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THE
S P E E C H
(AT LENGTH)
OF THE HONOURABLE
HENRY GRATTAN,
IN THE
IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS,
AGAINST
THE UNION
WITH
G R E A T B R I T A I N.

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1800.



S P E E C H

OF THE HONOURABLE

HENRY GRATTAN,

&c. &c. &c.

SIR, the Gentleman who spoke last but one (Sir L. Parson,) mentioned the settlement of 1782, adopting the ideas of the Minister of Great Britain. That Minister has come forward in two productions; he declares his intolerance of the Parliamentary Constitution of Ireland, that Constitution which he ordered the several Viceroy's to celebrate---in defence of which he recommended the French war, and to which he swore the yeomen---that Constitution he now declares to be a miserable imperfection; concurring with the men whom he executed, in thinking the Irish Parliament a grievance, and differing in the remedy only---they proposing to substitute a Republic, and he the yoke of the British Parliament. We have seen him inveigh against their projects---let us hear him in defence of his own; he denies, in the face of the two nations, a public fact, registered and recorded; he disclaims the final adjustment of 1782; and he tells you that this final adjustment was no more than an incipient train of *negotiation*.

The settlement of which I speak consists of several parts, every part a record, establishing on the whole two grand positions---first, the admission of Ireland's claim to be legislated by no other Parliament

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ment but that of Ireland—secondly, the finality imposed upon the two nations regarding all constitutional projects affecting each other;—on the admission of that claim, the first treats of this adjustment, and two Messages are sent by His Majesty to the Parliaments of the different countries, to come to a final adjustment, in order to remove the discontents and jealousies of the Irish—the second, the answer of the Parliament of Ireland to His Majesty's Message, declaring, among other causes of discontent and jealousy, one great, capital, principal, and fundamental cause, namely, the interposition of the Parliament of Great Britain in the legislative regulation of Ireland, accompanied with a solemn protest against that interposition, and with a claim of right on the part of Ireland, not of the Parliament of Ireland only, but of the People of the realm, whose ancient and unalienable inheritance it was stated in that Address to be---a perpetual exemption against the interference of the Parliament of Great Britain, or that of any other Legislature, save only the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. The third part of this adjustment was a resolution voted by the two British Houses of Parliament, in consequence of said Address, transmitted by his Majesty for their consideration. There were two resolutions transmitted;---1st, That the 6th of George I. containing the claim of interference by the British Parliament should be repealed;---the 2d, That the connexion between the countries should be placed by mutual consent on a solid and permanent foundation.---The 4th part of the covenant was, in the Address of the two Houses of the Irish Parliament, upon the consideration of those two resolutions: which Address does, among other things, accept of the proposition contained in the first resolution, and does expressly reject the second;

second; for it says, that “we conceive the resolution for the unqualified, unconditional repeal of the 6th of George I. to be a measure of consummate wisdom.”

I drew that Address---and I introduced those words expressly to exclude any subsequent qualifications or limitations affecting to clog or restrain the operations of that repeal, and the plenitude of the Legislative authority of the Irish Parliament. The Address adds the clause of finality, for in it stance---gratified in those particulars which states, that “no constitutional question between the two nations will any longer exist.”

The next part was the measure adopted by the English Parliament, upon the consideration of this Address; and in that measure, they accede to that Address entirely and unequivocally; they embrace our proposition of unconditional and unqualified repeal, and they accordingly introduced a bill for that purpose---and thus they closed the final adjustment. Our Address, though no part of their resolutions, became part of their covenant---as their bill of repeal, though no part of our acts, became part of our treaty.

Another instrument in the transaction is the Address to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, touching the finality of this measure, in which are these words---“We have seen this great national arrangement established on a basis which secures and unites the interests of both kingdoms; the objects we have been labouring for, have been accomplished.”

The next is the declaration of the Irish Government, touching the finality of that arrangement: “Convince the people that every cause of past jealousy and discontent is finally removed, and that both countries have pledged their good faith to each other, and that their best security will be

their inviolable adherence to this compact." There are two other parts which are material; the resolution of the Irish House of Commons, the 18th of June, declaring in substance, that the question was not now to be opened, and that the business was done, and in these words, that leave to bring in a Bill of Right was refused, because the right of Legislation in the Irish Parliament, in all cases, had been already asserted by Ireland, and fully, and finally, and irrevocably acknowledged by Great Britain.

The next instrument was an Address to His Majesty, to beseech him to appoint a day of public thanksgiving for the accomplishment of these great objects, as well as for his victories. Thus it appears, that whatever idea might have been conceived in the 2d resolution of the 17th of May 1782, it was totally and entirely abandoned; the Minister of that time probably intended to make the best bargain he could for England, and therefore conceived it eligible to condition and qualify the acknowledgment of the independency of the Irish Parliament by certain provisions respecting navigation, &c.; but finding that the Irish Parliament would accept of nothing but the unqualified and unconditional repeal, he dropt the fruitless idea.

I cannot presume to state his sentiments, but I can state that the Irish Propositions of unqualified and unconditional repeal, respecting the idea of further measures, was adopted in England by that Parliament, which embraced the Irish Proposition of unqualified and unconditional repeal of the 6th of George the First, and did repeal it accordingly without qualification, condition, or limitation.

I beg leave to mention two facts, which, though not recorded, are not forgotten—the one is a declaration by Lord Lansdowne, then Secretary of State,

State, that the repeal of 6th George I. was the only measure he meant to propose: the other was, a declaration by the Representative of the Irish Government in the Irish House of Commons, made after our Address of the 27th May, that our measures were intended to be grounded on the 2d English resolution of May 17. I remember the question to be asked, and so answered.

