

THE  
LETTERS  
OF  
TIMOLEON;  
AND THE  
ANSWERS THERETO,  
BY AN  
IRISH WHIG, AND ARISTIDES;  
ON  
THE LATE PARLIAMENTARY CONDUCT  
OF  
THE RIGHT HON.  
HENRY GRATTAN.  
—  
WITH THE  
SPEECHES  
OF  
Messrs. Sheridan and Grattan,  
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
THE 13TH AUGUST, 1807,  
ON THE MOTION OF THE FORMER FOR AN INQUIRY INTO  
THE STATE OF IRELAND.

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Kilkenny:

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1807.

## TO THE PUBLIC.

*HAVING perceived that the following LETTERS and SPEECHES, when they appeared in the Newspapers, attracted very general Attention, the EDITOR takes the Liberty of offering them to the Public in the Form of a Pamphlet, that they may be rescued from that Danger of perishing, to which ephemeral Prints are so much exposed.*



# LETTERS,

*&c.*

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TO

THE RT. HON. HENRY GRATTAN.

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*Hei mihi, qualis erat ! quantum mutatus ab illo !*

I ADDRESS you, SIR, with a mingled and unutterable emotion : my heart is rent with sorrow, and sunk is my estimation of human nature ; I weep over the fallen Pillar of my Country—I stand shocked at the wreck of intellect and honour—I cover my face with my hand. Behold him, my Countrymen—behold the pride and glory of the land—behold the incorruptible Patriot, the Champion of Emancipation, the Constitutional Warrior, who, for near half a century, battled on the side of Freedom ; behold that Man in the hour of his degradation—his integrity extinguished, his energies nerveless, and his former glories struck prostrate to the Earth. The blast of Corruption has reached him—and the tree, which flourished on its native soil, now withers, a transplanted trunk ! Whence this degradation ? whence this lapse of nature and of rectitude ? It is a subject of shame and sorrow.

Like the Ministry, on its formation, your conduct, Sir, has spread dismay and consternation thro' the land ; it has loosened the ligaments of public safety and of confidence—the frame of the community is shaken. You have much to answer for : the charge against you is momentous—and, unhappily, you stand destitute of defence. What is your conduct ? You support a Bill, which you once justly reprobated, and which consigns that Country, whose PENSIONARY you are, to the arbitrary exercise of a *Vigour beyond the Law*. Upon what authority ? Upon the mysterious *dictum* of a retired Secretary, not so lately in Ireland as you, Sir, his political mouthpiece—and who, though perched at his elbow during the discussion, utters not a single word upon the subject. As this species of secondary evidence would not be admitted in a Court of Justice, where the interest of the humblest individual was concerned, wherefore, then, should it be allowed, when the welfare of a

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community is involved? However, I assert that you carried the Bill—for it passed upon your credit and authority. You sat, indeed, by the cradle of Ireland—you followed her hearse; but you also blew the trumpet—not of her resurrection, as was vainly hoped—but of her annihilation! You swelled the blast which gave the Subjects, man, woman, and child, of that very IRELAND, your Native Land, to the caprice and violence of legalized Oppression. The Secretary was mute; but, had he made a single comment on the occasion, it may surely have been retorted on him, that Mr. GRATTAN, once the Friend of his Country, had stated, on the Proposition question, that “*A Lord Lieutenant’s Secretary was an unsafe Commentator on an Irish Constitution.*” But, as the Right Hon. Gentleman held a cold and cheerless taciturnity, the meaning of the Oracle must be had through you, its conducting instrument. The mystical Prompter makes known, that “*DARK AND SECRET MEETINGS*” were held in Ireland. If so, and that he knew of such, it was his duty to have suppressed them at the instant, and not left them an accumulating legacy to his successor. He was, therefore, guilty of a negligence, which, in an ordinary person, would have been punishable by law. He could not, surely, have alluded to the meetings of those unfortunate men, denominated *Threshers*—for the Civil Authority was found sufficient to suppress them. No other class of disturbers were, in his day, known in the Country. Where, then, do those men of Buckram exist? I am bold to say, no where, but in the corrupted heart; they are not even the *phantasmagoria* of a terrified imagination.—The late Chancellor, whose situation must have furnished ample means of knowledge, bears no testimony to their existence; the most respectable Characters in the Kingdom are unacquainted with them; nor has there been a single document produced, or a single fact stated, on which to ground even a plausible pretext for the enactment of this measure. All, all rests upon the assertion of a retired Secretary, adopted by you, Sir, the pivot of the machinery—the focus to concentrate the burning glare, and direct it to your native soil. In the calenture of its feelings, your Country repays you by its heavy malediction. You have undone the land; and, when you next press it, will surely feel the weight of the Public Eye, and taste the bitterness of Public Indignation.

Was the necessity of this measure proved by the opposition of the late Law Officers of the Crown, who voted in the minority? Had the Ministry continued, those learned and able men would have been consulted on, perhaps been the framers of a Bill, bearing some similitude to the present. Their’s, indeed, would, in all probability, have been a Bill of Precaution—but your’s is to remedy a *necessity*, which does not exist. However, these distinguished Gentlemen disapproved of your Bill—and such disapproval is, in my mind, a strong argument against it. The Brother of His Grace the Duke of Bedford opposed it; the



Member of that County which contains the Metropolis of Ireland opposed it; the Committee which acted for Mr. GRATTAN, and the men who sent Mr. GRATTAN into Parliament—all, all are in opposition to the Bill; and yet that Gentleman, in open hostility to the Public Opinion and the voice of Truth—without consulting his own understanding, or means of information—supports and carries, *on the suggestion of another*, a measure which extinguishes the glory of his own great name, and flings dishonour and destruction on his native land. Shame! shame upon the pseudo Patriot, who can thus outrage humanity, make moral excellence a subject of derision, and give to his enemy a weapon of triumphant retaliation.

You, Sir, must feel, and severely too, the scorn of the living; and, though the dead cannot rise to reproach you, yet must you experience a pang at the memory of the immortal FOX. Had he lived, you would have sunk before the majesty of his mind; your tongue would have faltered; and you had not dared to breathe a sentiment, in support of that Bill, which is your downfall. He would have done what you had not firmness to do, he would have rescued your character, and your country. But though Death has relieved you from the reproach of his eye, and the stinging truth of his tongue, you have the well-earned praise of most deserving and beloved men. The Apostles of the Scourge congratulate and applaud their regenerated Disciple. Their panegyric is not given in the bitterness of sarcasm; not so, it is the meed of acknowledged virtue—the wreath of honour—it is a crown of glory: their's are, indeed, but few; yet is the approval of that few more endearing to the heart than the displeasure of millions can be wounding. Purity of intention is their motto; Moderation and Liberality are their handmaids; and Mercy is their ruling principle. In such society, how sublime must be the intellectual communion! how blessed the practical effect! Hail! holy congregation! nurture, I pray you, and nourish this your renovated proselyte, whom I leave at present to your care and encouragement.—Detach not his mind from that Peerage, which he, patriotically, grasps at; but in the embraces of political pollution, permit the Apostate, in the words of JUNIUS, to “sit down for the remainder of his life, INFAMOUS and CONTENTED.”

TIMOLEON.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE CORRESPONDENT.

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SIR,

THERE are not a few amongst us who will not allow a man any other form of a public character than that which they themselves have, with somewhat of arbitrary license, fixed upon;



and whenever they cannot discover the immediate reasons which influence the conduct of a public man, they generously provide others themselves, which prejudice or folly is ready to supply; and as these are not of too flattering a nature, they are sure to find many to approve of them, for the virulence and acrimony which recommend them to the meaner passions of the world. The public prints have lately borne testimony to this assertion.

We have seen malignity forging the reasons which impudence and presumption have scattered abroad; as if the workings of a great mind, and all the great combinations which form its speculations, could be looked into by any inquisitive fool, and understood & described with the facility of a Show-box.

It is fortunate for the morality of our times that virulence and talent do not associate in equal degress. Nature almost always corrects the evil of her own work; and when she renders a man base, she mixes as much impudence as will disgust, and just as much folly as will render him harmless.—Men of this stamp, Sir, have lately presumed to become public writers.—Some of them who have tried their success in vilifying a great Man have put forth the contemptible as well as the bad extremes of their dispositions; they have been driven to the dishonourable expedient of assuming the grossest falsehoods as demonstrated facts to authorize the most enormous abuse, and they have opened all the sluices of their scalding wrath to overwhelm character and justice in the same gulph. They have not succeeded; and the public that recoils from their motives and turns in disgust from their conduct, shews how perishable is all slander which faction raises—for faction is always unjust.

One of those writers in an evening paper, of a few days ago, has outstripped in indecency every thing but his own malice. He first imagined a fallen character, and then he undertook to deplore it in a strain of monstrous grief, which shewed that he wanted the sensibility to feel, and the talent to complain. His fancy bent over an imaginary subject of regret, that just gave exercise enough to his hypocrisy, and suffered him to display the deadly hate of an enemy while he was pronouncing the language of a friend. An impudent sententiousness did not stoop to argue, but decided without discussion and condemned without inquiry; and a saucy sentimentality pretended to airs of wisdom, while it was devoting to odium and ignominy a character that it affected to admire. The quality of the sentence is ferocious, but its justice has been resisted by the public sense, as well as by the grateful recollections of the Irish nation.

The lofty inanity of this friendly lamentation, however, will not be more despised for the hypocrisy of its sorrow, than for the injustice of its invective. The writer scolds every where, but reasons no where. He damns the last Ministry while he endeavours to support them, and he raises the present Ministry in an attempt to depreciate them. He takes Mr. GRATTAN from the former, and he leaves them to unpopularity; he gives



him to the latter, and he confers upon them the honour of his support. Both efforts are made upon false grounds; but it is because the grounds are false that the writer has preferred them.

As an example of his reasoning, I would request your attention to the first sentence I meet in his effusion, which has any meaning distinct from abuse. "Theirs," that is the late Ministry, "would have been a bill of precaution, but yours is to remedy a *necessity* which does not exist." How does the writer know what their bill would have been unless he saw the draft of the bill? That it had been reduced to the form in which it was intended to be laid before Parliament will not be controverted—that it was founded upon a necessity supposed to exist has been avowed by that part of the Ministry that had been in Ireland, and concurred in by both Houses of Parliament; and that it was not precautionary but directly remedial of an existing evil is most indubitable. If we were to take the writer's word for the intention of the last Ministry, and against the irrefragable evidence of their own professions and the draft of their own bill, we should conclude that while they admitted the existence of a necessity, they were resolved to legislate as if that necessity did not exist; and that while the legislature was called upon to remedy a distemper that was present, they had resolved to legislate as if it were absent, and to adopt a precautionary measure, when precaution was ineffective and absurd.

