at all, but that religion should be left to chance—or secondly, that all religions should be equally established—or thirdly, that if one is to be established for the sake of religious instruction, it ought to be the religion of the majority, which is the Catholic.

In the fourth place, you establish, or acquiesce in the right of the Pope to a real, and essential jurisdiction within this realm, in all matters relating to the Church and its Government; and the right which has been asserted of the College of Cardinals, which is the Pope's Cabinet, to manage the ecclesiastical affairs of Ireland.

Thus

Thus so soon as the Catholics of Ireland are admitted into the Legislature, and the Test Oaths and Act of Supremacy repealed, the Protestant Church Establishment becomes a public wrong. *That* Establishment is defensible at present, because, on principles of reason, and from the nature of a free constitution, no religious sect can claim a right to be established and supported by the state which denies the competency of the state to regulate their conduct; but when that principle is abandoned, the defence of the Protestant Church Establishment is abandoned also.

It further follows, from the admission of the Catholics to political equality, that the frame of the House of Commons should be reformed. It is a known historical fact, that the Irish House of Commons was framed with the sole view of excluding Roman Catholics; when therefore the principle of excluding Roman Catholics is given up, the alteration of the House of Commons in favour of the Catholics follows of course.

Admitting the Catholics to seats in the Legislature, and retaining the present Parliamentary Constitution, would be like inviting a man to dinner, and, on his acceptance of the invitation, shutting the door in his face.

If then Reform must follow what is called Emancipation, and one be the unavoidable consequence

quence of the other, would not a revolution of power soon take place? would it not pass from Protestant into Catholic hands? and what hope could the Protestants retain of preserving their situation when they had lost their power in the Legislature, and their right to the Church Establishment?

Let us consider then what would be the natural effects of a favourable Legislative Union.

First.—The empire would have but one Legislature, one organ of the public will, and the dangers which arise from an *imperium in imperio*, from two supreme powers, would be avoided.

Secondly.—Ireland would be in a *natural* situation; for all the Protestants of the empire being united, she would have the proportion of fourteen to three in favour of her establishment; whereas at present there is a proportion of three to one against it.

Thirdly.—The Catholics would lose the advantage of the argument of numbers, which they at present enjoy, and the Constitution of the Empire would agree with the theory.

Fourthly.—Whilst Ireland remains a separate Country from Great Britain, Great Britain is not pledged upon any specific principle to support one sect

fect in Ireland more than another; if she cannot preserve the connexion of the two kingdoms by upholding the Protestants in their establishment, their power, and their property, I know not by what tie she is debarred from assisting the Catholics; for whilst the kingdoms are separate and independent, Ireland, except where the Crown is concerned, is merely bound by the ties of interest to England, and in a similar manner England is only bound by the Rights of the Crown and ties of interest to Ireland. She is pledged to preserve Ireland to the British Crown, but not to any particular means or any particular principles for maintaining that connexion. But if Ireland was once united to Great Britain by a Legislative Union, and the maintenance of the Protestant Establishment were made a fundamental article of that Union, then the whole Power of the Empire would be pledged to the Church Establishment of Ireland, and the property of the whole empire would be pledged in support of the property of every part.

An objection to this reasoning has been made by stating that an Union would encrease Absentee Proprietors; that the proprietors of estates are generally Protestants; that of course Protestant influence would decrease, and consequently the security for Protestant property.

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The answer to this objection is, that it does not appear that the Absentees from Scotland increased after the Union, and that an argument from experience in political reasoning is superior to any argument in theory. Another mode of reply is, that suppose Absentees were to be increased, this evil would be compensated by the solid advantage of having a fixed unalterable Constitution, and of having the whole power and property of Great Britain its guarantees. When once the hope of change were at an end, and the hope of forcing a change destroyed, dissatisfaction would sink into acquiescence, and acquiescence soften into content.

Another objection is, that if an Union be made upon Protestant Principles, it cannot fail to excite the opposition of the Catholics, and to encrease their disaffection to a Government which perpetually bars them from power; that consequently the Catholics would be more and more disposed to cultivate a foreign connexion, and, when free from the vigilance of a Protestant Resident Parliament, more likely to effectuate that connexion, and the plans resulting from it, without being detected.

