

Second Edition—with a Postscript.

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# COMMON SENSE,

TO THE

## PEOPLE OF IRELAND:

OR,

A SHORT VIEW OF THE DESIGNS OF FRANCE,  
AND INTERESTS OF THE IRISH.

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## P R E F A C E.

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UPON the first alarm of a war with France, and whilst the peace of the South of Ireland was lately menaced with disturbance, the following Observations were published, as essays, in a provincial newspaper. The infatuated attack on our metropolis has corroborated many of the remarks, and verified the opinions. Although the rapid succession of events has somewhat varied the scene, my argument may yet be found to be not inapt for the present circumstances—it may still tend to produce the effect for which it was designed—a vigorous, a determined and an unanimous exertion to rescue our country, and disappoint its enemy. If I have truly described the designs of that enemy, if I have proved that he is insincere and cannot prevail against our establishments, it may be hoped his wretched, I had almost said, his incorrigible partizans will give repose to their country. If they are inaccessible to virtue, to pity, or remorse, the certainty of disappointment may perhaps disarm them. In this hope the Pieces are again collected and offered to the public: a moment of less perturbation would have permitted to extend the argument with greater force and in a manner more comprehensive. Can it occur to any man, that the French faction in Ireland will ever be able to bring their preparation

preparation for attack to a greater state of perfection than in the late outrages? If with this advantage they miserably failed of success, by what other means can a more favourable termination of the crime be possibly expected? One remark necessarily occurs from a crime lamentable and enormous;—the leaders of the banditti exhorted to refrain from murder, and the first step of the followers is to turn from their main design for a cruel and unprovoked massacre.

Let me address those persons whose spleen against existing authority has not been overcome by a sense of the unequivocal disasters of innovation. Let me address those whose inveterate dislike to royal power, has not yielded to the practical excellence of the British Monarchy; admitting for one instant that their views are commendable, even they must acknowledge, that good, according to their own notions of it, is not to be achieved by such instruments as here present themselves. That class of men whom they must employ are indeed easily imposed on, but they are rash, impetuous, and when they are set in motion, very much under the influence of vehement and headstrong passions. It would require a laborious research in political economy, to examine into the circumstances which have formed this character, our business here is to consider how the imminent mischief can be counteracted.

# COMMON SENSE,

*TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.*

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WHATEVER may be the result of the hostile preparations which we see around us, the circumstance furnishes occasion for serious reflections to the inhabitants of this island. After a short and infidious truce, France, in obvious contradiction to her convenience, and her interest, provokes us to renew hostilities. With the Continental Powers, France waged a successful and beneficial war ; not such the obstacles to her aggrandizement which she encountered in the contest with Great Britain ; our resources were wielded with that degree of energy and address, that her transmarine possessions were wrested from the Republic, and her trade and navy were utterly annihilated ; internal troubles proved equally fatal to her finances, whilst her great effort of reserve, the enterprise which she threatened for a century, and on

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which she relied to weaken and intimidate, the designed invasion of Ireland, only tended to communicate new vigour to her rival, by rendering our domestic policy more compact and manageable. In common prudence the governors of that country ought to apply themselves to repair these losses, and peace affords the season and opportunity; yet they wantonly fling from them that desirable opportunity. Unquestionably it depended upon France alone to have secured the repose of her subjects. There has been no infringement of even her recently assumed dignity; no interference with her enormous territory; her sway on the Continent is undisturbed; nay, our ministers have been reproached at home, and censured, as it is alledged, abroad, for that forbearance, which marked and manifested their pacific inclinations; mean time the language held and authorized by our antagonist was arrogant, his manner dictatorial; nothing conciliatory or moderate in his councils and proceedings; a plain aggression has at length provoked resistance; whence this deviation by politic men from obvious policy? common fame asserts, and the publications he protects justify the opinion, that the ruler of that enslaved and unfortunate nation, ventures upon measures, which he would otherwise decline, calculating on the supposed facility of wounding the British empire by exciting disturbance in Ireland. The opinion entertained of our absurdity occasions our government to be insulted. On us falls the heavy but necessary charge of an expensive armament.

armament, and if matters proceed to extremities, the same opinion will bring the war to our thresholds. It is incumbent on us to profit of the present occasion, and remove for ever a delusive sentiment, so pernicious in its consequences.