The necessity for the Bills that Mr. GRATTAN supported is questioned by the writer—but it is confessed by his party; by that Ministry whom he has dishonoured by praise, and disgraced by support. The necessity was as Mr. GRATTAN stated, the existence of a French faction in Ireland;—that fact Mr. SHERIDAN not only confirms, but says that a French faction always existed in Ireland—and all the last Ministry perceive in that fact and in other causes, is a necessity for the Insurrection and Arms Bills, and they support their adversaries in bringing forward those measures; adversaries against whom they have been in the most incessant and strenuous contention, and with whom upon any other subject they could not agree. The writer stands confuted upon those facts. But I will give him his own grounds and confute him again. The Insurrection Bill is, in the nature of things, of a precautionary kind. It is inactive, until necessity calls it into operation. An actual disturbance must take place, before this law can be awakened from the calm sleep of the statute book. So that while the writer either begs the question, or knowingly asserts a falsehood as to what the last Administration would have done, this precautionary law, for which he is disposed to commend them, is in fact the very thing which Mr. GRATTAN has supported. But this angry partizan has lost his memory with his wits, if he ever had any of the latter. Those measures which he reprobates so strongly, and which the friends of the French faction have not hypocrisy enough to amend, are not measures of new enactment,



designed by Mr. GRATTAN, or the Ministry, or the Opposition. They are revived laws—laws that have had life and existence for years in the country; that aided the maintenance of the public security when a rebel army was organized in the nation, and the French navies spread their sails for our shores. They are now continued in their legal life, when the most enormous power the world ever saw openly threatens us; and when with all his acrimonious subtlety he has a foot concealedly planted in our country.

So, Sir, let me ask what becomes of the cant of this writer and all his querulousness and scurrility when we come to examine coolly the real state of things? He is one of the clamorous order who are bellowing continually in the public prints, distrusting every body, and abusing every thing; terrifying to the unthinking by the darkness of their descriptions, and by their confident anticipation of evil. They are for forcing every thing from our fears, and nothing from our affections. They see nothing but ruin in every measure of the State, nothing but infamy in every man who is not half ready for treason.

What is Mr. GRATTAN's offence against the orthodox politics of this class? He believes that a French faction exists in the country; and there are too many signs abroad, too many evidences of that fact to be found in the conversation and conduct of many to make it very doubtful. He supports the law that secures the public against *that evil*, the worst of evils, and that is likely to crush its partizans. He has supported the law that has paled in the people and separated them from this evil communion—that will constrain them from nothing right, useful, or advantageous; but from being allured by the coquetries and invitations that such an insidious wickedness well knows how to practise upon ignorance and poverty. The laws that have been so reprobated by a very few, are in effect laws of defence thrown up between the people and the intriguers which the enemy have sent in among us. They are more of the defensive than of the restraining sort. They restrain only from evil, and they restrain but to protect. The people know what is required of them, and they are bound for their own sake to give it cheerfully. They are not left to the blind severity of Martial Law; they are not left to the fallibility of discretion to measure out the degrees of rigour and severity which an unfortunate exigency may require. Whatever the public security may demand of sacrifice for the common good is now spread upon the statute book, to be used precautionarily or remedially, as times or circumstances may require.

The public mind is artfully misled upon this subject—it is diverted from contemplating the enemy to contemplating the State; from hating the former, to fearing the latter—But, Sir, between the State and the People there is no variance; there is no power aimed at by the former to circumvent the latter. The Constitution of the land has put those



old controversies to rest. The struggle now is against a foe whose success upon its present enormous scale can only be rendered permanent by our complete and total destruction as a free, independent Empire. We are now fighting the last battle we shall ever wage if we be subdued—the last we shall in all probability fight for half a century if we succeed, as we may do. Our enemy is powerful beyond any other that ever existed.—He employs more physical means than any other in the Universe can wield—we do not open our eyes sufficiently wide to take in the formidable extent of his preparations, nor the depth of his designs. All the ordinary faculties for war he possesses in accumulated abundance; and not content to rely upon those vast means of warfare, he leagues himself with every malcontent he can enlist to his interest; allies himself with the discontented and desperate among his enemies; and spares no effort however painful, no exertion however arduous, no labour however prodigious, no stratagem, however tedious, in its maturity, which the most profound artifice, the most dexterous craft, the most accomplished subtlety and the most expert contrivance can engender, to prepare the way for the quiet reception of his army among those whom he intends to invade, plunder, and oppress. He has partizans wherever infamy can induce men to volunteer evil, or money can bribe poverty to enterprize.

When I think of such an enemy and of his invariable system of corrupting first those whom his armies are preparing to invade, I would require us to look in upon ourselves with steady minds and ask whether we are impregnable to his arts? Whether we are less invincible than Switzerland, Holland, Italy and so many other portions of Europe—less than the armies of Austria and Prussia that were crumbled into individuals and lost all the inherent connecting principles as soldiers, before ever the tyrant of Europe, the demon of all popular debauchery, ordered a shot to be fired.

Sir, I love the honest prejudice that is ready to praise the gallant and generous natures of my countrymen, my heart swells with pride when I think of their noble qualities, and sinks to melancholy when I think how little good comparatively our follies have suffered us to extract from them; but I turn in inward indignation from the panegyric of a hypocrite, who paints his country with varnished words of praise, only to conceal the mischief to which he has reconciled his mind—who knows that nothing but force will beat such an enemy as we have to deal with, but who will vaunt of our present means only to prevent the necessary augmentation of them. My Countrymen, Sir, are not more simple in their manner, nor do they love their Countrymen better than the Swiss, and other people that cherished with fatal nature the growth of a French faction in their own bosom. They are brave and they are loyal; but they are as open and fenceless to crafty and designing men as the people of other countries. From the unfortunate misconstruction of



our state of society; from being split into factions and divided into rival parties: from having no common national prejudices, but being broken up into divisions by feuds, our people are accustomed to be governed by leaders, and to follow the head of a faction even at the peril of disobeying the law. I speak of the poorer orders. A few individuals may do more mischief here, than perhaps in any other country; and therefore more precautions against the entrance of a mischief which has already effected so much for our enemy, is necessary to check the execution of those designs to which we are so specially exposed.

In all our difficulties and troubles (and they have been all holiday adventures, the gambols of a gamesome hour, compared with those which we have now to encounter) we have wanted an erect & intrepid intelligence; and since Mr. GRATTAN's time we have drawn advantages from that sort of character; great advantages it must be allowed; beneficial to the nation, honourable to the times, and glorious to the man. We want more than ever the aid of that firm and undaunted genius, of enlarged and original views which form themselves to new combinations of circumstances, and which in the present convulsion of human affairs, are able to controul and sway those huge novelties that hourly present themselves. The powers that sometimes burst from Mr. GRATTAN's mind in broad maxims and comprehensive principles shew that he is not only great, but that he may be still useful to that country which owes him all the honour and felicity of her proudest-days. We shall not lose our only Irish Statesman when we most need his services; his country will yet receive fresh benefits from his hands, and he will live to see himself justified, fully and amply justified, even to those, if any thing may expect justice from them, who are the least tolerant of independence in mind or principle, and who would hold publicmen in leading strings, to act only at their own dictation. Mr. GRATTAN is still the man he ever has been—he has blasted the hopes of the French faction for ever, & they will not readily forgive him; but he has supported Ireland's interest upon its only solid ground, the union and amalgamation of all her children into a people, and the full participation of law and liberty among them all. But Mr. GRATTAN wants no justification. The thinking and reflecting part of the nation approve of him, and admire his constancy and fidelity to his principles. The admission that a French faction exists in Ireland, not only justifies, but imperiously demands measures, whether of law, policy, or force, against the machinations of that faction. Where would have been the wisdom to repose our safety in the theoretic beauties of our Constitution against the spies and minions of France—to meet craft and corruption, perfidy and treason with the precepts or practices of English Liberty?

We are charged with the care of our own time.—It is a moral trust confided to us, and we must sometimes protect it,



not as we could wish, but as well as we can. We cannot in justice to ourselves and posterity venture to capitulate with evils proceeding out of an avowed principle of destruction to ourselves—we must not allow our enemy nor his hirelings to use our constitution as the snare of our security, nor to tell us that we are not to circumscribe for a short season, the large circle of its freedom, because it would, in its usual extent, allow them a wider and more protected theatre for the performance of their designs, and the completion of the tragedy they are meditating. We are bound to nature and reason to seek for our own safeties with that foresight and providence which a sense of our danger inspires. We know what individuals, as well as factions and nations have sacrificed—what good in possession they have thrown away in favour of the most extravagant and irrational speculations. There is a natural proneness towards ambiguous prospects of advantage which is inherent in the mind of man, which disquiet times set in agitation, and which the love of adventure that marks our times has kindled into rash and formidable enterprize; and we every day, in every country of Europe almost, see benefits long enjoyed readily exchanged for the wild promises of a new and unexperienced condition. If we have missionaries of change among us, experienced adepts in revolutions that have gone from slavery to wanton licentiousness, and from thence back again to hug the chains of a more odious tyranny than that they first fled from, it will not be a subject of reproof to the wise and reflecting, that measures have been taken to diminish the disciples of such missionaries, and to crush themselves while their mischief is in the germ. It will not lessen by a particle Mr. GRATTAN's real fame, that he was on this occasion a man who would have swept from the Irish soil the hired panders of French tyranny and profligacy; it will not detract from his integrity that he is now as much above the libels of disaffection and the temporary clamour of the croud, as he has been heretofore above the menaces of power, or the allurements of greatness; and it will not depreciate the honourable renown of his talents with the age or with posterity, that he supported the principle of an indissoluble connection between his own country and Great Britain, and maintained the true and only ground upon which the happiness and liberties of that country can possibly flourish, in such a strain of noble and manly eloquence, and with such sentiments of liberality and wisdom as distinguish his very last effort in Parliament.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

AN IRISH WHIG.



TO

THE RT. HON. HENRY GRATTAN.

—Et tu, Brute!

SIR,

WITH a joyless sensation have I perused your posthumous apology, as given in an evening publication of the 11th inst. and I but share in the general depression it occasioned. You weighed down the public heart at the onset, and comfortless is the conclusion. After dragging the Curfew Bill through the House, your oration on its third reading is re-published here, and the presumption is rational, that its appearance is sanctioned by you. But it drops forth distorted and still-born, the feeble offspring of an emasculated character. Is this your vindication? this the substance of your defence? this the shield of your honourable name? Alas! you have again given a recoiling purchase on yourself, and on your country; but the bitter sense of her own lot yields, for a moment, to her lingering pity and affection for you. Hear me, Sir: I wield not the weapon of detraction, neither do I pass the limits of my right. I approach not your private character; it may be, and I do believe it is, exemplary. Yet, even were it not so, still should I hold it inviolable: sacred is the domestic life of a man: but public character is public property; and scrutiny, which spares the sanctuary of the private dwelling, is not unprofitably employed in exploring the public edifice. You are the delegated Servant of your Country; and every member of the State can claim, by indubitable right, an account of that delegation, wherein the acts of his Representative are deeply connected with his own welfare;—and your late conduct, Sir, in its wide spreading consequences, comes home to the Castle and the Cottage, to the table of domestic comfort, and the bed of sickness.—I pass on to your apology.