To solve this objection it is only necessary to state it as a *petitio principii*. What ground is there to assume that the Catholics will oppose an Union, though founded on Protestant Principles?

Why

Why may not an Union be so shaped, as to be favourable to the Protestants, without being unfavourable to the Catholics?

First.—A Free Toleration will be secured to their Religion. Their power of electing Representatives will be perpetuated, as well as their capacity of filling most of the offices of State.

Second.—It may be adviseable to connect with an Union a proper support for their Clergy and some system of regulation for their Church, not inconsistent with their Ecclesiastical Principles, and calculated to do away misconceptions of their religious tenets, and to discontinue practices which have been attended with inconvenience.

Third.—The dissensions which arise in counties from Candidates standing on the Protestant or Catholic interests, and all little parish jealousies will cease, from which circumstance great inconveniences have been already felt.

Fourth.—If the Protestant Interest be secured, there will be no necessary state partiality towards Protestants, which is a natural source of complaint.

Fifth.—Catholics will feel more confident under a Legislature framed upon a more extended basis,
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where the majority of members will not be influenced against them by local prejudices or antipathies.

Sixth.—Sectarian struggle will terminate, and, tranquillity being restored, animosities will gradually relax; and there being no ground for political jealousy and contention, the habits and connexions of social life will re-produce confidence and friendships, where exist, at present, rivalry and suspicion.

Seventh.—An opening may be left in any plan of Union, for the future admission of Catholics to additional privileges. And Protestants can never object to such an opening, as they may rest assured, that the British Protestant Parliament will not imprudently admit Catholic pretensions, as the Test Laws could not be partially repealed; and it is evident, that the Catholics could not force their claims with hostility against the whole power of Great Britain and Ireland.

Eighth.—The Catholics are most numerous in the south and west of Ireland; and it is conceived, that those parts of the kingdom would be most benefited by an Union, as to agricultural and commercial advantages.

Ninth.—As all the struggles of the Catholics for political predominancy have failed, and as they cannot hope to carry their wishes by domestic or
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even foreign force, they would do well to adopt a settlement, which would ensure them many political and all civil advantages, and to rest satisfied with a much greater degree of toleration than Protestants have ever enjoyed under a Catholic state.

To answer the other objection which was stated, we may observe, it does not follow that, if an Union were made, that the government of Ireland would be less vigilantly administered; it probably would be administered with more attention; because it would be less distracted by the business of party and of Parliament; and for the same reasons, it would be administered more impartially.

With regard to Dissenters, they are supposed to be in a ratio of about one-seventh to the whole population of the kingdom, and of one-sixth to the Catholics. They are mostly manufacturers, and some of them are merchants; but they have little influence in the present representation.

Whilst Ireland remains a separate kingdom, they are the least considerable body of the people; but were an Union formed with Great Britain, the Dissenting interest would be in a very different ratio in the empire, and their importance and power would proportionably rise.

It

It is difficult to comprehend the wisdom of their junction with the Catholics, in order to overthrow the Protestant power and establishment; for, supposing their project to have been completed, they would have been at the mercy of their allies.

If they had succeeded in their plans with the Catholics, their consequence in the state would have been probably annihilated; if an Union takes place, their importance in the empire will encrease; and, as to their staple manufacture, it will be secured for ever.

As it is probable that a modus for Tythes will accompany the measure of an Union, both Catholics and Dissenters would be essentially relieved and benefited by that part of a new system.

Some persons have conceived that it might be advantageous to the Dissenters, if the government of their Church were more assimilated to the Church of Scotland, which is under the most excellent discipline; but when the stumbling block of Tythes is removed, they may probably fall in with the Protestant Church. The causes of difference between Protestants and Dissenters have been for some time obsolete, and they resort to separate congregations, more from early prejudice and custom, than from any rational or even alleged necessity.

Having

Having considered briefly in what manner an Union would affect the great religious descriptions of the people, we may proceed to examine its influence on the different orders and classes of the State.