I have no hesitation in pronouncing that our enemy is mistaken in this presumption; he has probably lent a too easy ear to exiles, a class of men whose exaggerated accounts have in every age been proverbial. Vanity and a restless temper first prompted these persons to plot against the sovereign they were placed under: necessity then obliges them to impose on others, and to seek importance abroad, by magnifying the strength of the cause for which they suffer, and the number of its adherents. Such is at this moment the tone of a Newspaper in the pay of France, managed at Paris by persons of the description I allude to.— Some riots in remote parts of our island are there swelled into solemn and serious insurrection, and the names of men put forth as the sainted and venerated martyrs of Irish patriotism, who drew the punishment of the law upon their heads, and who are now as completely out of recollection, pity, or respect as the memories of Sir Phelim O'Neil or Lord Maguire.

If the invaders of private property are doomed to disgrace by custom, sanctioning the law and improving on it, upon what pretence are men to be honoured, who commit the same crime on a scale more extensive? For my part, I cannot see a difference, in point of reputation, between the political

political and any other depredator; the political and any other swindler. The crime of the one involves a greater number in its consequences; he is instigated by a greater variety of malignant or atrocious passions. Does avarice become innocent because it is combined with ambition? Is there dignity in deceit, because it is in a tenfold degree ungenerous? That injury, that violence which the private robber offers to one individual, is inflicted by the revolutionist upon a country. You justly stigmatize the knave, who passes counterfeit notes at a fair, to cheat the credulous peasant of the fruit of his industry; but measure either the magnitude of his fraud, or its consequences with the imposition of him, who presents to that same simpleton, hopes which he knows are not to be realized, and instigates him to acts of outrage, and to a temper of insubordination, yet more pernicious to himself and to his family. No man can at this day miscalculate, no man can mistake the effects of popular proceedings; and it is no more than just to place in a plain and familiar point of view, the conduct of persons who encourage such proceedings. They are not to have the extenuation of an error in judgment, for the experience of the world is before their eyes, and they must know that the overthrow of an established Government is only to be accomplished by removing the restraints of virtue, and making licentiousness predominate; upon no other conditions can the multitude prevail, or indeed be brought into action. If the cause

cause were good, the feeling and the honest heart would shrink from the dreadful means by which the end is to be prosecuted. Revolution, collective misery, indiscriminate ruin, the extinction of calm hopes, the cessation of peaceable pursuits, the harvest of low craft, the obscurity of the good, the meridian glory of the base and vile ; and frivolous indeed is the often-detected and refuted pretence of political improvement.

Drawn as we are to a crisis of great alarm and importance, it is indeed a pleasing task to congratulate the country on the favourable turn of its sentiment. No longer is it incumbent to prove by a comparison between forms of government, that the monarchy we live under is preferable to a republic, or that calculated upon the most sordid grounds of interest, every individual in the land should feel a British more desirable than a French connection. The time was, amidst the delirium of passion and the intoxication of intemperate and conceited projectors, that those topics urged with a warning voice might have been useful ; but the fever has subsided ; the spirit of innovation is laid ; we have seen to what it tends and in what it originates. Doubtless there are individuals in this land (we cannot expect to want our portion of human depravity) who cherish the hope of ascending to a higher degree of fortune by the favour of him who has sworn to rob their country of its precious tranquillity. Doubtless there is a populace credulous and easily excited, upon whom the arts and interference of these ma-

Hignant spirits may produce some effect. But I speak with a confident knowledge of Ireland, when I assert that the inclination of the public mind is to preserve the existing constitution: such is the common voice, and such the general sentiment of all who may be said to constitute a rational and acting public; of all who are above being mere instruments; in short, of the middle and superior classes of every party, place, and designation.

I do not write to warn those men against political delusions from which experience and reflection render them perfectly secure, but to exhort them by a vigorous and united exertion to extinguish the hope of their restless enemies, to save Ireland from the pain even of fruitless aggression, by shewing that their country is not to be attacked with hope, or even with impunity. Whatever is dear and valuable in life, are the objects to animate us; cold neutrality, insipid sluggishness, and barren professions are insufficient for the occasion and inadequate to its importance. If we are compelled to renew the war, the success of that war, and the protection of our country, are the only concerns which can engage the attention of a rational or generous mind: we must relinquish inferior cares, we must forget our differences: an oblivion of parties, of distinctions, even of offences, is the duty which this crisis calls for, and to rally round the throne with a prompt and vigorous unanimity.