Your comparison of this Bill with others of a similar nature, is surely unworthy of yourself, and bears no mark of that dignified mind which once habitually rested upon principle.—It is a comparison of evils, and the acts which “*suspended the operation of the common law*,” being, in your opinion, reprehensible, it follows upon strict analogy, that acts of a similar tendency must be reprehensible also. The measure you confess to be “*a strong one*,” and you support it, “*tho’ a continuation of the old Act*.”—I shall not discuss the comparative emergencies, or say to which period the scale of necessity preponderates; but I deeply lament your supporting such a Bill, in a season of profound tranquillity, when the *furor* of republican sentiment is vanished, when even the enemies of Ireland proclaim her loyalty, and you, Sir, join in the eulogium. I lament that, in such a season, you should smite your country with an Act of Parlia-



ment, which falsifies some of that very doctrine you urge in supporting it. "But" you say, "*there are lately secret meetings in Ireland, of a treasonable nature, tending to re-organize the country, and prepare for the reception of the French.*"—And almost in the same breath, you "*wish it distinctly to be understood, that you do not say the people of Ireland are turbulent or disaffected.*" I cannot reconcile those jarring assertions; opposite propositions, upon the same point, cannot both be right. But supposing for a moment, that such meetings do exist, they must, in part, consist of Irishmen, or not. If Irishmen compose any part, then are your Countrymen disaffected, and your praise is groundless; if they do not, the charge of treason is without foundation. If the meetings consist of Frenchmen only, how do they execute their mission? Are they a detached and insulated body, without approximation to, or contact with, any other. And if so, how have their consultations been developed? And what effects have they produced? Have their secret deliberations, in French, given a magical impulse to a People who know not their language, and are ignorant of their councils? In what corner of the Island do they deliberate? why are they not seized upon? And why not crush the Hydra at its birth? As you, Sir, *know* that the foul Conspiracy exists, I sacredly conjure you, for the Public Peace and Welfare, to give an open and indubitable proof of your assertion—exhibit the Conspirators to the face of day, and satisfy the Public Mind.

You urge "*that Government should not give up the powers of the Bill, because it possessed them for eleven years back.*" But you, Sir, well know, that if the original investment was unjust, it furnishes no argument for the continuance of that injustice. Time alters not the essence of moral law, and turpitude can never be metamorphosed into excellence. Yet, even acknowledging that a necessity did formerly exist, is the conclusion unavoidable that such necessity exists now? Let us look to the present, and not to the past. Let occurrence regulate the rule of action. You ground the propriety of its continuance upon a supposition, that "*Government would not venture now to use it for the purpose of party.*" But know you not, Sir, that one principle of a good Constitution, is, never to leave the welfare of the people to the caprice, or daring, of the Executive Authority; for who can say, that a formidable weapon in a mighty hand shall fall but on the guilty? Let me be understood when I assert, upon the *principle* of the question, that it matters not, whether the ruling power be personally virtuous, or vicious. I discuss not the morality of individuals, but I maintain, that the consignment of discretionary powers, which may, by any contingency, generate abuse on a whole People, without a co-equally controuling responsibility, is indeed a tremendous delegation. You, Sir, thought the Duke of Bedford's Government was right, in refusing to proclaim the West. Is not this a fair acknowledgment how dangerous was



the discretionary power which he possessed? Had his Grace intemperately adopted the pernicious counsel of his advisers, all Ireland may, at this moment, have groaned under PROCLAMATION.—It is indeed, my firm conviction, that the present Viceroy is most anxious for the general welfare—he is too gallant not to sympathize with an honourable and intrepid nation. But we well know, that the Harpies who defile the land, and devour the people, are indefatigably employed in hunting the powers of Government upon the Country; even now they stand greedy for prey—and is then this measure to continue *for years*, a suspended sword above our heads, at the mercy of any, the vilest incendiary, whose breath may snap the slender ligament that supports it; or are the sons of rapine and blood, the wolf and the jackal, to become, *at once*, our nocturnal marauders? Is the trading justice, or his follower, to rule over a brave land? and is there no refuge, no asylum against the reptile whom the law lets in upon us, at the hour of rest and retirement?—You, Sir, say, that “*if abuse takes place, remedy remains.*” You felt the futility of the argument, even when you uttered the assertion. Your enlightened mind is against the theory, and your experience against the fact. You may recollect that no government upon earth can presume to rate itself by the immutability of Justice. That abuse is not always followed by remedy, and that injuries may be inflicted, for which the Treasury would be no equivalent. That the scourge which lacerates the back, inflicts an incurable wound upon the mind; that the victim of violation cannot weep back her insulted honour—and when the flaming cottage gives up the wife and daughter to pollution, and the son to the bayonet, “*Who is there to mourn for LOGAN?—Not one.*” Where lies the remedy? Will you, Sir, devise the equivalent?—But measureless are the wrongs which spring from the abuse of power, and while I feel that even the possibility of abuse is not in the present instance justified by any existing necessity, I look with a trembling horror to that measure, which, with the disarming Bill, may produce effects so dreadful, and which in your own words are “poured like red hot balls upon the country.”

You assert, that you are “*against measures and acts of coercion.*” And is Mr. GRATTAN reduced to declare that he wishes not to enslave his Native Land? It is an humiliating declaration. There are charges which the noble mind disdains to notice. You advance, as proofs of your disposition, that you, and your friends, “*had discontinued the Act suspending the Habeas Corpus, and declined to execute the Powers given by the Insurrection Act;*” but, Sir, have you, or any other man, a right to draw upon your past conduct, as justification of your present, when each is in diametrical opposition to the other. It is not your former merit which now agitates the public mind; it is your recent departure from that course in which the Patriot



of Ireland was distinguished, honoured, and rewarded. I should be glad to learn, if you, Sir, and the public, have the same security which you then had, that the Insurrection Act will not be brought into operation but on real emergency. Vast was the difference when your friends were in power—when the first talents of the empire ruled the helm, and an honest and temperate Ministry possessed the national confidence. That no necessity exists for this alarming measure is manifest from the Parliamentary proceedings, independent of the corresponding opinions of the Judges on their circuits. Without recurring to the many other proofs, look to the Protest of Lord PONSONBY, and the masculine eloquence of Mr. SHERIDAN. The former the Pupil of a mighty Master, who wielded all the powers of local information, and whose sentiments he may naturally be supposed to proclaim: the latter, a venerated patriot who invariably supported the empire in the hour of danger, whose glorious conduct, when the mutiny raged at the Nore, and a Naval Armistice was proposed by an insulting enemy, is only to be equalled by the late noble stand for his ill-fated country. But the Bill is passed. It is now the statute law of Ireland, and for two years will it overshadow the land. What its baleful effects may be at home, the sickened imagination can only conjecture; but we cannot, upon rational consideration, be ignorant what effect it must have on that gigantic Power, which strides over the Continent, which steep its laurels in blood, and, like Zanga, treads even upon the prostrate warrior. Is it not a proclamation to the unprincipled despot, that Ireland is in that state of turbulence best suited to invasion? Is it not a direct invitation to the legions of France? The wily Minister, who shook off the cares of the Church for those of the Cabinet, will not remain uninstructed by the lesson, conveyed, through an high authority, that Ireland is ripening for rebellion, and panting for the work of death. The advice of his enemy will not be forgotten; *fas est ab hoste doceri*. You, Sir, “*can never pronounce a Bill, in fact tending to prevent the raising a French force in Ireland, a measure of coercion.*” The whole of an observation can be true only when all its parts are so. But unfortunately the former member of this sentence is given as proof of the latter, and that proof is the assumption as a certainty, of what at best is problematical. I call it a coercive measure, because, upon uncertain grounds, it generates certain abuse; it insultingly rides over the People; and even if no other ill consequences were the immediate result, it is pernicious as a measure of insult, exasperation, and alarm. I also call it inoperative, as to its professed object. The principles of France are the detestation of Ireland; and, as the raising a French force in this country could be effected only by an approbation of French principles, that detestation renders such an event impracticable.

You speak, Sir, of your integrity, and your language is affecting. Hitherto you were almost spotless, and sacred was



the name of GRATTAN. But in the fluctuation of human conduct, can we forget that the greatest have fallen; that Patriots who were once the pride of their Country, have sunk from their elevated rank? Can we forget "*the follies of the wise,*" the Pension of WILKES, or the Peerage of PULTENEY? Should I, Sir, wrong your integrity, my tongue could not utter the anguish of my heart, and my remorse would only cease with my existence—yet should I hail, with delight, that messenger of your truth, which consigned me to repentance, but restored you to the world, in uncontaminated glory.

## TIMOLEON.



### TO THE EDITOR OF THE CORRESPONDENT.

*" Justum et tenacem propositi virum,  
 " Non civium ardor prava jubentium,  
 " Non vultus instantis tyranni.  
 " Mente quatit solida,"*——

" The man in conscious virtue bold,  
 " Who dares his secret purpose hold,  
 " Unshaken hears the crowd's tumultuous cries,  
 " And the impetuous Tyrant's angry brow defies."

FRANCIS.

SIR,

IT has ever been the fate of Public Men, acting upon a noble and conscientious sense of duty, to experience vicissitudes of Public Opinion. Of this, no man's life has furnished stronger illustration than that of Mr. GRATTAN. He created his Country; yet, at one time, that Country would have extinguished him. She might be forgetful and ungrateful—but she could not render him uncivil or estranged; he continued to love and to serve her, and she recovered her senses. If we had not had precedent of this, the unstable affections and precipitate decisions of our People, it might well be among the greatest wonders of the extraordinary times in which we live, that Mr. GRATTAN, the Father of Ireland, should need to be defended against an Irish Libel!—Hated and abused by the Monopolists and the Bigots—by the venal and intemperate instruments of venal and intemperate Party—there only wanted to establish his character, and to perfect his glory, that he should be hated and abused by the Rebel. It is done: for who but the latent Rebel, or the French Emissary, that has not blushed, conscious of National Criminality and Degradation, on perusing the infamous Libel which has appeared in *The Dublin Evening Post*, under the profaned signature of "TIMOLEON?" Too surely, "on evil days we're fallen, and evil tongues," when the hardihood of Malice and of Slander dares so bold a flight,



Taking instruction from his own luminous mind and independent virtue, Mr. GRATTAN would not yield himself submissive to the views of a Party, or the passions of a multitude; nor would he, like some political Gamblers, stake his conscience and his Country's good against the desperate hazard of a rabble popularity. Unfortunately, however, the number of persons capable of appreciating such a man's motives of action are too few; while the ignorant and impassioned many are ever ready to censure what they do not understand, and to hate what constrains their licentiousness. But this maxim, however generally applicable, should be controuled by the particular merits, the tried integrity, and the exalted character of Mr. GRATTAN. His whole life forms a continued argument against Calumny, and against the argument what slander can exist? To confide in that great man in opposition to any appearance, however unfavourable and specious, should be the political religion of Irishmen; and faith in his integrity should constitute the orthodoxy of their creed: not to repose in that integrity is more than involuntary scepticism—it is an heresy against Reason as well as Faith; and the double abandonment of conviction and of duty should draw upon our heads a more than common share of political condemnation. Heaven avert from our Country so foul a crime as an extensive adoption of the Libel!—It is averted—I will not believe that the veteran and venerated Patriot can have an enemy who is not the enemy of Ireland—he can have no foe but the friend of France. Gratitude is an Irish virtue: to love and to benefit Ireland is peculiarly the virtue of a GRATTAN; to love her against her faults—to counsel her against her errors—to correct and to save her against her follies and her vices. He has lived but for his Country, and now lives for her most; that Country, if doomed to be extinguished, will not sink in a monstrous ingratitude—and, worse than the desolation of her People, and the overthrow of her liberties, commit the suicide of her fame and moral character. No! from the first developement of his gigantic powers, he adopted Ireland—Ireland will not adopt his Libeller. He nursed her into strength beneath the Ægis of his talents, and, still more than his talents, of his virtues. Will she now abandon his sacred age to the poisoned pen of the slanderer? She never will! There is no need to defend the hoary Patriot; it is my Country that should be vindicated from the reproach of seeming quiescent to the libellous and insolent ravings of the incendiary TIMOLEON.