The Peerage would probably, in any plan of Union, be represented like the Scotch peers, by a delegation to the British Parliament. This arrangement would not affect those nobles who are peers of Great Britain, and it would be favourable to those who reside in Great Britain. There are forty-one of the former class, and about eighty of the latter. The remaining fourscore peers who attend Parliament occasionally, would be the only peers materially interested, but almost all of them have considerable property in land; and as all personal privileges and prerogatives would remain to them, the general advantages of an Union, in giving permanent security to their titles and their properties, would compensate any diminution of consequence they might feel from their not being all certain of seats in the British Parliament.

The spiritual peers would be amply recompensed by the security given to their diocesan estates, and to the general interests and establishments of the church.

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The same reasoning will apply to those who have parliamentary influence in the House of Commons; yet it must be acknowledged that some sacrifices must be made of power, of emolument, of importance. Many schemes have been in circulation for adjusting the representation of this kingdom in the British Parliament. It is not the design of this publication to examine them; but can it be doubted that a reasonable representation may be selected, which, however it must interfere with the conveniencies of some individuals, will give this kingdom a proportionate influence in the House of Commons of the empire? There is no difficulty in the subject so great, which may not be obviated and overcome, if an Union is of importance to be attained, and if we seriously endeavour to effect it.

The chief opposition to the measure must be expected from the Bar, who are supposed to be more personally interested against it than any class in society. It is a general habit in the gentlemen of Ireland to educate their sons at the Temple, and the number of barristers is much greater in proportion here than in England. And as the profession will not support, by any means, the numbers which pursue it, lawyers in Ireland extend their circle to politics, and are very numerous in Parliament, and extremely active in the business of it. In England there are few lawyers in the House of Commons; whereas in Ireland they are
a formidable

a formidable phalanx. Were a legislative Union to take place, Irish lawyers would be deprived of the parliamentary market for their abilities and ambition; they could not attend the British Parliament without renouncing business; they would be entirely confined to professional prospects; and mere political emoluments and situations would be taken from their grasp.

But when opposition to an Union comes forward from the Bar, it must be taken into consideration, that the very reasons which make the Bar oppose an Union, are arguments in favour of it.

1. It is obviously the interest of the nation, that the law should be accurately and deeply studied; and it will be more probable that students will pay attention to their profession when their hopes of advancement are confined to knowledge and ability in the line of it. In proportion as you have abler lawyers, you will have abler judges, especially when the temptation of placing them upon the bench, from political reasons, is removed.

2. It is obvious that it would be prudent to exclude from the Legislature, young adventurers, who have but little stake in the country, who have acquired by habit a facility of speaking upon every subject, and upon every side of a subject, and who

who only consider a seat in Parliament as the means of bringing their abilities to market.

It does not, however, appear that the prospects of the Bar would be materially injured by an Union; the offices to which lawyers are usually appointed, would remain the same; and if the road to them was more through professional merit, than Parliamentary services, it does not appear, that either the Bar or the Public would be injured.

It is said, also, that the opposition of the Bar is not likely to be unanimous; and that some leading characters, who have thought most on the subject, and who are capable of thinking best, who ought to have great weight, where their interest is in no shape concerned, and where pursuit of public good can alone sway their opinions; so far from considering an Union as destructive, conceive it as pregnant with solid and permanent benefit. Aged and experienced characters are certainly as liable to political temptations, as the virtuous ardency of youth; but where no private interest can operate, and especially where the point of interest, the *cui bono*, lies against an opinion given, one should never hesitate between the natural precipitation of youth, and the cautious decisions of experience.

To

To demonstrate to the Clergy the advantages of an Union, would be lost labour indeed; if they are supposed in general to be sufficiently sensible to the interests of the Church, we may safely leave them to their usual discernment, in the question before us.