I think I have now shewn from the records quoted, the argument of the Minister is against the express letter, the evident meaning, and honest sense of this final settlement; and I repeat, that finality was not only a part of the settlement, but one of its principal objects. The case is still stronger against him: finality was the principal object of his country, as Legislative Independency was the object of ours. Ireland wished to seize the moment of her strength for the establishment of her liberties—the Court of England wished to conclude the operations of that strength, and bound its progress; the one country wished to establish her liberty, the other to check the growth of demand. I say the growth of demand, it was the expression of the time; the Court of England came therefore to an agreement with this country, viz. to establish for ever a free and independent existence of the Irish Parliament, and to preserve for ever the unity of the British Empire—the former, by the above-mentioned adjustment, the latter, by the clause of finality to that adjustment annexed, and by precluding then, and at all times to come, the introduction of any further constitutional questions in either country affecting the connexion, which was to rest under solemn covenant, impregnable and invincible by the intrigue or ambition of either country, founded on the prudent, the profound, the liberal, and the eternal

eternal principle of Unity of Empire and Separation of Parliament.

I might, however, wave all this, and yet the Minister would get nothing by it—I might allow, contrary to common sense, that final adjustment, as proposed by His Majesty, means incipient negotiation—I will suppose, contrary to truth, to public faith, public honour, and common policy, that the Councils of Great Britain at that time meant to leave the Irish Constitution open to the encroachment of the British Parliament and the British Empire, open to the encroachments of the Irish Volunteer; that is, that she meant to expose the solidity of her empire, in order to cheat the Irish, first of their opportunity, and afterwards of their Constitution; and yet he has gained nothing by these preposterous concessions, because he must allow, that the arrangement did proceed to certain articles of covenant, and the first article on the part of England excludes his Union, being the assent of the Parliament of Great Britain to the requisition of the people of Ireland, which was, to be exempted, in all times to come, from the interference of British Parliaments, and to have established over them no other Legislature whatever, save only that of King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. Admitting, then, the ridiculous idea of ulterior measures to follow final adjustment, a Union could not be one of them. It is hardly necessary to mention, that he has been Minister ever since that period, that during the whole of that time he never ventured to name a Union as one of those further measures—not in 1783, when a Bill was brought in by the Ministry—not in 1785, when he introduced his celebrated Propositions, and stated the 2d resolution of the 17th of May 1782, to comprehend not the Constitution

tution but the Commerce of both countries—not in the Administration of 1785—not, in short, until he had reduced this country, by a train of calamitous measures and religious divisions, to the condition of a conquest, such as she was when the Parliament of England, at the close of the last century, took away the Trade, and in the middle of the present took away the Constitution. The Minister proceeds: he impeaches the Constitution of 1782: from disavowing an arrangement so adjusted at that time, and an adjustment so concluded, he advances, and calls that adjustment a miserable imperfection after fifteen years panegyric; and when he has a great army in Ireland he has made that discovery, and instead of a Constitution which established peace in Ireland, he revives a principle which produced war in America, namely, that two independent legislatures are incompatible. This was the language of Lord North's sword in the colonies, this is the language of Mr. Pitt's sword in Ireland, and the doctrine of an Imperial Legislature, which lost Great Britain America, and which Great Britain surrendered to Ireland, takes once more its bloody station in the pages of the Minister, in defiance of faith, and in contempt of experience.

“You abolished,” says he, “one Constitution, but you forgot to form another.” Indeed!---What! does he mean that we should have demolished a Constitution in order to mangle a Constitution? Does he mean that we should overturn the tyranny of one Parliament to mangle another? In short, does he mean that we should have taken away the usurped and tyrannical powers of one Government, in order to restore those usurped and tyrannical powers to that very Legislature? In what branches? His Propositions have stated them; Commerce,

Commerce, &c. the very branches in which they had been by that very Legislature most oppressively and egregiously, obstinately and transcendently abused. Most certainly the conductors of that settlement, on the part of Ireland, did not think proper to restore the grievance of a foreign Legislature, and so to limit the powers of a domestic one. The Minister has given in his speech the reason---“ All the great branches of trade (by which he must mean the linen trade, the plantation trade) are to be ascribed to the liberality of England, not to covenant.”---I deny it: but as Ministers may deny covenants, it seemed prudent to reserve the powers of Parliament; and accordingly the Irish Legislature retains full and ample resources, under the settlement of that time, to incline the councils of England to remember and observe her compacts with our country, should the British Minister be disposed to forget them. Thus the Parliament of Ireland can so regulate her intercourse with other countries for colonial produce, so regulate her right to an East India trade, and so duty her Channel trade, as to secure a preference in the English market to her linens, and to secure a direct intercourse with the British Plantations. Was Ireland to retain those powers with a view to annoy? No; but she was to retain them; and to retain them, lest Great Britain, instigated by some Minister, might be induced to exercise once more those very powers of annoyance with which now the Right Honourable Gentlemen threatens Ireland; in short, lest Great Britain should retain all her powers of molestation, and Ireland should surrender all her powers of retaliation. The classic Minister must know—Tacitus has told him—that between the powerful and the impotent there can
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be no peace ; the powers I speak of were powers of peace—they were powers of protection---they were the great resources of the Irish Parliament to secure the trade of Ireland and harmony of empire. The wisdom of the resource such a Minister as he is was born to establish. Strange ideas this Minister entertains of the Constitution of an Irish Parliament—it should be incompetent—it should be omnipotent ; it should be incompetent to regulate the commerce of the country—omnipotent to overturn her Constitution : it should be inadequate and all-mighty—inadequate to protect—all-mighty to save the people ; its divine powers are to arise from its obsequiousness, and the act of its surrender with him constitutes its omnipotence.