Collecting, then, from the turgid and inflammatory abuse of this Writer what is tangible in accusation, his charges, relieved from the rubbish of his verbiage, are comprised in the assertion that Mr. GRATTAN supported the Insurrection Bill without any proof of its necessity but “the dictum of a retired Secretary,” and unaided by the approbance or co-operation of those other Characters who formed the late Government of Ireland, particularly the late Lord Chancellor. It would not be difficult to shew



the utter falsity of these charges, and the flimsy misrepresentation of facts to the base and wicked views of the Libeller, if consistent with your limits. I could introduce into this letter the correct report of Mr. GRATTAN's speech upon the third reading of the Insurrection Bill. Mr. G.'s best vindication is himself; and, if we could forget his services or suspect his principles, the criminal lapse of memory and confidence would best be corrected by his unequalled and resistless eloquence. Of the necessity for the Bill there was no question—that was admitted on all sides; and in supporting it the late Ministers only assisted into Law a measure of their own. And is it rational to suppose, or could the most stolid minds believe, that they would not have given to the measure the most angry opposition, favoured as they would have been by the popular prejudices of this Country, if they had not, by the conclusive information which their late official means afforded them, been fully and satisfactorily convinced that the quiet and safety of Ireland demanded the Bill? Surely not—and, but for such overruling conviction of its absolute necessity, they never would have declined using so apt a weapon in their contention with the present Ministers. The only difference of opinion that existed on the subject was of a modificatory nature, not essentially affecting the general character and operation of the measure, and which seems to me to have arisen more from an affectation of some opposition, and a little coquetry with the popular feelings, than any real wish to have the necessary strength of the Bill frittered away. The necessity for the Insurrection Bill was generated by the French Revolution, which, by the diffusion of its baleful principles, imparted to the too natural turbulence of the Irish Peasantry a political impulse. France formed a Party here; and I need not call the public recollection to its action in producing the Rebellion of 1798. We all know how that horrible volcano burst upon us when we least expected it—and when those who had not been in the secret, and actually organized, would have laughed at the idea of such an event—and who, very probably, joined in the cry which such Libellers and Incendiaries as TIMOLEON raised, against the extraordinary powers with which it was found necessary to strengthen His Majesty's Government in that day. We all can remember that it was then, as it is now, the policy of those who were secretly organizing and maturing the Rebellion to assert the tranquillity and the loyalty of the land, and to designate the necessary acts of the Legislature by such epithets as "*legalized Oppression*."—In the papers of *The Press*, and the various manifestoes of Treason, we can be at no loss to find the models of TIMOLEON's composition—the expression of congenial sentiment, and the subjects of familiar study. Even when the smoke of the yet hidden fire arose above the horizon, they would have had us believe it but the picturing of Peace; and, while they were aiming the pike of Insurrection against the bosom of the Law, they seemed, alone, to be tender of its influence and preservation.



We must remember how the Trial by Jury was extolled, and the Constitution referred to upon every occasion; while the Press teemed with libels upon Constitutional Men, and the foulest abuse was levelled at every Public Character who denied himself to their views, and disdained and abhorred the pollution of their praise! We had then our TIMOLEONS, our MARCUSES, and our PRESS. TIMOLEON, *for that time*, escaped—MARCUS was probably hanged—and THE PRESS and the Rebellion were put down;—not so the disposition to rebel, which was probably strengthened by the very means and events that deprived it of the power of action. A Civil War naturally bequeaths a legacy of extraordinary irritation and division to the unhappy land which it scourges—and his intellect and knowledge of human nature must be very confined, who does not believe that this irritation and division has been carefully, though cautiously, kept alive by the Emissaries of France in this Country. If Irish Disaffection, originating in French Intrigue, keeps pace with and watches the progress of the French arms, and in whatever degree prevailing, it must be acknowledged that the present period is that in which we have more to fear from Disaffection, because we have more to dread from the increased power and malignity of our Foreign Enemy. Is it, then, in such a moment that the Government is to cast from it the securities with which it is armed, and bare itself to the attack of accumulated force and accumulated enmity? It is no argument against the necessity of the Bill that actual Rebellion does not exist: in that event, Government should resort to still stronger measures—it should not merely shew the sword in the scabbard, but draw it and strike—not the Insurrection Act should warn, but Martial Law should controul the land. The fact of Government being timely armed with extraordinary powers, will most probably prevent these powers being called into vexatious action. The Insurrection Bill, therefore, is not only a measure of precaution, but of necessity—because the precaution infers the necessity. It would have been brought forward by the late Ministers, had they remained in office;—this, TIMOLEON does not deny—nor, in reality, is he less angry on that account with them than with the present Ministers; but, viewing the subject through a distorting medium, he makes a distinction unlogical and absurd, and which no powers of common sense can reconcile—namely, that in their hands it would have been a measure of precaution, but that Mr. GRATTAN supported it as “remedying a necessity which does not exist.” This, surely, is worse than nonsense! That the measure should be rejected because the proposed modifications were not adopted, would be equally nonsensical, but I confess very worthy of TIMOLEON’S argumentative powers; nothing but the extremest emergency can call the Bill into operation, such as actual rebellion, or movements tending thereto. I hesitate not then to say, that any modification making the Bill weaker would make it less effectual to its object, and that, as the necessity calling for its



operation presupposes the utter inability of the ordinary law to the preservation of the public peace, the perfection of the Bill would consist in the extent of its powers. Had the late Ministers opposed from factious principles, a Bill which they intended to have brought in themselves, and of the necessity of which they were convinced; had they opposed it because brought forward by their successors, into what irretrievable contempt must they have fallen in the estimation of every loyal and reflecting man? Some there are (a very small number indeed) to whom I will not say, that that contempt does not in a certain degree attach—of these some sheltered themselves under the plea of *modification*, and, meanly hedging for a vulgar popularity, voted against the Bill, while others more bold and shameless in their inconsistency, opposed it altogether. Not so the proud and magnanimous GRATTAN—he rose superior to such a wretched trifling with public opinion—such contemptible coquetry with his own principles; he would have reduced the vigour of that Bill, and in that I think he was wrong; but conscious of the imperious necessity of its enactment, he sacrificed all lesser considerations to the public safety, and he manfully and with the fortitude that belongs to integrity” voted for the Bill, establishing thereby the proudest claim of his illustrious life, to the eternal esteem and gratitude of his Country.

But TIMOLEON asks upon what authority it was that Mr. GRATTAN did support the Bill, and he answers his own interrogatory by asserting that Mr. G. acted lolely upon the “dictum of a retired Secretary.” It would require some greater degree of argument than the Libler displays, to make the retirement of Mr. ELLIOT operate against his veracity and disinterestedness. However we may suspect a Secretary in office of wishing to acquire for himself a power beyond the law, it is not in the common experience of life, or the maxims of party politics, that he should be desirous so to strengthen the hands of the man who had turned him out of place. We have every natural conclusion in favour of the retired Secretary’s veracity, independent of his high and honourable character, if Mr. G. even had founded his vote on M. ELLIOT’s *dictum*, but I deny that such was the fact. Mr. GRATTAN did not pin his faith upon the sleeve of an Ex-Secretary.—You have not the evidence of his own speech for it: his words are, “that he voted for the Bill because *he knew* that there were lately certain secret meetings in Ireland of a treasonable nature, tending to re-organize the Country, and prepare it for the reception of the French; he did not say these meetings were many or numerous, but that *they existed*, and if they should re-organize the Country, the Country would be put under *Military Government*, and might, in the end, be transferred to France.”—Where here is the indication of an uninformed reliance upon the *dictum* of a retired Secretary? There is none—it is not asserted, I should suppose, that out of his confidential connection with the late Government of Ireland, arose sufficient



knowledge to justify his vote—it sprung from those sources which governed all the members of the late Administration in their determination to bring in a similar Bill ; that decided the constitutional mind of the Duke of BEDFORD, Lord Chancellor PONSONBY, Attorney General PLUNKET, and the present Solicitor General BUSHE ; men whose love of our constitutional rights cannot be questioned, and who would not have consented to relinquish an atom of those rights but upon that conclusive information and conviction of necessity which their official means peremptorily pressed upon them.—The difference between Mr. GRATTAN and those who either voted against the Bill, or designedly cunning kept aloof from its discussion, is this, that conscious of its absolute necessity, he gave his voice for strengthening his Majesty's Government, and, with the magnanimity of a great mind, performed his duty in defiance of idle and undigested opinion, while they contemptibly shrunk from that duty, covering themselves with the flimsy cloak of a coward popularity. “ But,” says TIMOLEON, “ there was no document produced, no report of facts, no evidence upon which to found the measure.” This savours so much of the little special pleader, the limping caution of the courts, that I should suspect the objection to proceed from that quarter, if I had not stronger cause for attributing it to an empyric of another profession, who affects to look for the symptom, when he well knows the disease.—Shallow Politician ! Is the policy necessary to save a state from the thousand and nameless contingencies of a perilous crisis, to be measured by slow forms and narrow rules of an Old Bailey trial, or is the pulse to be gravely and deliberately counted while the destructive poison is rushing to the heart ? Cannot it be conceived that a Government may have reasons the most satisfactory, if known, for not going into explanation upon such a point, and for not making such a disclosure of facts as might defeat their measures of prevention ?