The gentlemen of landed property, would be merely affected, as the prosperity of the kingdom in general would be increased or diminished. If an Union would produce tranquillity, security, commercial and agricultural advantages, estates in lands would be proportionably benefited. Political contests, party struggles may be the harvest of enterprising adventurers; but they blight the hopes, and blast the fortunes of country gentlemen. Land in England, during times of peace, is sold from thirty to forty years purchase; in Ireland the price of land seldom exceeds twenty years purchase. This is attributable to the supposed different state of tranquillity and security of the two kingdoms. The continual insurrections in different parts of the country, of White Boys, Oak Boys, Right Boys, Defenders, United Irishmen, have made residence unsafe, and diminished the certainty of rents, and the value of tenure. If it is probable that an Union would put an end to these disorders, by introducing steadiness of administration, and regular subordination, the value of estates would gradually rise to the English level,

and speculators in land, would naturally prefer this kingdom as the scene of improvement and experiment, in proportion as the soil is in general superior to that of England, and, from being less improved, more fit for experiment. The monied capital of England, has of late years been increased to such a degree, that, notwithstanding the enormous loans which have been borrowed by Government, the monied men are embarrassed in what manner to invest their capitals with advantage and security. When a peace arrives, and loans shall cease, the difficulty of employing capital will be augmented; and there can be no doubt that, if the state of this country can be rendered secure, it will be abundantly employed in Irish purchases and Irish speculation.

It is also certain, that Great Britain does not produce sufficient corn for her consumption; it must be a great object, therefore, for Irish landed gentlemen to secure a preference in the British market for ever, which an Union would certainly effect.

As we suppose the Union, which we are discussing, will confer all commercial advantages which Great Britain enjoys upon Irish subjects, it would be lost time to prove that our merchants must be gainers by the measure. The British administration, in order to encrease the wealth of the kingdom, for the purposes of power, are perpetually employed
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in devising the means of extending the commerce of England; and under the wise regulations of that Government, a commerce has been established, and by the late naval victories has been secured, which is the astonishment of the world. An Union then will place the Irish merchant upon an equality with the British, and he will be certain to enjoy, for ever, the same privileges, protection, regulations, bounties and encouragements, as are enjoyed by the greatest commercial country that ever flourished.

The question of Union will be debated in the metropolis, and one of the chief arguments against it is, that it will ruin the metropolis, and render it a desert. The same argument was used most powerfully at the time of the Scotch Union, with regard to Edinburgh: the desertion of that capital was predicted; the bankruptcy of its shopkeepers, the ruin of its proprietors, were foretold and insisted upon; yet, notwithstanding the Union, and the prophecy, Edinburgh, so far from decaying, has flourished more since the Union, than it had done before. It will be considered, that Dublin *must* still be the residence of a Viceroy and his court; that sciences, arts, amusements, may be cultivated in proportion, as there will be less attention to politics; that it will be the seat of justice, which will be administered as at present; the chief seat of revenue, and the head-quarters of the army. It will probably monopolize the corn
trade

trade between Great Britain and Ireland; and, from the circumstance of the Canals, which are making in every part of England, and communicating with London, its commerce for all English goods, with Liverpool, will greatly increase; and in proportion, as canals from Dublin are carried to different parts of the kingdom, it will be the depôt for their consumption in all articles of British manufacture and import,

A similar prediction is made as to the depopulation of the country in general; and with much less reason. For what induces residence? Is it not peace, and comfort, and security? What has banished so many families, but the loss of these invaluable blessings? Restore to Ireland good humour and tranquillity, and comfort, and security; her fugitives will soon return. Taxes will be lower in Ireland, living will be cheaper; these advantages, assisted by the natural attraction of property, and the place of nativity, will soon bring back the proprietors of the soil. Property is ever fluctuating; men of estate are apt to be imprudent and prodigal; and the accumulations of wealth, acquired by the lawyer, the merchant, the manufacturer, and the farmer, are ultimately invested in the purchase of land. New purchasers do not easily abandon their property; as, therefore, the wealth and trade of the country increase, the purchasers of land will increase, and, with new purchasers, new residents.

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The adversaries of an Union admit, that it will be beneficial to trade and manufactures; we need not then be terrified by alarms of depopulation.

The next city in consequence to the metropolis is Cork, which enjoys a situation particularly calculated for foreign trade, and an excellent harbour for Men of War to resort to, for the protection of the island and its commerce. It is also the emporium of provisions for the British Navy, and a place for all homeward-bound convoys to make to in times of war, when the channel might be dangerous to approach. From the convenience of the situation of Cork, it would probably, after an Union, become a Marine Station, and a Dock-yard would be there formed: It is known that the three present harbours of England, viz. the Thames, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, are inadequate to the extent of the navy; and that a new station is greatly wanted. If an Union were once effected, there can be little doubt that Cork would be selected for the purpose.