The Minister proceeds—he specifies his objections to this settlement of 1782—the Regency is one, and war another ; facts are against him in both. He states, that it was accident alone (meaning the recovery of his Majesty) that preserved the identity of the Executive Power at the time of the Regency. He mis-states that fact, totally and entirely. It was not accident, viz. the recovery of the King, that preserved the identity of the Executive Power—that identity was preserved amply, carefully, and affectionately, by the determination of the Irish Parliament in chusing for their Regent the Heir Apparent of the Crown, already designated and determined upon, though not in form invested by the Parliament of Great Britain. The Irish Parliament provided in that event not only for the preservation of the monarchical principle, but for the preservation of the connexion likewise, and adhered to his country, though they did not link themselves to his party. The principle that came under the consideration of the Irish Parliament was threefold—

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the principle of Monarchy, the principle of Connexion, the principle of Party. With regard to the two first, they concurred with the Parliament of England; they chose as Regent the next in succession to the Crown; and they chose him after, and not before, the Parliament of Great Britain had signified, with the Minister at their head, their determination to appoint him; and in so doing, *they* followed faithfully the spirit of the act of annexation of the Crown, which forms between the two countries their bond and connexion, but a bond and connexion through the medium of Monarchy. I am stating the spirit of that act, without defending or condemning it. I say the Act of annexation, and so the Bill of 1782, altering and amending the act of Poyning's, and ordaining that Irish bills shall be sent to the King, looks to the bond and connexion of these islands through the medium of Monarchy. A British Republic never was in the contemplation of either; but an English Monarchy, and no other form of government, was present to the conceptions of both, giving thereby the Royal House, who are the Monarchs of Ireland as well as of Great Britain, a double security, and the Throne upon which they sit a double root. I say the Parliament of Ireland did adhere to the principles of British connexion, and did unite with them the safe and the prescribed principles of Monarchical Government. They did concur with the Parliament of England in the choice of a Regent, in the person of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and after his designation by Great Britain; but with regard to the third principle, namely, the principle of party, they differed, the Parliament of England thinking proper to encumber the Regent with extraordinary limitations, and

and that of Ireland judging it more eligible to leave him in full exercise of all the executive powers; it therefore rejected a motion of delay, knowing the object of that motion was to postpone the appointment until the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland should have formed a formidable faction confederated against the Government.

In short, the Parliament of Ireland did not think it proper to appoint a Regent with less than regential power, and to constitute in opposition a Minister with great portions of regal authority. Hence, perhaps, this Union; hence, perhaps the visitation of calamitous Government which has befallen Ireland ever since. One of the Minister's instruments in this country has confessed it; he has said in one of his speeches published by his authority, that all the misfortunes of this country sprung from that resentful period. But who is it reproaches Ireland upon this subject, most injuriously and unjustly, with the crime of availing herself of the opportunity afforded by that most calamitous event that visited the health of our Sovereign? 'Tis that very Minister who published that opportunity in the broadest and most unqualified resolution, who told the Parliament of both countries that they were perfectly competent to supply, in that melancholy moment, the deficiency in the executive magistrate by any method which they thought proper; that is, who told the British Houses of Parliament they were competent to establish a temporary Republic—and told the Irish Houses, of course, and by necessary inference, that they were competent to establish a temporary Republic, and to accomplish a temporary separation. To have declined the opportunity is called the Am-

bition of our Parliament—to have proclaimed the opportunity is called the Moderation of the Minister. His partisan in this country went further; he maintained the power of the British Parliament to bind Ireland.

—Ille impiger hausit
Spumantem pateram et pleno se proluit auro.

According to the two opinions, the two Houses of the British Parliament could overturn the British Monarchy and Irish Constitution.

The Minister proceeds—he states a second instance, namely, that of war. Here again the fact is against him; the Parliament of Ireland have ever since their emancipation concurred with England on the subject of war; but they have concurred with this remarkable difference that before their emancipation their concurrence was barren, and since their emancipation it has been productive. Immediately on the settlement of that emancipation in 1783, they voted a sum for British seamen, and on the apprehension of a war with Spain in 1790, they voted another; and in the present war, under Lord Fitzwilliam's administration, they voted a third. So much more beneficial are the wild offerings of Liberty than the squeezings, and eviscerations, and excruciations of Power. But all this is lost upon the Minister—fact and bounty make no impression on him; he has against both a fallacious argument and an hungry speculation. He thinks he foresees that the Parliament of Ireland may dissent from that of Great Britain on the subject of war—that peace or war are in the department of the King, not of the Parliament. He knows that on a proclamation by His Majesty, Ireland is