But the Insurrection Bill is spoken of as if it were a measure unprecedented in ill, pregnant with the most dreadful inflictions on the country, and of a nature to prostrate all the securities of civil freedom. It would seem as if the Royal Assent to such a measure had been the watchword for every exercise of vexatious power, and that a man could not pass his threshold without stumbling upon a justice and a prison ! The first insurrection bill was enacted in the year 1796 ; who shall say that it was not then necessary, yet was the country never so tranquil ? Rebellion too soon called it from its neutrality, and its operation powerfully assisted to preserve to us our lives, our property and our constitution. For eleven years it continued a law, but after the suppression of the rebellion where was to be seen its operation, except in the good it had produced. It existed during the Government of Lord HARDWICKE ; but I ask any man if it was felt ? Through the five years administration of that excellent and virtuous man, did it appear in practice that we



had such a law? The Duke of BEDFORD was armed with the same power; but he was also possessed of the same moderation, and the bill remained like a sword in its sheath which a child might play with. What is there to warrant the supposition that it will be less inoffensive in the hands of the Duke of RICHMOND? Where is the instance of his political intemperance, or that of his counsellors or assistants? His Grace is a gallant soldier, a cultivated Gentleman, a man who knows the world, and doubtless knows the nice and beneficial distinction between the necessity of possessing extraordinary powers, and the expediency of using them. To no man will this character more happily apply than to Sir ARTHUR WELLESLEY also; he is, besides, our COUNTRYMAN! and, than Mr. Secretary TRAIL, to whom the safe keeping of the act may be principally committed, there lives not, I firmly believe, a more cautious and constitutional statesman; and it is worthy of remark that this Gentleman's correct and conciliatory conduct justly pointed him out to maintain the important situation which he now holds, even after the late administration which placed him in it was dissolved. But if the present Government of Ireland were intemperately disposed, the bill itself provides against its abuse. And here it may be instructive to your readers to describe in their principal features the difference between the old and new acts.

The old act empowered Magistrates in the proclaimed districts to examine strangers, and if not satisfied with their account of themselves, to commit them to goal until security were given for their good behaviour.

Here was a great and dangerous latitude of power without any controul; the construction of the offence, the punishment, the option of bail—all were lodged in the Magistrate; the securities for a due administration of Justice depended upon the capricious disposition of the man, and if the Judge were ignorant or malicious, an innocent stranger might groan in captivity, without pity, without redress, and without hope! The most afflicting tyranny might thus overrun the land without the knowledge of any but those who suffered and those who imposed it. But in the present act applying to the same case, it is provided, "that the Magistrate shall, *without delay*, after such committal, transmit a true and faithful report thereof, and the grounds and reasons alledged by him why he should not be committed, which such Magistrate is required to take down in writing, to the Lord Lieutenant, or other Chief Governor or Governors, for the time being, in order that such person may be detained or discharged, as to him may seem right."

By the old act, if any person was found out of his house within the interdicted hours, one or two Magistrates, as the case might be, could by their sole warrant transmit that person to serve on board his Majesty's navy!—In the present bill no such summary and arbitrary power is even contemplated; no such punishment is mentioned.—For that and all other offences,



recited in the Act, the accused must be regularly tried before a special Sessions of the Peace, permanently sitting in the proclaimed part; and to establish the judgment of the Court, the Assistant Barrister, who may be truly said in such case to be the Prisoner's counsel, must concur with the majority of the sitting Magistrates, and if he do not concur with them, he is forthwith to report the case and the whole of the evidence, together with his opinion to the Lord Lieutenant, who shall ultimately decide upon the charge.

Under the old act, Magistrates might authorize any person or persons, forcibly and without the smallest delay, to enter the house of the Subject, between sun-set and sun-rise, under the pretences arising out of the Bill, and without any responsibility attaching to the persons so authorized, or any check upon the Magistrate, and under this latitude of deputed authority, peaceable and loyal citizens might experience the most grievous and insulting vexations.—Under the present Act, the persons deputed to search must afford to the inhabitants a reasonable time to open their doors after the demand of admission; and to secure to the public a proper responsibility on the part, not only of the persons executing such duty, but also of the Magistrate under whose authority they act, it is provided, “that the Justice of the Peace, authorizing and directing any person or persons to make search, shall make a true and faithful report of the names of all persons so deputed to make search, and their quality and descriptions, to the special sessions, within seven days after such search.”

By the old act, any man or boy hawking or dispersing seditious publications or any paper by law requiring to be stamped and not duly stamped, might be sent upon the authority alone of one or two of the Justices of the Peace on board the navy; while the present act attaches to persons thus offending, only the punishment of imprisonment, and that for a term not exceeding six months.

The old act authorized Secretary's warrants, and imprisonment of the subject, indefinite in time and uncircumscribed in place. It is probably one of the proudest features of the new act that it communicates no such power.

Upon the whole of the comparison, in which I might adduce some lesser advantages to the subject comprised in the new act, it appears to me, Sir, that human wisdom, determining in the spirit of a well regulated liberty, could not have devised such a law with greater regard to the security of the state, or more attention to the civil and constitutional privileges of the people. To the loyal and well conducted man, it can offer no injury or vexation, were it called into operation to-morrow; it is the disaffected alone who can be constrained and punished by its restrictions and penalties, and it is these alone who are angered by its enactment. TIMOLEON, and all persons of such detestable principles and views, may complain of what they term “a vigour beyond the Law,” but that vigour can only affect



those who wish to destroy the Law altogether; who are desirous, not to place the Law under a protection emanating from herself, but to tear her from her august seat, and extinguish her for ever. It is a vigour which preserves the law to us, and consigns it an inheritance to our children—It is a vigour which repels and withers, in his assassin approaches, the concealed French intriguer, whose pen, dipped in the poison of sedition, has occasionally endeavoured, for the last sixteen or twenty years, to wound the health of the state, but who has had cunning enough to escape the conflagration which he assisted to fan,—maintaining himself, not unknown but unproved, safe amidst the society which he has so strongly laboured to subvert—O! TIMOLEON, *thou seest I know thee!*—This is not the first—no! this is not the first time that the virtues and loyal and constitutional patriotism of the illustrious GRATTAN has had the honourable evidence of thy abuse. But it is an important part of the system of French intrigue in this country, to break down the public confidence in every public character who will not lend himself to its agency, and to bring into popular disregard the talents and the virtues which it fears. Thus it was that that great statesman, Mr. Fox, was attacked upon his last entrance into office—of that spirit was the impudent and turgid epistle addressed to him by a political empyric of this City, who mistaking the ascendant planets, crept further from his safe obscurity, and, like the serpent in Virgil, erected his crest, hissed and spat his venom against the splendid goodness of the land. Of the same complexion, and directed to the same object, were the many publications of the United Irish association, one of which, so characteristic of its Author, provided “a veil for *professional prudence*.”—Sir, we require the Insurrection Bill while such men can walk abroad in the capital of our country, and spread their poisons with impunity. We want it to stop that impunity, and if necessary, to punish their crimes.—We require the bill while the late tenants of our State prisons are abusing the lenity which set them free, and libelling the official ability and virtue which counteracted their treasons.—These demand the Bill, for no bold and licentious provocation is omitted on their parts to call it into action.

Perhaps I am not justifiable in imparting to the insolent vituperation of the libeller TIMOLEON, the importance of such lengthened notice, but one word more and I have done—one word more, and I shall leave him to the stings of his own conscience and the contempt of society.

He insinuates that the illustrious object of his sacriligious slander, is making sacrifice of his fame and his integrity, to the bauble of a peerage. To what end? No peerage can more ennoble GRATTAN! No titles can add a grace or dignity to a name so familiar to the best affections of his countrymen, so identified with the glories and best interest of his country—a name which neither he nor his posterity can ever wish to be forgotten, or merged in the tinsel'd obscurity of a Coronet. If



I have any knowledge of that Great Man and honest Patriot, the distinction he most values is to be paramount in the estimation of his Country; and if a whole life, so gloriously and unequivocally exerted in its service cannot secure him the confidence of an hour; if all the mighty obligations he has conferred upon his Countrymen cannot ensure their gratitude; if the most honourable and steady experience of benefit and integrity cannot bear down their unhallowed suspicion, or assist their good sense, no man hereafter will devote his talents and his years to their honest service. So base an instance of popular levity will blight the spirit of patriotism in the land, so that it will never shoot again; and the surest symptom of our Country's ruin, and her aptitude for slavery, will be the withdrawing her confidence from that great man while living, or ceasing with civic adoration to venerate his memory when he is no more!—Should this abhorred degeneracy come upon the public mind of Ireland, it would be a sad but strong illustration of the following elegant and instructive passage from a speech delivered by the late Lord YELVERTON in the Irish House of Peers, 22d March, 1800; with it I shall close my letter:

“ I have long learned to despise popularity, and if I had not independently a conviction of its emptiness, and idle and capricious value, the treatment extended to an honourable and estimable friend of mine, (Mr. GRATTAN) would have sufficiently instructed me of its worth. I have seen him stigmatized as a traitor, and, if I may speak in more figurative language, carried by a senseless mob half way to be hanged, and the next moment adulated to the skies. I have seen that man, foremost in obtaining the freedom of his country, disfranchised by the blind zeal of an hot-headed corporation. I know that illustrious man well, I know his inmost thoughts—and I know that it never entered into his contemplation to separate the two countries. I will not name that great man—I will not name another great and virtuous man, since dead, who was his colleague in Patriotism, but I will say I knew them both well; I had the honour to act along with them, and however their opinions might, in some instances have been erroneous, their motives were pure, and their loyalty *unquestionable*. If there be any young man now present who feels enamoured of popularity, that visionary and delusive good, I will give him a short lesson of instruction. If he devote his whole life to the attainment of some impracticable object, he will be sure, to the close of his life to retain popularity, but if he turn to the pursuit of some sober, solid, and possible good, some upstart and brawling politician will run a bar's length before him, and snatch the worthless and foolishly valued prize of popular estimation.”

## ARISTIDES.

P. S.—Since writing the foregoing, I have seen a second letter addressed to Mr. GRATTAN by TIMOLEON. The first letter had little argument—the second less. His tinsel is diffused to the utmost; and I am happy to perceive that the more TIMOLEON writes, the less injury he is likely to effect.



THE  
SPEECHES

OF

*Messrs. Sheridan and Grattan,*

ON THE MOTION OF THE FORMER FOR AN INQUIRY INTO THE  
STATE OF IRELAND,  
ON THE 13TH OF AUGUST, 1807.