Limerick and Waterford would not be particularly affected, except in proportion as an Union, by inducing the import of British capital, and the general extension of trade, would naturally augment their commercial exertions; and this general argument is applicable to all parts of the South-west.

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With regard to the North of Ireland, which carries on a manufacture of linen, of which 52,000,000 of yards have been exported in one year; all that can be desired is to confirm a trade, which, by its extent, seems a monopoly. Great Britain gives a preference in her market, to Irish over German linens of 37 per cent. and grants a bounty of three half-pence a yard on all Irish linens re-exported, the value of which does not exceed eighteen-pence a yard. These advantages in favour of the North of Ireland, England might repeal or diminish, whenever she pleases; by an Union, they might be fixed for ever.

It may now be desirable to obviate several objections which are naturally and generally brought forward to dissuade Ireland from an Union.

First.—*An Union would extinguish Ireland.* The name may remain, and surely it will not extinguish the people and the soil; though it may meliorate both. If its representatives sit in the same place with its Executive, and by that means obtain great influence in the councils of the Empire; and the same security for its Constitution as the people of England enjoy, how will Ireland be extinguished?

Second.

Second.—*What can be such madness and folly as for a people to send its Legislature from the Metropolis of their own Country, which is convenient to all its Members, to sit in the Metropolis of another Country, separated by the sea, at a great distance, to the inconvenience of all its Members?*

The answer to this objection is, that Ireland is part of an Empire; that the King of Ireland resides in that distant Metropolis; that having two Legislatures in one Empire is incompatible with its safety; that a Consolidation of those Legislatures promises great advantages; that the distance of Ireland from the Metropolis of England, is not greater than that of Scotland; that in the French Republic the distance of Toulon and many other parts from Paris, is much greater than the distance of Dublin from London; and that in America the distance of Charlestown and other Capitals from Philadelphia, is in the same proportion; yet no inconvenience is felt in these cases; and the inconvenience of distance may be easily balanced by the advantages of Union.

Third.—*Shall we tamely resign that Legislature, whose Independence was so gloriously asserted and established by the arms of the Volunteers?*

It is not intended to detract from the merit of the Volunteers of Ireland. In asserting the independence

pendence of the Legislature of Ireland, they were convinced they were promoting her happiness and security; they meant well, they acted nobly, but they have failed in success. The security and happiness of Ireland is at present suspended. It does not appear that the continuance of a separate Legislature will restore it. Some new arrangement must be tried. If the Volunteers of Ireland armed for the happiness of their country, they armed for a separate Legislature, provided that could obtain it; but if that has failed, and nothing but an Union can procure it, they armed for an Union; it was not the means, but the end, which was in their contemplation. To secure the liberty and the property of their countrymen, to encrease the happiness and prosperity of their country, were their objects; and whoever best pursues those objects, fights in their cause, and enlists under their banners. Can we suppose, if, in 1779, Ireland had been united to Great Britain by an identity of Legislature; that if her privileges had been equally great, and equally established, that if we had then been in the enjoyment of a trade as free as the commerce of England; if our liberties had been secured by the Habeas Corpus Bill; if our judges had been independent, and if we had not been degraded by Legislating Privy Councils—in short, if our Constitution had been the same as the British, that the Volunteers would have stood forth to destroy the prosperity and happiness of such a state, and have
dissolved

dissolved that Union which produced them? Would they not, on the contrary, have considered any attempt to separate the kingdoms as hostile, and have treated the advisers of such folly as enemies?

Nor was it so much the theoretic defects of our former connexion with Great Britain, which roused the Volunteers, as the practical evils resulting from it, and especially the restraints upon our commerce. But their acquisitions, which removed those evils and restraints, have produced, (as was at the time foretold) new inconveniencies and evils: What then is the state of the case? a subordination of the Irish Legislature to the British, has been experienced and found injurious; a separate Legislature has been tried, and proved inadequate to secure our happiness; an incorporation with the British Parliament may still be resorted to, which promises to increase the security of our subordinate state, and the advantages of our independent situation, and is in theory preferable to both.