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in a state of war, of course without the assent of the Houses of Parliament. He knows that the supply of that war depends not on the Parliament of Ireland, but of Great Britain; therefore, the interference of the Parliament of Ireland on that subject, is little more than the declaration of a sentiment. Now the declaration of a sentiment on such a subject is only valuable, as it is the sentiment of a nation;—and the concurrence of Ireland in British wars can only be the sentiment of the nation, as the Constitution of the nation, that is to say, the rights of Ireland, as claimed by herself, to be exempted from the Legislative authority of a British Parliament—tendered, regarded, and protected by the British Empire.—It is not the isle of Ceylon, the Cape of Good Hope, the Mysore country, nor the dominions of Tippoo, nor yet the feathers of her western wing, that engage the attention or interests of Ireland: it is her own internal freedom and Constitution—it is her own idea of that internal freedom and Constitution, not such as British Ministers who have invaded that Constitution too often shall hold forth, not such as English nor Scotch metaphysicians, who forged chains for America, and cast them her Constitution, and are ready now to cast links for Ireland, with the foreign stamp of Irish liberty—but that Constitution which she herself (Ireland) feels, comprehends, venerates, and claims—such as she herself expressed, both in her Convention at Dungannon, and through all her counties and cities, and in every description or association of people, and afterwards in full Parliament claimed, carried, registered, and recorded. It is for the preservation of this Constitution that she is interested in British welfare. She considers the British Empire a great western
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barrier against invasion from other countries. Invasion on what? invasion on her liberties, on her rights and privileges, invasion on self-legislation, the parent and protectress of them all. She hears the Ocean protesting against separation, but she hears the Sea likewise protesting against Union; she follows, therefore, her physical destination, and obeys the dispensations of Providence, when she protests, like that sea, against the two situations, both equally unnatural—Separation and Union; but then, she feels her Constitution to be her great stake in the Empire, and she contemplates the Empire as the great security of her Constitution. Our liberty we think is secured by this great western barrier, and we give our strength to this western barrier for the security of our liberty: but if British Ministers should do that very mischief which we apprehend from the foreigner, namely, take away the Parliamentary Constitution of the realm—they take away with that our interest in the British dominions, and thus withdraw at once a great pillar of Liberty and Empire.

On these principles I suppose the dissent of Ireland on the subject of war highly improbable, as it is uninstanced; but I should attribute, like the Minister, infallibility to those Councils that engage their country in a war, should I suppose the dissent of Ireland on such a subject at all times to be fatal. Happy had it been for Great Britain—happy had it been for His Majesty—happy had it been for his glory and renown in all times to come, had not the Parliament of Ireland, in the American war, cursed him with her concurrence. What could the tutelary Angel of England have done more? If that Angel had been Minerva, and that Minerva sat in Parliament, she

she would then have held over the Councils of that time, the shield of her displeasure. Or what could the Demon of Great Britain have done more, or the avenging Genius of the Colonies, which her Cabinet butchered, than to have filled full and overflowing them easure of her malice? In an humble and dutiful address of thanks and concurrence, looking back to the wars in which Great Britain has been engaged, I should therefore suggest, that she is in less danger from the hesitation of Ireland, than from the precipitation of Great Britain. In this part of his argument the Minister is weak; but in his remedy is not only weak, but mischievous; he proposes, by taking away our powers of dissent, to withdraw our motive of concurrence; and to secure our silence, forfeits our affection. He foresees an improbable event—of that event he greatly exaggerates the danger, and provides a remedy which makes that danger not only imminent but deadly.

I will put the question to my country—I will suppose her at the bar, and I will ask then, Will you fight for a Union as you would for a Constitution? Will you fight for those Lords and those Commons, who, in the last century, took away the trade, and in the present the Constitution, as for that King, Lords, and Commons, who have restored both?

Well, the Minister has destroyed this Constitution. To destroy is easy. The edifices of the mind, like the fabrics of marble, require an age to build. But ask only a Minister to precipitate, and, as the fall is of no time, so neither is it the effect of any strength. A common labourer and a pick-ax, a little Lawyer, a little Pander, and a wicked Minister—so perish the works of men!

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That Constitution, which with more or less violence has been the inheritance of this country for 600 years; that *modus tenendi Parliamentum*, which lasted and outlasted of Plantagenet the wars, of Tudor the violence, and of Stuart the systematic falsehood; the condition of our connexion—yes, the Constitution he destroys is one of the pillars of British Empire; he may walk round it, and round it, and the more he contemplates, the more must he admire it—such an one as had cost England of money a million, and of blood a deluge—cheaply and nobly expended—dear in its violation, dear in its recovery—whose restoration had cost Ireland her noblest efforts, and was the habitation of her loyalty. We are accustomed to behold the Kings of these countries in the keeping of Parliament—I say of her loyalty, as well as of her liberty, where she had hung up the sword of the Volunteer; her Temple of Fame, as well as of Freedom, where she had seated herself, as she vainly thought, in modest security and in a long repose.

I have done with the pile which the Minister batters—I come to the Babel which he builds—and as he throws down without a principle, so does he construct without a foundation. This fabric he calls an Union; and to this his fabric there are two striking objections. First, it is no Union—it is not an identification of people, for it excludes the Catholics: 2dly, It is a consolidation of the Legislatures, that is to say, a merger of the Irish Parliament, and incurs every objection to an Union, without obtaining the only object which an Union professes—it is an extinction of the Constitution, and an exclusion of the People. Well! he has overlooked the
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People as he has overlooked the sea. I say, he excludes the Catholics for ever, and for the very reason which he and his advocates hold out as the ground of expectation—that hereafter, in a course of time (he does not say when), if they behave themselves (he does not say how), they may see their subject submitted to a course of discussion (he does not say with what result or determination); and as the ground for this inane period, in which he promises nothing, in which he can promise nothing, and in which, if he did promise much, at so remote a period, he could perform nothing—unless he, like the evil he has accomplished, be immortal;—for this inane sentence, in which he can scarcely be said to deceive the Catholic, or suffer the Catholic to deceive himself, he exhibits no other ground than the physical inanity of the Catholic body accomplished by an Union, which, as it destroys the relative importance of Ireland, so it destroys the relative proportion of its Catholic inhabitants, and thus they become admissible, because they cease to be any thing. Hence, according to him, their brilliant expectation; “you were,” says the import of his argument, “before the Union, as four to one—you will be by the Union as one to four.” Thus he founds their hopes of political power on the extinction of physical consequence, and makes the inanity of their body and the non-entity of their country, the pillars of their future ambition. Let me add, that even though the Catholics were admitted into Parliament, by the articles of Union, it would be of little avail to the body.—What signifies it to the body, whether a Catholic individual be an insignificant UNIT in the English Parliament or in the street; in either case, he would be nothing

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—he would belong to nothing—he would have nothing to which he could belong—no country—no Irish people—no Irish nation.