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MR. SHERIDAN rose to make his Motion, which he had on a former day been prevented from making by the length of time to which the House had been detained by matters of minor importance, tho' certainly of much importance in themselves. The Resolution which he was about to move was, in his mind, rendered necessary by the Bills which had been this day constituted Laws for Ireland—they should be obeyed; but he had a conscientious conviction, a Resolution such as that he meant to propose was necessary to prevent mischiefs, which may otherwise be created by the passing of such Laws, and by the circumstances under which they were passed. (With regard to its being said, that the Bills now passed were to be adopted by Ministers of whom he approved, he would say nothing. It was difficult to reconcile him to trust enormous powers to any hands; but certainly there was a great difference in lodging it in the hands of those who were known to be animated by a spirit of concession and conciliation, and who, like the late Lord Lieutenant, shewed that nothing short of the last extremity could bring them to make use of it. At the same time that he did this justice to the Noble Duke lately at the head of the Irish Government, he should also say that he knew nothing of the Noble Duke his successor, which did not lead him to hope that he would emulate the conduct of his glorious and humane predecessor.—The accounts of the State of Ireland were different, according to the dispositions of those who made them—and the same persons stated it differently, according as different occasions required. A Noble Lord (Hawkesbury), in another place, said there was nothing in the state of Ireland to give room for any apprehension of danger from the removal of the troops from that Country, in order to send them to the assistance of the King of Sweden; and another time, when these Bills were under discussion, the same Noble Lord described the state of the Country to be such that nothing short of the coercive measures contained in these Bills could keep it quiet. The statements of disturbances and loyalty in the county Tipperary were expressly declared to be unfounded by Judge Fox, in his address to the Grand Jury. The Grand Jury of the county Kilkenny also congratulated the county on the general loyalty prevailing in it, and on the universal harmony between Protestant and Catholic. But then a statement of rather an opposite nature had been made from the high authority



of the Member for Dublin, for whose talents and integrity he had the highest esteem and admiration, and to whom he felt himself indebted, as an Irishman, not less anxious for the honour and interest of his Country than those who resided in it, for the indelible services he had rendered to the Irish Nation. But he confessed he was confounded when he heard from him opinions contrary to the deliberate vouchers of the well-affected state of Ireland, to which he had just adverted. But, from the very contradictions of such high authorities, the direct inference was, such strong measures of legislation should not be passed without inquiry or information. All appearances were at present against the existence of any alarming degree of discontent—much less were there any grounds to suspect an organized system of insurrection. If he could suppose an indifferent foreigner placed on the shore of Ireland, such a foreigner, exercising a free judgment, would be convinced from symptoms in particular, that there was no room to doubt the friendly disposition of the Irish people towards England. First, such a foreigner would observe, that when the Magistrates of one county had rashly called upon the Duke of BEDFORD to place that county under martial law, to put down some disturbances of the Threshers, that firm Viceroy rejected that application, and relying on the simple powers of the Constitutional law, put down completely every thing that could be looked upon as indicative of a disposition to resist the laws. Another proof that the Irish were averse to insurrection, he would find in the peaceable demeanour observed on the rejection of the Catholic Bill, lately suffered to drop in that House. Into the policy of that Bill he would not now enter, but it was at least interesting to a great portion of the people of Ireland, who had been given to understand that it would be passed, and who indeed must be grievously disappointed when it was not. When instead of riot and confusion, the intelligence was, under these circumstances, received with good order and resignation, the peaceable disposition of Ireland was beyond question,—nay, even when the ingredients of riot and general uproar were sent over under the wrapper of a Proclamation for dissolving Parliament, the Election that followed afforded the strongest proofs of exemplary good order; proofs sufficient, even without the declaration of the Protestant Grand Jury of the county Kilkenny, or the declaration of Judge Fox, stating that the charges of disloyalty in the county of Tipperary were libels, fabricated by the papers which contained them. But the fourth proof was stronger than all the others. It was that Government had withdrawn all the Military force, even the German Legion, which had been placed particularly to garrison Ireland against its inhabitants, and to send them to the assistance of the King of Sweden. If it should be said to such a foreigner, that the removal of the troops was of no moment, and that the laws lately passed could do more for the safety and tranquillity of the country than any army whatsoever.

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ever, he would say it may be so, but it is an odd expedient. I have often heard of one regiment being marched out, and another being marched in, as more capable of securing the quarters; but this is the first time I have heard of the superior expediency of marching out an Army, and marching in an Act of Parliament (*a loud laugh*)—turning out a Military force, and substituting a Law. Was Ireland so unlike a nation, that the more circumstances called upon you to arm England, the more you disarmed Ireland? When you took their arms from the people, what would they fight with in case of invasion? If you took the Constitution from them, what would they fight for? But it was asserted on high authority (by Mr. GRATTAN) that there was a French faction in Ireland, and that it was against that and not against the Irish people that the Act was intended to operate. This qualification was satisfactory. As to the fact, when was it that there was not a French faction in Ireland, since the reign of Elizabeth, since the introduction of those acts of tyranny and oppression which degraded every better feeling of human nature, and which rendered it necessary in every man of spirit and dignity to seek refuge in France? Since that time, there had been always a French faction in Ireland, and an Irish faction in France.—Let Gentlemen look back to the statute book for the substance of those penal acts, which to the disgrace of the Legislature that enacted them, were recorded in the acts that repealed them in this mild and beneficent reign. He congratulated the country on the beneficent measures of this reign; but there was a manner of bestowing, by which the most valuable boon would make but a faint impression. He hoped this would be borne in recollection, in considering what had been done, and what yet remained to be done for the people of Ireland. Till the present time, the laws passed with respect to the greater part of the people of Ireland, were so many blows, aimed sometimes at the higher, and sometimes at the lower classes; sometimes again at the middle classes, sometimes at the landed, and sometimes at the commercial interest; so that the only difference was in the mode of attack. If there was any wish to know the particulars of these attacks, look to the acts that repeated them. There the provisions of those acts would be found in terms which would excite wonder that there should have been a Legislature wicked enough to enact them.—Was it to be wondered at, that under the impression of such acts, discontents should have existed? He recollected the story of a drummer, an Irish drummer too, which was more apt to the occasion; who was condemned to the hard duty of inflicting punishment on his comrades, and being once about to flog one of his countrymen, the man complained of the pain he suffered from the lash, where it then fell, and begged the drummer to hit him a little lower; the drummer kindly acceded to the request, but the man still complained, and said, hit me a little higher: the drummer again complied with the request, but the



man still complained, and begged to be hit in another place.—Now, said the drummer, I see you are a discontented fellow, and that, let me hit you where I will, I cannot please you.—*(A laugh.)* If he was asked whether he was sure that no Military force, no measure of legal caution was requisite to secure Ireland, he would say no such thing. He would have a military force there, not as executioners against the people, but as a guard of honour on the constitution. He would omit no means necessary to secure so valuable a possession. Bonaparte, whenever he attempted invasion, would attempt it with means which would require the whole energy of the country to meet them. In such a case, no one could tell how many may be disposed to join the invader, not from any preference of his cause, but from a hope of finding advantage in uproar and confusion. He was sure that treason of this kind would never exist to any extent, which it would be difficult to overcome, but he wished to deter those who may be weak and wicked enough to feel an inclination to co-operate with the invaders, by giving them to see, in the force established in the country, a mass of military power, which could not fail to crush their fruitless and abominable conspiracy. He was of opinion, the Constitution itself afforded legal means sufficient to put down treason and disaffection. Martial Law was within the Constitution, and on the responsibility of those who should advise it, it was preferable to the measure which had this day received the force of law for Ireland. For the very Proclamation of Martial Law called forth public attention, and put those who were to be affected by it on their guard; but the measure now passed was Martial Law in masquerade, in which every severity of Martial Law stole upon the people, like a thief in the dark. The principle of this measure went to overthrow, not to strengthen the Constitution, and the power of the Crown. For the power of the Crown went to arm even by compulsion, and not to disarm when the common interest was in danger.

He asked how such acts could be passed for Ireland without proof, what no man had dared to propose here with ten times the provocation existing, beyond all question. He was averse to this practice of suspending the Constitution, of giving leases of it for three or seven years to the Government.—For though Government might promise to return it safe and sound, there might be always a fancy to take a fresh loan; he should like to know how a receipt could be framed for the Constitution so taken, to be returned safe *(a laugh)*:—Whereas a free Constitution belonged to the People of Ireland—we promise to return it safe at the end of three years—*(a laugh)*. Mr. SHERIDAN then contended, that not one of the promises held out to Ireland, as inducements to enter into the Union, had been fulfilled;—he dwelt particularly on the failure in performing the promises of Catholic Emancipation, so decidedly held out and repeated by Mr. PITT—who afterwards, in opposition to his own pledge, came into power without it.—He expressed a res-



pect for his Majesty's conscientious repugnance to the measures of Catholic Emancipation; and commended the acquiescence of Ministers in those scruples. What he blamed was the horrid cry of "No Popery," in which he hoped that at least those of his Majesty's Ministers who were pledged for Catholic Emancipation, did not join. It was unwise and wicked, in yielding to his Majesty's conscientious scruples, to raise impediments to concession at a future time, when circumstances should perhaps have occurred to remove from the mind of his Majesty then, the scruples that now existed in it. What had been done for Ireland began at the wrong end.—It was in the lower orders, and not in the higher, that an amelioration of condition ought to be contemplated; in the cottages and potatoe gardens, and not in the parks and palaces, where it was but a mockery. The reformation of Tithes was particularly essential. He begged to correct a mistaken impression of the character of the Irish peasantry, who, instead of been idle and turbulent, were industrious and well disposed. In support of this opinion, he cited the able pamphlet of Mr. BELL. The Irish who came here to labour hard in building and watching the palaces where the great resided; in having the streets over which the ladies rolled in their carriages, certainly not with more comfort and ease than he wished them—*(a laugh)*; the men who saved and carried home to their beloved country a portion of their hard earnings, could not fail of shewing in their own Country the courage, the industry, the fidelity, for which they were remarkable out of it, without a heavy impeachment of the system upon which the Government of that country was carried on. It had been a common-place remark in every age, that the country was in a perilous crisis; but it might now be said so without any exaggeration. He declared himself to be sick of Continental Alliances, and of hearing of the magnanimous Emperor of Russia, whose magnanimity had ended in his entering into the Legion of Honour, and in his participating in the spoils of his unfortunate Ally. When he saw these things—when we looked, as Mr. BURKE had finely expressed it, at the Map of Europe, and saw nothing but France; and when our commerce, as derived from the West Indies, was so much in danger, he thought it was not too much to call on the House to unite the Empire in its own defence.—Let the actions of Bonaparte be compared with the actions of our public men;—while the latter were engaged in squabbles and mutual accusations, Bonaparte was extending the territory of France and surrounding it, not by an iron frontier as was idly boasted by Louis XIV. but by irons of his own creation. Could any man doubt that to such a mind one object still remained in view—the annihilation and extinction of the glory, the honour, and the independence of Great Britain? Was it not in such circumstances desirable to secure the affection of Ireland? He wished, therefore, to give Ireland a solemn pledge that an inquiry should be instituted, why, instead of having her as



an ally by our side, we had been compelled to enact arbitrary laws for her restraint. He concluded by moving the following Resolution :