Fourth.—*Must it not be the height of folly to part with the management of our own concerns for ever?*

The obvious answer is, that, in a fair Legislative Union with Great Britain, we shall retain as far as is necessary, and not part with at all the management of our concerns. We shall have Irishmen in the originating Cabinet of Great Britain; we

shall have a number of Irish Representatives, in proportion to our relative consequence, in the Parliament of the Empire. Our affairs will be there discussed by our own Members, in the presence of the wisest and freest assembly which ever existed, where our interest is their interest, our prosperity their prosperity, our power their aggrandizement, and where of course the anxiety for our welfare must be as great in the British as in the Irish part of the Legislature.

But this objection might as well be urged by Yorkshire, or any county in England as by Ireland. It will be said the Members for Great Britain will out-number the Members for Ireland, as five to one; so may Yorkshire complain that the Members for Great Britain are in proportion to the Members for Yorkshire as fifty to one.

The same weak argument was advanced at the time of the Union of Scotland; it was then refuted in terms, it has since been refuted by experience.

Fifth.—*A kingdom that subjects its own Legislature to the will of another kingdom, becomes its slave.* Let the position be granted, and let it be allowed that it is true, with respect to an Union of despotic countries; with regard to an Union of free countries it does not apply. For an Union, presupposing
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ing that the Legislature of the united empire is composed of numbers of representatives, proportionate to its component parts, and that the laws to be made must attach generally and not partially, and that there is an identity of privileges and interests throughout the whole; it will follow, that so long as any part of the Union remains free, the whole will remain free. Who would desire to have better security for his liberty than an Englishman possesses for his? The liberties of the empire are at present maintained by a separate body of representatives for Great Britain, and a separate body of representatives for Ireland; how will they be endangered when a common body of representatives shall be formed on a scheme of mutual interest for the joint preservation of the Liberties of both?

Sixth.—It is urged *that the present is a most improper time to agitate the question, when the people are in such a state of irritation and turbulence, and the kingdom engaged in war.*

It may be argued on the other hand, that the present is the period most adapted for its discussion; for whilst the feelings of our late misfortunes are fresh, it is natural that we should be anxious to provide every safeguard against their recurrence, and that we ought not to adjourn the consideration of our permanent safety to a casual interval of peace

peace, when a temporary enjoyment of tranquillity may render us indifferent and regardless.

As to a time of war, if it is true, that the Volunteers took advantage of the embarrassments of Great Britain in the last war, to assert the independence of our Parliament; it is likewise true, that the United Irishmen in the present war have taken advantage of the supposed weakness of Great Britain to play the game of separation. When, therefore, the enemies of the empire take advantage of a time of war and embarrassment to effect its ruin, we should turn against them their own game, and make use of a time of war to establish its security.

Seventh.—The question of Union is beyond the power and competence of Parliament; a House of Commons elected for eight years, cannot abolish the House of Commons for ever.

This objection is easily answered by considering the end of Legislative Institutions, by which their competency is best defined. The end for which Legislature is established by a free people is to maintain their property, to protect their charters, to secure the liberty of their persons, and to consult the convenience and happiness of the people. Now if it be not possible for a Legislature to ensure these ends to its constituents by preserving itself separate from another kingdom; and if, by uniting

ing itself with another kingdom, it is certain or highly probable that these ends will be attained; it follows, that were a Legislature to refuse entertaining such a question, it would desert its duty, which is the pursuit of the general good. That, in the discussion of the question, the Legislature ought to listen to the opinion of the people, is true, and it will not act against that opinion if universal; but on the other hand, it ought not to be terrified by the clamour of a few, and should be satisfied by general acquiescence,

If this argument had any real weight, we could never have obtained the reformation, and the establishment of Protestantism; we could never have procured the Revolution, and have changed the line of hereditary succession to the throne: the Union of Scotland and England could not have been entertained. It is a common maxim in logic, that what proves too much, proves nothing; and if this maxim is applicable to subjects, where strict reasoning is required, it cannot be excluded from political arguments, where probabilities and experiences must be resorted to; and questions are to be decided by the principles of moral reasoning, not by mathematical precision.