The Catholics of the city of Dublin have come forth in support of the Constitution—I rejoice at it; they have answered their enemies by the best possible answer—by services: such answer is more than refutation—it is triumph. The man who supports and preserves Parliament qualifies. The path of glory leads on to privilege: enjoy—without me if you please—without me if you are illiberal—but by me certainly—and at all events enjoy the Parliamentary Constitution of your country. This is to defend the tower—this is to leap upon the wreck—this is to sit by the country in her sick-bed; if she recover, there is a long and bright order of days before her, and the Catholics will have contributed to that event; if she perish, they will have done their utmost to save her; they will have done as an honest man ought in such an extreme case; they will have flung out their last setting glories, and sunk with the country.

The Minister, by his first plans, as detailed by his advocates, not only banished the Catholics from Parliament, but banished the Protestant poor likewise, for he banished them from a due representation therein; he struck off one half of the county Representatives, and preserved the proportion of boroughs as two to one; thus he disposed of the questions of Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform, by getting rid of both for ever; thus did he build his first plan of Union upon the abuses both of Church and State, and reformed neither; religious monopoly, and borough monopoly. He continued to exclude the Catholic from Parliament, and he continued to
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shut out both Protestant and Catholic from a due and effectual Parliamentary Representation—he shut out Protestant Ascendancy, as well as Catholic Participation; and in the place of both, constituted Borough ascendancy in perpetual abuse and dominion; he reformed the British Parliament by nearly sixty Borough Members; he reformed the Irish Parliament by 558 English and Scotch Members; and on this mutual misrepresentation constituted an imperial Legislature; there was no great effort of ability in all this—much felicity of mischief—no expenditure either of time or talent; there was nothing in the scheme which was grand—nothing which was deep—nothing which was comprehensive; he demolished an old institution, at the same time that he preserved old abuses, and put himself at their head, and entailed them on posterity like a common disorder, to be continued through what he calls a parental Parliament. Such a plan was too desperate, as far as relates to the proposition of counties and boroughs. I understood it was in part abandoned, and well it may, because whether these Representatives be in a greater or less proportion Borough Members, they will be the Host of Administration, and not the Representatives of the People. He takes 100 Members, many of whom are removed, by the nature of their election, from their country, are withdrawn from that of sympathy; from that of opinion. He changes the sphere not only of their action, but of their character and of their sensations. How came the Irish Parliament, with all its Borough Members, in 1779, to demand a free Trade; in 1782, to demand a free Constitution? Because it sat in Ireland; because it sat in their own country;

because, however influenced, as many of its Members were by places; however uninfluenced, as many of its Members were by popular representation, yet were they influenced by Irish sympathy, and Irish law of opinion; they did not like to meet every hour faces that looked shame upon them; they did not like to stand in the sphere of their own infamy. Thus they acted as the Irish absentee at the very same time did not act; they saved the country because they lived in it, as the others abandoned the country because they lived out of it.

I will not say that 100 Irish Gentlemen will act ill where any man would act well; but never was there a situation in which they had so much temptation to act ill and so little to act well. Great expence and consequent distresses; no support from the voice of an Irish public, no check, they will be in situation a sort of Gentlemen of the Empire, that is to say, Gentlemen at large, unknown by one country, and unelected by the other, suspended between both, false to both, and belonging to neither. The sagacious Secretary of State has told this---“What advantage,” says he, “will it not be to the talents of Ireland, to have this opportunity in the British Empire thus opened?” That is what we dread; the market of St. Stephen opened to the individual, and the talents of the country, like its property, draughted from the kingdom of Ireland to be sold in London. These men from, their situation (man is the child of situation,) their native honour may struggle, but from their situation they will be adventurers of a most expensive kind, adventurers with pretensions, dressed and sold, as it were, in the shrouds and grave-clothes of the Irish Parliament, and playing for hire their
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tricks on her tomb; the only repository the Minister will allow to an Irish Constitution, the images of degradation and the representatives of nothing. Come---he has done much: he has destroyed one Constitution, he has corrupted another; and this corrupted Constitution he calls a Parental Parliament.

I congratulate the country on the new baptism of what was once called the Representative Body of the Nation; instead of the plain august language of Constitution, we are here saluted with the novel and barbaric phraseology of Empire.

With this change of name, we perceive a transfer of obligation, converting the duty of the delegate into the duty of the constituent, and the inheritance of the people into the inheritance of their trustees.

There is not in this plan any one profound, comprehensive, or exalted conception. Well, this Assembly, this Imperial Parliament, what are its elements? Irish absentees who have forsaken their country, and a British Parliament that took away the Constitution. Does he say that such a Parliament will have no prejudices against Ireland? Let him look to his speeches: a capital understanding, a comprehensive knowledge, and a transcendent eloquence---hear him with all these powers speak on the subject of Ireland, whether it be the conduct of her Administration, the character of the people, the commerce, or her covenants, or her Constitution, and he betrays an ignorance that would dishonour an idiot. Does he wish for further instances? let him look to the speeches of his agents in Ireland---speeches under and published for the palate and prejudices of the English Court.