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"Save your Country, in mercy to yourselves!" so sang, in the early days of our late commotions, one of those fine spoken speculators, who imagined that our constitution was not declamation-proof, that an established Government was to be blown down by the artillery of words and sentences; this language, in the place from whence I copy it, was an admonitory menace to Parliament, urging that body to adopt some propositions of Democracy. I employ it for more useful purposes, to rally the People, that they may protect their most precious interests; to animate my friends and neighbours, that, employing the means which are obviously in their power, and easily within their reach, they may keep the exterminating sword from the throats of their wives and children. I have no apprehension for the established Government; it may prove fatal to individuals, that Ireland should become the seat of war; the middle ranks may be crushed in the contest; we may be ruined in our properties; outraged or massacred: but the British authority is too firmly fixed in Ireland, too much connected with the essence and well being of Society, to be endangered by such efforts as France can make, and still less is it likely to be shaken by childish combinations within the country.—What are they; what has been the composition of them? The bustling blockheads of a populous City, who feed their self-importance, by whispering at every corner of a street enterprizes far beyond their energy to attempt, and I really believe beyond their ma-

lice to approach seriously. Some intriguers of desperate fortunes; a few weak dupes of democracy; a restless rabble, without any certain view, or fixed principle, and unmanageable to that degree, that no leader can pretend to guide them. I should as soon suppose, that an army of schoolboys, with lath-swords and paper-caps, (the efficient materials of a barring-out against their master) should overpower the magistracy of a regular town, and compel its garrison to surrender, as that any combination of circumstances should render our domestic agitators formidable to established authority. No, let even the scanty treasury of France be at the service of her Irish abettors; they may procure murders to be committed, or houses to be broken open; they may awaken the vigilance of the magistracy. All this constitutes not an affair of state, but merely of police. There is not subordination, concert, or probable uniformity of action to rise beyond the effort of a riot.

Invasion may be more serious in its immediate operation, but as to any thing of permanent impression, it is just as little likely to prove effectual. If France possessed resources for the enterprize, and had an adequate inducement to throw a considerable and well directed force upon this kingdom, the consequence might deserve to be considered as important. But France could never hope to retain Ireland herself; and the establishment of an independent Government, so much beyond the reach of her controul, is not an object that can interest

terest her. Whoever weighs the present means of France, (which in every thing but men, are extremely limited) the difficulties of the enterprize, and the remoteness of the concern, will admit, that France can never turn her attention to this Island, with any other design, than merely to occasion to the British government a temporary annoyance, and embarrassment. For this—for a mere stock-jobbing speculation, our restless enemy will heedlessly disturb our repose, will sport with our feelings, our passions, and our happiness. He will endeavour to re-kindle civil war; he will affect to espouse some faction; perhaps have emissaries in all; for every party, except that which confines its zeal simply to the maintenance of royal authority and public order, assists the designs of Bonaparte: If Irishmen permit themselves again to be deluded by the government of France, it will again deluge their country in blood, without the least prospect of honor or advantage to any portion of them; it will sacrifice them for a consideration so vile, as to alarm the Jews of London, and deter them from providing money upon easy terms for the British government. Simple and egregious dupes, who contribute to forward this design, or who view its progress with indifference, when shall the career of absurdity conclude? Every page of your history records similar instances of delusion, which have misled you to your ruin.

In our political condition there is one weak point; our populace is easily inflamed and capable

ble of gross excesses; and recent circumstances have contributed to render this disposition a more active propensity to licentiousness. With a profligate disregard of the event, as to his wretched instruments, and of the comforts of mankind, overturned and laid waste, for purposes, the most frivolous, our enemy prepares to assail us on this quarter; there, of course, should be exercised activity and vigilance, to resist and disappoint him. Such would be the duty of patriotism, if only our country were exposed to danger: but it becomes the injunction of personal and private prudence when the peril is appropriately our own, and when evils, scarcely to be described, are the penalty of indifference. This consideration will bring home to private men the conviction of a truth, that to preserve their country from turbulence is not exclusively the affair of Government. Every individual to whose temper and condition of life, tranquillity is valuable, is yet more deeply concerned; it is for them to prevent a relaxation of authority, which to them, to the substantial inhabitants of the country, must prove, as heretofore it has proved, peculiarly and essentially disastrous. You cannot preserve your ease, if the danger draws more close, and the indulgence of your passions would, in that case, become ridiculous. Terminate, then, your differences in time; make those exertions, and those sacrifices which you will be obliged to make, under circumstances less favourable. The steps, which might be decisive at this moment, will every day become

become of less avail; and you will, perhaps, at length, have to regret, that they are ineffectual.