Eighth.—The arguments from national dignity, and national pride, have been obviated already;

ready; but as they will be repeatedly urged, as being easy topics of declamation, another mode of refuting them may be suggested.

Ireland, independent Ireland, has, at this moment, its commerce, in all parts of the world, protected, without expence, by the British Navy. Her supplies for the year are chiefly raised by the British Minister in England, on the faith of the British Parliament; her country is protected from domestic and foreign enemies, by forty thousand British troops, at the expence, to Great Britain, of seven hundred thousand pounds a-year. If her dignity and pride do not suffer by receiving such assistance and protection, how can they be injured, if she makes herself a part of that nation, incorporates her Legislature into that of Great Britain, and converts that protection, which she now receives as a favour, into a right?

Ninth.—When Ireland was subject to the controul of the British Parliament, was she not then kept down in a wretched state of penury, by the tyranny of Great Britain; and will she not be reduced to a similar state, by again subjecting her representative to theirs? Has not all the improvement of the kingdom arisen from the exertions of a free Legislature; and shall we consent to part with that power, which has been the only cause of our prosperity?

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This argument would have some weight if an Union were a state of subjection, from which it is essentially distinguished, as has been demonstrated before. The great advantage of an Union is, that it places Ireland on an equality with Great Britain, and prevents its subjection for ever. The vice of our former connexion with England was, that Great Britain made laws to bind Ireland, without binding herself at the same time, by the same laws. After an Union, partial laws cannot be made, where general interest is concerned; we shall have full security that the British United Parliament will never injure Ireland, because it must at the same time injure Great Britain, and this is the best possible security.

It is certain, that since the independence of the Irish Legislature, our commerce has increased; but that has been effected by Great Britain admitting us to her Colony trade, and by relaxing the Navigation Laws; and if the giving us some of the advantages of British Commerce, has been of such benefit already, what progress may we not expect, when all the advantages of the British Market, and British Commerce, shall be secured to us for ever, which cannot fail to be the effect of an Union!

Tenth.

Tenth.—*An Union must be our ruin or destruction ; all we want is a good steady Administration, wisely and firmly conducted, and then all things will go well.*

Here we must ask, what is meant by a *firm and steady Administration* ? Does it mean such an Administration as tends to the encrease of the nation in population, its advancement in agriculture, in manufactures, in wealth and prosperity ? If that is intended, we have had the experience of it these twenty years ; for it is universally admitted, that no country in the world ever made such rapid advances as Ireland has done in these respects ; yet, all her accession of prosperity has been of no avail ; discontent has kept pace with improvement, discord has grown up with our wealth, conspiracy and rebellion have shot up with our prosperity.

What then is intended by a *steady and firm Administration* ? Is it a determined, inflexible support of Protestant Ascendency, and a rigorous and indignant rejection of Catholic claims ? Who will be a guarantee of that system, and whom will it content ? The Catholics will not acquiesce in its propriety. A party of Protestants in Ireland, term it unjust and absurd ; another party in England, term it by fouler names ; great leaders in opposition, possibly the future ministers of England, may condemn it ; and some members of the
British

British Cabinet are supposed to be adverse to it. Its stability may rest upon accident, upon the death of a *single* character, upon the change of a Minister, on the temper of a Lord Lieutenant; and the policy of this system is much doubted by the people of England.

But perhaps a *firm and steady Administration* means Catholic Emancipation and Reform. Dr. M'Nevin, however, and the United Irishmen, assure us, that these measures are the certain introduction of Separation and Republicanism, and that they were merely adopted with that view by the United Irishmen. *Fas est & ab hoste doceri.*

If then mere attention to agricultural and commercial prosperity, and to general improvement, will not preserve good order, subordination, and allegiance; if the power of maintaining Protestant Ascendency is uncertain, and the project of Catholic Emancipation and Reform is pregnant with danger, ought we to reject the consideration of a measure with contumely and disdain, which places our Constitution on the same footing of security as that of Great Britain, and holds out British Principles, British Honour, and British Power, as the guarantee of our Liberties and Establishments?

A few of the topics relating to an Union have been now discussed, and it is hoped they have been

discussed in such a manner as to prove that the subject of an Union with Great Britain deserves the serious and calm deliberation of every honest man ; that it is not to be encountered by passion, nor combated with arms.