*“ That the House will, immediately on the meeting of the ensuing Sessions of Parliament, proceed to take into consideration the State and Condition of Ireland, in the anxious hope, that such measures and remedies may be safely adopted in regard to the discontents alledged to exist in that country, as may render unnecessary the continuance of those provisions which the Legislature of the United Kingdom has deemed it expedient reluctantly to adopt at the close of the present Session, and the permanence of which would be a violation of the rights of the People of Ireland, and a subversion of the spirit and practice of our free Constitution.”*

Mr. GRATTAN began by observing that he was glad that the present question had excited so great a portion of the public attention, because it shewed that the people of this country were not indifferent to the common cause.—Ireland was linked to that cause, and every thing that related to Ireland naturally excited the public interest. It was the cause, not of Ireland only, but of the two islands together: the greatness, that is, the being of this great Empire, was identified with the cordial co-operation of Ireland; and every question that related to the one, naturally involved the dearest interests of the other. With regard to the term of the Insurrection Bill, he had certainly voted for the shorter period, and he still believed that it would have been more wise to confine within as narrow limits as possible that period of the suspension of the British Constitution. This much he said in confirmation of the assertion of his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. SHERIDAN), who had that night re-asserted his claim to the due applause of past times, and the disinterested admiration of impartial posterity. He had fought a good fight in the cause of Ireland, he had evinced a Statesman's firmness and a patriot's love, and his display in the cause of his native country is not the less luminous because a commendable moderation served to augment its splendour, and invigorate its force. He (Mr. GRATTAN) approved of that moderation, and approved of the sentiment—it was not in the sentiment he differed from his Rt. Hon. Friend.—No, far from it; he heartily coincided with him in the sentiment; it was in the application of that sentiment that he had the misfortune to differ from him. He could not agree however with his Right Hon. Friend, that there were no just grounds for the passing of the two Bills, the Irish Arms Bill and the Irish Insurrection Bill, which had been enacted by Parliament. His Right Hon. Friend had said that there was no just ground for passing the Insurrection Bill; and yet has not his Rt. Hon. Fd. admitted, and with truth, that there has always been a French party in Ireland? There *has* been always a French party in Ireland, that party was always dangerous, and was it less so now, when Europe was France, and France was Europe? (*hear, hear!*) and not that only, but at a



time like the present, when France, like a giant recruited from his labour, comes down to our shores to menace the liberty she is not destined to enjoy?—(*Hear! hear!*)—If, then, there were at the present moment French partizans in Ireland, he was for the application of a bold remedy—he would destroy and root them from the soil—the common law alone was not sufficient—it was a slow remedy, that could not check the rapid progression of a vital disease; and therefore was he willing to accede to the temporary suspension of the British Constitution, rather than endanger its permanent loss.

With regard to the eulogium passed upon his Countrymen by his Rt. Hon. Friend, he (Mr. GRATTAN) heartily concurred in that eulogium. The population of Ireland were brave to a proverb—and he believed in his soul that in principle they were as loyal as they were brave (*hear! hear!*)—their rebellion was not against England or the King, but against oppression and misrule. But while he admitted thus far, he was not to be misunderstood—His Rt. Hon. Fd. had stated, and stated truly, that the counties of Tipperary and Wexford were in a state of tranquillity;—but would his Rt. Hon. Friend thence infer, that, because two of the thirty-two counties in Ireland were declared by their respective Magistracy not to need the interposition of Military Law, that therefore there existed no French Party in Ireland?—The object of the Irish Arms Bill was simply this: “Whereas a certain banditti, associated for the purpose of plunder, go about from house to house, in order to take by force from His Majesty’s peaceable and loyal subjects their arms, &c.” Was it oppression to check such banditti in their career—the career that must finally arm them against all law and social order? He did not think it was, and he therefore voted for the enactment of that Bill. But it had been his crime, too, to vote for the Insurrection Act—He had done so, and he did not think he ever should have cause to regret that vote. It did go to suspend the Constitution; but its operation was confined to a state of rebellion—that is, an awful emergency alone was to render its application necessary. The Trial by Jury, however, was not, even in rebellion, to be abolished—and the *judicium parium* was justly considered equivalent to any such emergency. The first Insurrection Act had originated with the late Lord KILWARDEN; he had drawn it up; and that person was no enemy to the established laws of his Country—for, at his death he had announced his wish that his murderers should be brought to justice by the law of the land only, and not by any extraordinary means of intervention. A still greater authority had supported the principle of the Bill, the late Lord YELVERTON, Viscount AVONMORE, then the Chief Baron of the Exchequer. That great Constitutional Lawyer had approved of the principle of this Bill upon the ground of its urgent necessity. He spoke in the Irish House of Lords in favour of the principle in 1796, in 1797 he supported the principle, and 1798 proved that he was not wrong in supporting it—(*Hear! hear! from the Ministerial benches*). But as to men yet living,



they were not without authority: the late Attorney General for Ireland was known, even in that House, to be there the authority he was so justly in his own Country: he had approved of the principle; the Solicitor General of Ireland had approved of the principle of the Bill,—a man perhaps of the first genius in that country, and of a spirit of patriotism liberal and enlightened as his talents. The present Bill has been supported by them both; and was it so culpable in him (Mr. GRATTAN) to yield to his own impulse when sanctioned by such constitutional authority? The Bill he believed to be necessary—and so rooted was his conviction, that he should have supported that Bill, had he been left in a trifling minority;—nay, continued Mr. GRATTAN, had I stood alone I should have voted for both Bills—the state of Ireland justified them. I am not speaking against Ireland, but I am advocating the cause of Ireland against France. I would put Ireland herself against the distempers that would sap her Constitution—it is a strong Constitution. Nature has done much, but something may creep in to abuse the bounty of nature—at the same time they are not to be considered as symptoms of weakness—the bodily habit is physically strong, and the eruptions on the surface prove rather a certain kind of inane violence, that may be purified into salutary strength; correct the external pruriency, and you have all the advantages of inward health and substantial vigour;—the pimple on the face of the fair one did not dim the lustre of her beauty, or contract the fascination of her charms.—In the same manner, if Ireland had expressed any indignant sense of measures that were deemed oppressive, the feeling that was strong in resentment for alleged sufferings, would be lively in gratitude for projected benefits. Ireland might murmur for what she suffered, but would be grateful for what she was but promised. So much for Ireland. With respect to those two laws, they are enacted not against Ireland, but for the empire. If the suspension of the Constitution is objected to, I answer that the Mutiny Bill is a suspension of the Constitution in England; of the dearest privileges of the Bill of Rights; yet, why was it enacted?—that we might have an army—a standing army in England; and why are those Bills, the Irish Arms and Irish Insurrection Bills, enacted?—why, that the French may not have an army in Ireland. It is good to talk of abstract principles; but it is better to apply such principles to existing difficulties. I would suspend the English Constitution in Ireland, that she may have it, and maintain it ever after. I like abstract principles where they can be best applied; those wide, vague, cosmopolitan principles were useless if they did not apply, and perhaps were dangerous if they did.

So much for the Bills which I have supported; and now as to the general state of Ireland, I would say a few words. If you would remedy Ireland, look to it in three points—look to it in its Education, its Agriculture, and its Religion. The system of Education was bad—it was, as far as related to the free schools,



a monopoly; the number of petty schools was injurious to the cause of literature. I would go not only to educate the rich but the poor. Eight thousand acres of land supported but eighteen free schools, averaging the 8,000 acres at 10,000*l.* Those free schools had not succeeded—I am not prepared to say why. Many of the principals I know to be men of capability, assiduity and learning—but yet the schools have declined; perhaps it was owing to the niggardly policy, that defeated its own object, in the manner of the institution. The petty schools were too many, and the great ones too few: the result of such an economy may be readily anticipated. Two or three great public schools would be better than a horde of those minor inefficient schools. When you plant a little school in a wide extent, and yet a limited vicinity, you must engraft imbecility upon ignorance—it perishes by its own weakness;—whereas colonize learning, and you assist its propagation. I would recommend, therefore, a principal school in each parish, and not merely a principal institution of the kind in each diocese.—As to the second consideration, the Agriculture, it involved at once the question of Tithes. Tithes made the hot-bed of discontent in Ireland. I would propose some modification with respect to the mode of collecting them. Let the Government, suppose, guarantee the payment to the Clergy, and thus exonerate the struggling peasant from the many restrictions that at present hang over him, as to the culture and management of the little spot that gives him an interest in the fate of Ireland, by enabling him to feed his wife and family. This subject is peculiarly worth the attention of Parliament, because Tithes have been the source of all the past disturbances in Ireland. Tithes gave rise to the *Hearts of Steel*—Tithes called together the *Right Boys*—Tithes were the cause of the *White Boys*—Tithes were the cause of the *Peep of Day Boys*—Tithes were the cause of *Threshers*—Tithes were in a manner a kind of watch-word to summon the oppressed to act in common cause against their oppression. I would propose, then, a commutation of Tithes—(*Hear! hear!*) This subject does deserve attention—for, if you remove this one cause of discontent, it will go in a great degree to fritter away the rest.—The third head is Religion: upon this I shall be very brief, because it is too obvious to receive any elucidation from what I could offer here. I most heartily concur with my Right Hon. Friend: the door is shut, and the population of Ireland is excluded—and excluded from what? From the means of defending you—from the generous spirit to defend what they have not, and the disinterested zeal of co-operating with you in defence of what you have and enjoy—and that immediately by them to whom you refuse the same blessings. The Parliament have no right to refuse their Religion to a People, when they obey faithfully and fight ardently for the laws that it enacts. No one set of men can justly dictate to another the creed of their own orthodox; no Government had a right to obtrude into the sanctuary of the human mind, to decide between its GOD and its responsibility.