Be instructed by those countries on which France has made an impression, and over which she is still enabled, by her continental influence, to maintain an ascendant. The Brabanters were alienated by some political controversies from the House of Austria, their sovereign. They did not oppose the French invasion; but so irksome was the dominion of these deliverers, that before many months elapsed they repented of their facility, and solicited the Emperor to re-assume his authority for their redemption. The Dutch were at variance with their Constitution and with its legal Ministers; France took advantage of the quarrel to introduce her troops, and has since held that state in subjection, amidst the murmurs of an indignant people. The lot of the common wealth is political slavery, and the individual citizens are harassed with pecuniary exactions, at once rigorous and arbitrary. The Swiss divided about forms of government, furnished to France a pretext for interference. The result has been the imposition of a galling yoke, against which they have repeatedly risen in arms, but risen without the effect which their exertion must have inevitably produced, if they had in time been agreed in a sound understanding of their own and of their country's welfare. Even the small island of Malta expended twenty thousand lives, and whatever it could command of treasure, to expel a garrison of Frenchmen. In fact a soldier of that nation never established

established his banner in any country, in which he did not immediately become a tyrant.

Such is the picture of regular subjugation; but not so mild is the destiny prepared for Ireland. No; the policy of Bonaparte consigns us to be torn in pieces by the occasional licentiousness of our own populace. It is contrary to common reason to imagine, that he would destine against Ireland a force sufficient to effect the reduction of a country which he could not hold, and of which the possession, if it were even practicable to obtain and to preserve it, is to France unimportant and uninteresting. I recur to this argument at the hazard of becoming tedious by repetition; but if any of my countrymen still cherish a disposition hostile to their natural government, their error may yield at least to considerations of prudence, when they clearly see how small is the foundation of the hopes, and how weak the reliance to be placed on the promises which the agents of France hold out to them. Taking for our guide the interest of him we deal with, there can be no difficulty in anticipating his conduct. However he may fare, *he will, he must abandon his Irish partisans to destruction.* In one alternative the revolutionary Irish are ruined with their country; in the other, which is the more probable, the country is saved, and they who have been the contemptible tools of a stranger's chicane, are left in the hands of the power they defied, and the justice they insulted. No man who has pretensions

fions to a reasoning faculty, will reduce himself to this option.

If Ireland were subdued, France could not preserve her conquest without a naval force, which she does not possess, and naval exertions to which she is no way competent.

I shall not press the difficulties, which indeed are almost insurmountable, of transporting the number of men which are requisite to make a formidable attack, with artillery and other necessary stores and equipments; this subject has been repeatedly investigated. I will admit the ruler of France to have been successful in landing on the coast of Ireland a body of troops, sufficient to endanger the stability of our government, he must command the sea in order to preserve with that army, such communication as should enable it to act with powerful effect. By rendering Ireland the seat of war, cultivation would be impaired to that degree, that two considerable armies must be in a great measure supplied from abroad. France has few or no ships of war; and we are all fully sensible of the force and prowess of the English navy; the first step, if French troops gained the land of Ireland, would be, so to blockade them, as to prevent communication with their own country; they would by consequence neither be supplied nor recruited. Suppose the rabble of the country to be a means of offence relied upon; the junction of that description would only tend to encrease the perplexities of the attempt, by augmenting the de-

mand for provisions, and diminishing the number of cultivators ; it is then to be presumed that no such auxiliaries would be received, unless, pursuant to the precedent established by General Humbert, they were taken in to do services of drudgery for the invading army. Take into the account the resistance, upon which the invader must calculate with certainty. Whilst the centre of Government continues unshaken, a distant part might for a season be convulsed, but revolution could by no means be brought to perfection. Every man in England possessing one thousand pounds of property, feels that the value of it would be diminished by at least one-half, if Ireland were lost to the empire. To avert that catastrophe the wealth of England, confessedly the most opulent country on earth, would be cheerfully and profusely contributed. The money of England would procure soldiers from Germany, Russia, or any other quarter in which men abound ; and the fleets of England afford a facility of transport. All the mercenaries of the world would offer themselves to dispute our soil with the invaders.