Court. What description of men have they not traduced? what patriot achievement have they not depreciated? what honest character have they not belied? Does he look for further instances? let him turn to his catalogue—what notorious apostate whom he has not honoured? what impudent defamer of the rights and character of Ireland that he has not advanced? On the other hand, what man that made a stand for her liberties, whom he has not dismissed? Mr. Fitzgerald, Sir John Parnel also, who has supported his Government long, refused to abandon their country and their honour, were immediately told they were no longer fit for the service of Government. Mr. Forster, who had supported his administration long, held up his shield for that Parliament of which he is the natural advocate, and was immediately honoured by the enmity of the Court, and a personal attack on his character and consistency.

Lord Fitzwilliam, an Englishman, a friend to the war, a strenuous advocate for order and regular government, with a character that is purity itself, entertained for Ireland a fatal affection, and by that one offence cancelled all his long and splendid catalogue of virtues. And does he disclaim prejudices against Ireland?

A Legislature the parent of both countries he talks of; a Legislature, as far as relates to Ireland, free from the influence of vicinity, of sympathy. The Isle of Man is all that, free from the influence of opinion, free from the influence of duty, directed by prejudices, and unincumbered with knowledge. In order to judge what this parental Legislature would be, let us consider what the British Parliament has been, and let us compare that Parliament, for this purpose, with
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the Legislature of Ireland, and in this comparison I do not mean to approve all the Parliaments that have sat in Ireland. I left the former, because I condemned its proceedings; but I argue not like the Minister, from the misconduct of one Parliament, against the being of Parliament itself. I value that Parliamentary Constitution by the average of its benefits; and I affirm, that the blessings procured by the Irish Parliament in the last twenty years are greater than all the blessings afforded by British Parliaments to Ireland for the last century, greater even than the mischiefs inflicted on Ireland by British Parliaments, greater than all the blessings procured by those Parliaments for their own country within that period. Within that time the Legislature of England lost an empire, and the Legislature of Ireland recovered a Constitution.

Shall we have done with this parental Parliament, and now come to the bribes which he holds out?—And first, he begins with the Church: to the Protestant Church he promises perpetual security—to the Catholic Church his advocates promise perpetual salary—and both hold out to the former commutation of tithes.

With respect to the Protestant Church, whatever may be his wishes in favour of its duration, he takes the strongest measures to accomplish its destruction, for he attempts to disgrace it to all eternity. He is employing, or his agents are employing, several of its members to negotiate away the Constitution, and to mendicate addresses transferring to another country the Parliament and Legislative Power of their own, disfranchising the very people by whom the Church is fed, and deserting the holy mission of God to
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fulfil this profligate mission of the Minister.— Give up your country, says the Minister, give up your character, and be immortal: so said Charles the First to his Church, when he prohibited the Gospel and regimented the Clergy into battalion against the Constitution, and overturned the Church by its own infamy.

At the same time that the Minister endeavours to take away by his measures the authority of one Church, his advocates tell you, that he proposes to give salaries to another; that is, they tell you that he proposes to bribe the Catholic Clergy, if they will betray the Constitution. In whatever form of religion our pious Courtier contemplates the Almighty, it ever occurs to convert him to some diabolical purpose. The Catholics had been accused pretty liberally of disloyalty by those very advocates who now seem to think it is proper to reward their imputed treasons against the King, provided they shall be followed up by real treasons against the People. I do not believe, I never did believe, the general charges made against the Catholics—I do not dispute, I never did dispute, the propriety of giving salaries to their Clergy; but it should be salaries, not bribes—salaries, for the exercise of their religious duty, and not wages for the practice of political apostacy. According to this plan, the Catholic religion, it would seem, disqualified its followers to receive the blessings of the Constitution; but his hostility to that Constitution qualifies him to receive a salary for the exercise of that very religion which is at once punished by civil disability and encouraged by ecclesiastical provisions---as good Catholics they are disqualified, and as bad citizens they are to be rewarded. I dare say, in general, the Catholic

tholic Clergy will find on this occasion, as they have done upon others, a regard for their native land, superior to the threats of a Minister.

The Minister proceeds—he proposes his third bribe, the abolition of tithes. You observe, such a proposal does not seem to form part of his Union, but is an offer kept back to be regulated, modified, and qualified, when the Union is passed, and the consideration is given. I approve of a *modus* as a compensation for tithes; but I do not approve of it as a compensation for Parliament. When I proposed that measure, and was opposed by men by whom I could only be opposed, and could not be answered, I was told by the King's Ministers, that commutation of tithes was the overturn of the Church. Couple then the project of the Minister now, with the argument of his agents then, and the combined idea amounts to this, that it is prudent to overturn the Church, provided at the same time you overturn the Constitution. But the fact is, that the argument at that time was false, and the proposal at this time is fallacious; and both shew that the argument had for its object personal calumny, and the proposal, national extinction.

The Minister has not done with bribes—whatever economy he shews in argument, here he has been generous in the extreme power, priest: (I think one of his advocates hints the Presbyterians) are not forgotten; and now the mercantile body are to be all bribed, that all may be ruined. He holds out commercial benefits for political annihilation—he offers you an abundance of capital, but first he takes it away—he takes away a great portion of the landed capital of the country by