But it has been said that the faith of the Catholics of Ireland related to foreign powers, and engendered foreign affections. It was denied by the Catholics in their professions and conduct; the leading sentiment amongst them was hostility to France and French principles. I will read the Resolutions of the Protestant Grand Jurors of the county of Kilkenny; I will read also the answer of their Catholic Brethren—(*Here the Right Hon. Gent. read the Resolutions and Answer*). Was it, then, to be endured, that such men could in general be suspected of harbouring a thought favourable to French Politicians? Let England look at her strength; and ask herself how much she owes of it to Ireland. The Catholics have gone hand in hand with you in all your dangers,—will you now turn your back on them, and deny them a participation or a share of your privileges? If you object to them pigmy scruples of bigotry and party,—how will you answer to their mighty appeal to the battles they have fought, and the victories they have shared in? It is a bad policy to tell the men covered with wounds in defence of your rights, that they shall have no rights to plead for. But my hopes are founded on something sounder than your provisions. If the People of Ireland see their situation with a mind truly great; if, as formerly, their strength of mind be but proportionate to the extent of their calamity; if, with a dignified compassion, they pity and forgive the pitiable virulence of party animosity; if they forget every thing but themselves, and what they have been—and what they have done in 1779, when they got a Trade—and in the memorable 1782, when they got a Constitution (*a loud cry of hear! hear!*);—if Ireland but remembers this, and looks to the present momentous crisis with the eye of a gallant, generous, and high-minded nation,—then will she best refute the calumnies of ignorance; she will not turn aside from the cause of Great Britain, of Europe and the Globe, to listen to the moody mutterings of any shabby mutineer—the *Right boy*, or the *White boy*, or any other ragged rebel. She will look to what such a policy did for her in 1779; she will see Constitution following Commerce in 1782; she will ponder upon them and not disgrace the example of these hallowed times. French politics are their own remedy; Ireland need not look to Holland, where commerce invited plunder, but could not glut it. Ireland need not look to Genoa, where prostration was the consequence of an ill-placed and hasty confidence. She need not look to Italy, where all that was made sacred by time, by habit, by national prejudice, by religion, served only by the richness of the spoils, to heighten the splendour of the conflagration that consumed them. Let her remember she has qualified herself in pursuit of the rights she has obtained, by the freedom that sought, and the allegiance that acknowledged them. Ireland has fought boldly and faithfully to secure to England the Constitution Ireland so naturally wishes to share the blessings of; but she will continue in the pursuit of them, as she has done in



the pursuit of a legitimate object by legitimate means. Let it be for you to answer her accordingly, and let no narrow policy prevent you from making the Protestant a people, by making the Irish Catholic a Freeman. Such are my sentiments as to the state of Ireland. Agreeing, as I do, with the sentiments of my Right Hon. Friend, whose exertions this night in the cause of his native country, are above my poor praise, and do equal honour to his talents and his patriotism; still I differ from him in the application of that sentiment. Besides, the motion in its present form goes to censure the late proceedings of Parliament with respect to that country; and I do not think that the House would readily acquiesce in imposing a censure on itself. I am willing to give every credit to the motive of my Right Hon. Friend in making the present motion; but it is not to be expected that I am now to censure my own act in voting for the two Bills, which the present state of Ireland, and that of Europe, as affecting Ireland, in my mind rendered necessary.

[After Mr. GRATTAN, several other Members spoke in opposition to the Motion.]

Mr. SHERIDAN rose amidst cries of "*Question*," and expressed his hope that the House would indulge him with the privilege granted to persons who brought forward a motion, and hear his reply to such arguments as seemed to him peculiarly to call for attention. Of this privilege he would not avail himself at any length. Gentlemen seemed to suppose, that he had censured the passing of the late Bills, and thereby called upon the House to censure its own acts. He never had such an intention, nor could his motion, by any one who took the trouble to attend to it, be supposed to carry any such meaning.—An Hon. Gentleman (Mr. LOCKART) had said, that he had listened with great anxiety to his speech, because he expected that he (Mr. S.) would have first stated the evil, and then the remedy. The Hon. Gentleman might have listened to his speech with anxiety, but he had certainly done so with more anxiety than attention (*a laugh*). He said that he (Mr. S.) ought to have pointed out the grievance. Certainly not. He never thought that he was bound specifically to do that in the present instance. When Ministers came to him, asking him to give his assent to such regulations as these, the *onus probandi* lay on them. They were to shew what grievances called for such measures, and that too, before the measures were passed. "But no," said the Hon. Gentleman, "pass your Bills first, and then let us hear of grievances." Inquiry ought to have preceded the passing of these enactments, and the necessity for them ought to have been proved. However, the House had passed the bills, and all he wanted now was, that they should give a pledge to inquire, whether they had passed them on good grounds or not. This was all he asked.—Then the Hon. Gentleman accused him of having said, that Ireland had been used worse than a conquered country. Certainly, he had



said that England had adopted a more ignorant and barbarous system of management with respect to Ireland, than ever any one nation with any pretensions to civilization had adopted with respect to another. The Hon. Gentleman said, that he was "*taken a-back*," with regard to this statement, when he allowed that concessions had been made in the present reign, and consequently the system changed. This he supposed was meant, for he did not pretend to understand the phrase "*taken a-back*,"—not being a *naval* man, as the Hon. Gent. probably was. He did not wish, as he said before, to produce any irritation whatever; but, if the times and circumstance when these concessions were made were considered, it would be found that they had been wrung from most unwilling minds, rather than conferred in an open, liberal and generous manner.

Now, his Right Hon. Friend on the bench near him (Mr. GRATTAN) had made a more able speech in favour of his motion than he himself could possibly do. That speech was characteristic of his wonted genius and eloquence—and every thing must be full of genius, animation, and eloquence, that came from him. This very speech was one great instance of the benefits to be derived from the motion now submitted to the House—for his Rt. Hon. Friend had, in the course of it, thrown out more information respecting the state of Ireland, than ever had been communicated by any other Member, or at any period for some time past.—But another Member accused him of libelling the Legislation of this Country, and our cosmopolitan and philanthropic Parliament! But what had our most philanthropic Parliament done for Ireland? Why, they legislated *without inquiry* for that Country;—but if his motion had been proposed and agreed to two or three years ago, Parliament would have been better able to have legislated for Ireland. For the proof of this, he would only refer to the speech of his Rt. Hon. Friend, who had exposed the abuses with respect to Tithes, the non-residence of the Clergy, and the state of the Protestant Schools.—An Hon. Gentleman seemed to be mightily offended at his saying, that Government had not been attentive to Ireland. For a proof of this, too, he referred to the speech of his Rt. Hon. Friend, who had stated that 10,000 acres of land supported only 18 Protestant Schools; and yet, with all this before them, some Gentlemen pretended that the Government had paid the requisite attention to the state of Ireland! He hoped, however, that an attention of a different sort would be given it. Ireland expected this—England expected it; and the result, he had no doubt, would be beneficial to both Countries. His Right Hon. Friend had adverted to the state of Tithes in Ireland—and, from the ill-constructed method of collecting and managing these, had deduced a great part of the evils under which Ireland laboured. The *Right Boys*, *Threshers*, &c. all arose from the Tithes, which appeared the most cruel of the burthens under which the lower ranks of people in Ireland groaned. Did not this, then, sufficiently account for the disaffection in Ireland, without having



recourse to the idea of a French faction? His Rt. Hon. Friend admitted the general loyalty of the People of Ireland; but still said, there was a French party in Ireland—a French party; but contemptible—a miserable faction, destitute of talents and energy, and of trifling numbers. What he wanted, then, was—to have the nature of this danger ascertained—to see of what it consisted—to find out the strength of this French faction—and, if so contemptible as his Right Hon. Friend had said, to apply a remedy *equal to the disease*; and not to overturn the whole Constitution of a Country on account of a wretched faction.—His Rt. Hon. Friend had compared that general loyalty of Ireland, and her French faction, to a beauty with a pimple on her face—a very gallant illustration, and one that must certainly be admired by Irishmen (*a laugh*). But if he (Mr. S.) were to give his advice to this beauty, he would say to her, “my lovely charmer, put a patch on that pimple, but do not cover your whole face with a mask.” (*Loud laughter*). Apply this to Ireland. Were the whole of the loyal Irish to be deprived of their liberties, because there existed a contemptible French faction? Let the remedy meet the evil—but no more. Let not the foul mask of Despotism cover the land; but let Liberty bloom in all her beauty, where there existed a soil in which she was capable of flourishing.—It had been said, that now, in this difficult crisis, was the time for the Catholics to shew their loyalty and attachment to the Constitution, and their worthiness to enjoy its benefits! But this was beginning at the wrong end. If you want the attachment of the Irish, begin by giving them some reason to love you—if you want them to fight your battles, give them something to fight for. But the other way—to deprive them of a Constitution in the mean time, was—

“*Propter vitam, vitæ perdere causas.*”

You asked them for bravery—and took away the motives to it!—you asked them for loyalty, and bade them contend for their laws and liberties—and, at the same time, deprived them of the benefits of the Constitution! But his Rt. Hon. Friend said, that they were only deprived of these for a time—and that they would have their liberties again, *after they had achieved some acts that would shew their zeal and loyalty!* He had a different view of the subject: he wished to give them the motives to act, before he sent them to action. But, was this proof of the Irish Catholics requisite? Had they not already given it? Where, by sea or land, had they failed to do their duty? When had they shrunk in the moment of invasion? When had they been deficient in expressions of loyalty and attachment to the Constitution? and when have their words been falsified by their actions? Yet his Rt. Hon. Friend seemed to think that proof of their loyalty and zeal for the Constitution was wanting!—You must, however, trust the Catholics—you must have them in your Militia. Why, then, suspect them, and subject them to penalties without cause? He might be wrong in this; but, if that was so, *let it be proved.*—A Right Hon. Friend close by him (Mr. WINDHAM) had said,



that he seemed to hold the concessions to the Catholics cheap, His Rt. Hon. Friend was mistaken. He had said, that, without some other measures in favour of the poorer classes, what was called Catholic Emancipation might excite envy and jealousy in them; the benefits to them they would consider as not running *pari passu* with those of their superiors; and, without caution, what was intended to promote harmony might excite contention.

What did the Bill proposed by the late Administration in favour of the Catholics do?—It certainly did a great deal indeed, when it proposed to abolish the restrictions on the R. Catholic Officer, when he came to a certain rank; an officer who stood in this singular situation, that he rose till he had an opportunity of doing some act worthy of preferment—and, however great the services he might perform, there he stopped, and the disabilities under which he laboured damped his ardour, and rendered him less fit or disposed for enterprise and exertion.—The unfortunate Catholic Officer might therefore be said to rise to his degradation. The removal of such restrictions was not doing too much, and the best effects would certainly have followed from the adoption of such a measure. Was it not better to put confidence in the Irish than to bind them down by restrictions? The enemy might hope to break their chains, but they could not expect to turn towards them those hearts that had been conciliated by kindness and confidence. Instead, therefore, of putting them on trial, his wish certainly would be to give them the benefits of the Constitution before they mustered in the field. Instead of the yoke of slavery, he would hang the privilege of the Constitution about their necks, and arm them with their rights. Without this it was impossible to expect that the Irish Catholics should be so cordial in their loyalty and attachment to the Constitution as they would otherwise be. He had heard nothing more that appeared to him to require any particular observation. But he again repeated, if no other good effect should result from his motion, than an acknowledgment on the part of Parliament, of the importance of the subject, of the motion ought to be adopted. Charles the First asked SELDON, “What was the best way to put down rebellion?” to which SELDON answered, “remove the cause.” He begged of the Government to apply this answer to Ireland, and put an end to disaffection there, by removing the cause.—He would keep his word, and trespass no longer on the indulgence that had been granted to him.

Mr. GRATTAN explained, that he had not said that any proofs were necessary to shew that the Catholics were loyal; but that the want of allegiance was charged upon them by their enemies, who would be put down by such conduct as he had stated.—Mr. SHERIDAN admitted that he had misconceived his Right Honourable Friend.

FINIS.



Houses of the Oireachtas