An Union has this advantage—it may be our salvation ; it cannot be our ruin.

Equal liberty, equal privilege with the people of Great Britain, guaranteed by a Parliament composed from the Representatives of both kingdoms, and upheld by the power of all the subjects of the two islands ; in short, the consolidation of Great Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, with one Constitution, one King, one Law, one Religion, can never be the ruin of Ireland. It widens the foundation of our liberties, it advances our prospects of improvement, it strengthens the basis of prosperity by encreasing domestic security, and ensures our Imperial Independence by consolidating our power.

There may be prejudices to overcome ; there may be private interests to manage and to compensate ; there may be the intrigues of our enemies to counteract ; but if the nature of our situation, our permanent and great interests, demonstrate an Union to be salutary for our perpetual improvement, security, and stability, let us boldly follow where our reason leads, though private interest and
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local prejudice, and hostile intrigue, shall attempt to impede and arrest our progress.

The design of what has been written is to remove any improper prepossession against an Union in general; the detail of the subject has not been entered upon. It may be observed, however, that the following points are supposed :

First.—The preservation of the Protestant religion and establishment, as a fundamental article.

Second.—An equitable number of Peers and Commoners, to sit in the Parliament of the Empire.

Third.—An equality of Rights and Privileges, and a fair adjustment of commerce.

Fourth.—An equitable arrangement as to revenues, debts and future taxes, suitable to our situation and powers.

Fifth.—The continuance of the civil administration in Ireland, as it stands at present accommodated to the new situation of the kingdom.

Sixth.—An arrangement for the Roman Catholic clergy, so as to put an end, if possible, to religious jealousies, and to ensure the attachment of that order of men to the state.

Seventh.

Seventh.—Some further provision to the Dissenting clergy.

Eighth.—An arrangement with respect to tithes.

It is surely possible that all these points may be properly adjusted, by wise and able men, so as to produce upon the whole a rational and permanent system upon which we may securely close up our interests with those of Great-Britain: But it would be useless to enter into the detail of any measure, so long as the public mind should refuse to discuss its principle. If all advantages are to be rejected, because they cannot be obtained but through the medium of an Union; if we had rather continue in turbulent insecurity, than be united in prosperity and happiness with Great-Britain; and if we prefer adhering with tenacious obstinacy to false notions of Pride, rather than to cherish the sentiments of true Independence, the labour of detailed reasoning would be lost and futile.

But as we trust the foregoing observations may tend to incline every rational mind to a fair Examination and Enquiry, we may hereafter profit on the disposition and temper of the Public, and suggest a scheme for consideration, accompanied with calculations and details.

Some

Some of the statements which have been made in this publication, seem to have the tendency of increasing Party Animosity ; whereas the object of the writer is to reconcile and extinguish them ; but he knows not how to induce men to think rightly, without making them see their situation and confess it.

The premises which have been stated cannot be controverted. If our situation be imputed to mal-administration, who can secure us from its recurrence ? If to the instability of affairs, who can insure their future consistency ? If to the prevalence of the Protestant Monopoly, who can induce men to relinquish what appears to them the security for their properties ? If to the efforts of the Catholics, who can force them to abandon their claims ?

Is there not some settlement to be anxiously wished for, which may lay these causes of discontent asleep, and quiet them for ever ? We have been sufficiently distracted and harassed. We have drank enough from the bitter cup of dissension. Shall then any attempt to ensure tranquillity be the source of discord ; shall the discussion of a plausible theory lead to passion and resentment ; and an honest attempt to allay the commotions of the State, and to settle its jarring interests, be a provocation to new animosities and fresh outrages ?

The

The enemies of the empire have stated, that Ireland can never be happy until she is separated from England; it is the opinion of many of her friends, that she never can be truly happy till she is entirely united with England.

The one attempt would make Ireland the scene of contest in Europe; would deluge her with blood; would reduce her to desolation: the latter, by making her power the power of Great Britain, and the power of Great Britain her own, would enable the British Empire to defy every hostile attack, and to secure, to the happy coasts of the two islands, all the blessings of genuine and rational liberty, of true and solid independence and security.

THE END.

Edward Looke