the necessary operation of Union. He will give you, however, commercial capital in its place, but first he will give you taxes. It seems it is only necessary to break down the batteries of Liberty, and the tides of Commerce will flow in of course—take away her rival in landed capital, and then commercial capital advances without fear. Commerce only wants weight, it seems, in order to run with new spirit—he not only finds commerce in the retreat of capital, but he finds corn also—why not wine? If the removal of landed capital shall produce wheat, why not the distance of the sun wine—why any method in his madness, when there is so much madness in his method. His whole speech is a course of surprises; the growth of excision, the resource of incumbrance, and harvests sown and gathered by the absence of the proprietor of the soil and their property. All these things are to come—when, he does not tell you—you take his word for all this. I have heard of a banker's bill of exchange, bank of England notes, bank of Ireland notes, but a prophet's promissory note is a new traffic. All he gets from Ireland is solid loss---all he promises visionary---distant and prophetic advantage. He sees, though I do not, British merchants and British capital sailing to the provinces of Connaught and Munster, where the Orangeman had sent the Defenders---there they settle great multitudes, themselves and families. He mentions not what description of manufacturers---who from Birmingham---who from Manchester---no matter---he cares not---he goes on asserting, and asserting with great ease to himself, and without any obligation to fact, upon the subject. Icarian imagination

gination is the region in which he delights to disport. Where he is to take away your Parliament---where he is to take away your first Judicature---where he is to take away your money---where he is to encrease your taxes---where he is to get an Irish tribute; there he is a plain direct matter of fact man; but where he is to pay you for all this---there he is poetic and prophetic; no longer a third-hand financier, but an inspired accomptant. Fancy gives him her wand; Amalthea takes him by the hand; Ceres is in his train. The English capitalist, he thinks, will settle his family in the midst of those Irish Catholics whom he does not think it safe to admit into Parliament---as subjects, he thinks them dangerous, as a neighbouring multitude, safe. The English manufacturer will make this distinction: he will dread them as individuals, and confide in them as a body, and settle his family and his property in the midst of them; he will, therefore, the Minister supposes, leave his mines, leave his machinery, leave his comforts, leave his habits, conquer his prejudices, and come over to Ireland to meet his Taxes and miss his Constitution.---They did not do this when the taxes of Ireland were few; we were indeed told they would, as we are now told; they did not do this when there was no Military Government in Ireland: however, as prejudices against the country encrease, he supposes commercial confidence may increase likewise. There is no contradicting all this; because arguments which reason does not suggest, reason cannot remove. Besides, the Minister in all this does not argue, but foretel---now you can scarcely answer a prophet, you can only disbelieve him; his arguments are false, but his

inspirations may be true; appearances, however, are against them: for instance, a principal ground of complaint in Ireland is a misapplication of landed capital, or the diversion of it to foreign countries from the cultivation of Ireland, where great tracts remain either totally neglected or superficially improved, where the tenantry has not capital, and the land can be reclaimed only by the employment (and a very rational employment it would be) of part of the rent arising therefrom, on the soil which produced it, improving however gradually since the establishment of our free Constitution, which contains in itself the power of checking the evil I speak of; and which, by adding to the consequence of the country, will naturally diminish the number of absentees, aided as it must be by the growth of English taxes, unless by an Union we adopt those taxes in Ireland. How does he remedy this disorder? He finds a great absentee draught; he gives you another; and having secured to you two complaints, he engages to cure both.—

Another principal cause of complaint is another effect arising from the non-residence of the Irish landlords, whose presence on their own estates is necessary for the succour, as well as the improvement of their tenantry; that the peasants may not perish for want of medicine, of cordial, and of cure, which they can only find in the administration of the landlord, who civilizes them, and regulates them in the capacity of a magistrate, while he covers them and husbands them in that of a protector, improving not only them but himself by the exercise of his virtues, as well as the dispensation of his property, drawing together the two orders of society, the rich and the poor,

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until each may administer to the other, and civilize, the one by giving, and the other by receiving; so that Aristocracy and Democracy may have a head and a body; so that the rich may bring on the poor, and the poor may support the rich; and both contributing to the strength, order, and beauty of the State, may form that pillar of society where all below is strength, and all above is grace. How does his plan accomplish this? he withdraws their landed gentlemen, and then improves Irish manners by English factors. But I leave this trifling, and come to his threats.

As he offered before a trade which he had not to give, so now he menaces to withdraw a trade which he cannot take away. His threat is founded on a monstrous assertion, that our principal branches of commerce are due to the liberality of England. Liberality of England to Irish commerce! Where are we to look for it? In what part of this country, for near 100 years? It is a long time. The Minister himself disclaims the illiberal policy of this country. Is it at the close of the century, for instance, in His Majesty's speech from the throne in year 1775, where he is advised to signify his intention to maintain the principle of American taxation over all the dominions, or is it in the embargo of the same period, or is it in the Tea Tax imposed on Ireland by the British Parliament about the period of 1779---or will he say this liberality appears in the mockery of those bills in which England affected to relieve the distress of Ireland---was it in the English act, giving the Irish a power to catch whale, or in that other bill permitting the Irish to plant tobacco? Or was it in 1778 that this liberality made its appearance? No; for I remember in that pe-
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riod moving an Address for the extension of Irish commerce; and I remember also being opposed and defeated by the immediate interposition of the Crown. It is not then in the period of 1778 that we are to look for this liberality---was it in the period of 1779, the time of the short money bill, of the non-consumption agreement, of the Irish requisition of free trade?

Here is the liberality of England: she was just then, she was liberal never; and she was just to you then because you were then just to yourselves; she has been faithful since. I shall be satisfied for one, with her fidelity and justice, and of these occasions I acknowledge both. Are there are any further in which we are to look for English justice on the subject of Irish trade? Yes, there is another in 1793, on the subject of the re-export—an attempt had been made to carry that point for Ireland in 1786, contained in two resolutions which I moved as an amendment to the Navigation Act, which has been charged to Ireland as a favour, but which was in fact jobbed to the British Ministry by him who made the charge, and sold without any clause of equality and reciprocity—but afterwards in 1793, a re-export bill passed in Great Britain in favour of Ireland, exactly at the time when the charter of the East India Company expired; an Irish bill was necessary, and did pass, to secure her monopoly for a limited time. Such is the history of British concession. Now look at the tariff, or see what has been the result, greatly in favour of England. Under the head of Home Manufacture and Colonial Produce, in favour of England; under the head of Raw Material the produce of the respective countries, above two millions in favour of England. Add to this an Absente

sentee Rental of considerably above a million, and you will find there is a balance of a sum of above four millions annually, in which Ireland administers to Great Britain, and pours herself, as it were abundantly and without reserve, into the British dominion.

This is the trade the Minister threatens to alter, and thinks he threatens not Great Britain but Ireland—there he will have some difficulty; and first, the covenant of 1779: he denies that covenant; he says that all the great commercial advantages of Ireland are to be ascribed to the liberality of the British Parliament, and not to the Irish Parliament. Wherever he meets an Irish covenant, he gives it no quarter; I will state the fact, and let the public judge:--in October 1779, an Address passed the Irish Commons, containing a requisition for a Free Trade; it was followed by a Motion, declaring that the Irish Commons would not, for the present, grant new taxes; it was followed by a limitation of the Act of Supply to the duration of six months only: it was considered in England, and attended with resolutions moved by the then Minister, purporting to repeal certain restrictive acts on the free trade of Ireland, and to grant a direct intercourse between Ireland and His Majesty's plantations, subject to equality of duty. These resolutions were considered in the Parliament of Ireland---(See the Resolutions and the law expressing the condition and covenant)---they were voted satisfactory. A long money bill was then passed, and new taxes were then granted in consideration thereof, and this he calls no covenant; he has denied, it seems, the linen covenant; he has denied this commercial covenant of 1779, and he has denied the constitutional covenant of 1782— and having disclaimed the obligation of these treaties,

treaties, he now proposes a fourth, founded on his denial of the three others, in which he desires you to give up your Parliament, to secure his faith in time to come, by encouraging his disavowal of former covenants.

I argue in a different manner—I argue from his disposition to dispute the validity of covenant to the necessity of the existence of Parliament—an Irish Parliament—the guarantee of those covenants, who has power to preserve the obligation or resources to retaliate. Does the Minister, when he talks of an eleemosynary trade, recollect how the Irish Parliament could affect the East India Company, by discontinuig the act of 1793, granted but for a limited time? Does he recollect how she could affect the British West India monopoly, by withdrawing her exclusive consumption from the British plantations? Does he recollect how we could affect the navy of England, by regulations regarding our Irish provisions? Does he recollect how we could affect her empire, by forming commercial intercourse with the rest of the world. But let not this depend upon idle threats, threats which never should have been advanced on one side, if they had not been first most imprudently introduced on his. I say, let not the argument rest on threats; but let it rest quiet on past experiment; the experiment has been made; we got one trade by our resources and our Parliament—we will keep our trade by affection and by covenant. But should a British Minister choose to despise those tenures, we have another, we can keep our trade by the means by which we have obtained it, our Parliament, our resources.

He speaks of the linen trade. On this subject, indeed, he has been answered, as he has upon the others,

others, by argument and by experiment; the argument which proves that the bounty on linen was not granted for the sake of Ireland, and that Irish linen sells itself. But suppose his reasoning in this case to be as true as it is fallacious, what does it amount to? That his country robbed Ireland of her free trade in the last century, and gave her in place of it the export of one solitary manufacture, depending on the charity of England; and now proposes to rob Ireland of that manufacture, unless Ireland consents to be robbed of her Parliament. Has he no other ground of triumph but the disgrace and dishonour of his country? However, her case is better than he has stated it, and that is proved by the experiment; for in 1779 we were encountered by the same threats on the same subject—we despised those threats, we put the question to a trial—we entered into a noncon-sumption agreement—we demanded a free trade—the free trade we obtained—the linen trade we preserved.

What he cannot reconcile to interest he attempts to reconcile to honour. He, the Minister (his budget crammed with corruption), proposes to you to give up the ancient inheritance of your country, to proclaim an utter and blank incapacity to make laws for your own people, and to register this Proclamation in an act which inflicts on this ancient nation an eternal disability; and he accompanies these monstrous proposals by undisguised terror and unqualified bribery; and this he calls no attack on the honour and dignity of the kingdom.

The thing he proposes to buy is what cannot be sold—Liberty. For it he has nothing to give—every thing of value which you possess you obtained under a free Constitution; part
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with it, and you must be not only a slave but an idiot.

His propositions not only go to your dishonour, but they are built upon nothing else. He tells you---it is his main argument---that you are unfit to exercise a free Constitution, and he affects to prove it by the experiment. Jacobinism grows, says he, out of the very state and condition of Ireland. I have heard of Parliament impeaching Ministers; but here is a Minister impeaching Parliament. He does more, he impeaches the Parliamentary Constitution itself; the abuses in that Constitution he has protected, it is only its being that he destroys---on what ground? Your exports since your emancipation, and under that Parliamentary Constitution, and in a great measure by that Parliamentary Constitution, have nearly doubled---commercially it has worked well. Your concord with England since the emancipation, as far as it relates to Parliament on the subject of war, has been not only approved, but has been productive imperially; therefore it has worked well. What then does the Minister in fact object to? that you have supported him, that you have concurred in his system; therefore he proposes to the people to abolish the Parliament and to continue the Minister. He does more; he proposes to you to substitute the British Parliament in your place, to destroy the body that restored your liberties, and restore that body which destroyed them. Against such a proposition, were I expiring on the floor, I should beg to utter my last breath, and to record my dying testimony.

FINIS.