A French force not deriving assistance from home, blockaded by a British fleet, and adequately opposed by a British army, must of necessity waste its strength, and be constrained to surrender ; thus the armies of Egypt and Malta were obliged to yield, and the same circumstances are not likely to controul less powerfully the fate of an expedition against Ireland. A

French

French invading force destined against Ireland has then to encounter, first, the British fleets, which cover the sea to intercept its passage; if that obstacle be surmounted, the difficulties which await him by land are such as must render the attempt abortive. Let us give our enemy the utmost extent of supposition, grant that his fortune has risen superior to so many fatal embarrassments, what is his end? What his recompence? He cannot find the one or the other in the permanent possession or the temporary occupation of Ireland.

The plunder of this island is not such as to allure the rapacity of French generals, not even sufficient to defray the expence of the soldiers. Our wealth consists of the soil, the stock of capitalists invested in the public funds, and the circulating currency which is principally in paper; debentures and bank notes are of no value to him whose object is to destroy the credit and confidence that support them; the land is our sole intrinsic and unalterable wealth; and would a French soldier be gratified if in retribution for his fatigue and danger, it were propos'd to him to cultivate the earth? an employment, which he could have procured and fulfilled on easier terms in his own country.

Then, have the French rulers any inducement or occasion to annex to their present dominion a territory which presents no object for a commercial settlement, which produces no one article not already abundantly supplied from some province

vince of France, and which is only valuable in proportion as industry is assiduously watched and attentively encouraged; if our aspiring neighbour is inclined to promote agriculture and manufacturing pursuits, he will find at home sufficient occupation; but I apprehend he has scarcely leisure to undertake that duty. Thus, if Bonaparte could be successful in the subjugation of Ireland to the utmost extent of his ambitious wishes; the acquisition would not answer any purpose, and is in no degree desirable.

For these reasons, first, the expence and arduousness of the attempt to reduce Ireland, and because the object, if it were successful, is uninteresting, no French government will ever act with serious views, or equip a decisive armament against this country. The display of invasion heretofore made, was no more than sufficient, to feed the hopes of a party which may answer to France the purpose of annoyance, but whose projects it is not a matter of any moment to accomplish. If France took any active concern in the fate of her Irish partizans; if she had grounds to hope, that she would be able to separate Ireland from the British empire; or if she entertained a serious intention of attempting that dismemberment, she would have sent hither the armament which Bonaparte conducted to Egypt. But France proved in that instance the real objects of her political predilection.

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The policy of France with respect to Ireland, resembles in a great measure, the course of conduct which the ancient monarchy practised towards the English Jacobites. Their expectations were kept alive, but no blow was struck in their favour, nor was any effectual assistance afforded to them. Upon that, as upon the present occasion, the French government projected to waste the resources of its rival by domestic irritation, and to impose the necessity of keeping up an expensive establishment, whilst that force was prevented from being directed against France herself. It enters at present into the calculation of the Consul, to alarm the public creditors of England, and to divert the hardy and intrepid peasantry of Ireland, from the fleets and armies of their own Sovereign. He desires no more than short and occasional insurrections: these will, it is true, be quelled in the blood of the insurgents; to us, that is a poor consolation, when our country shall be rendered not worth inhabiting, when property shall be wasted, personal security destroyed, and industry driven from us; and it is a consideration of contemptible indifference to the unfeeling politician to whom we are opposed. He has squandered the blood of his own citizens profusely, on enterprizes apparently insignificant, and would not suffer the life and happiness of every Irishman on earth, to weigh as a feather in the scale against any political intrigue whatsoever. He indeed! the cold-hearted adventurer, accustomed to sport with the sufferings of mankind, and to

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rise upon their miseries ; he bestow a single thought on the good or ill which may befall a remote and uninteresting people ! let none be so chimerical as to suppose it. He makes up his account on the easy terms with which he can perplex the hostile Government of Britain ; this game the consular ruler will endeavour to play, and such of us as do not desire to be scourged by our own follies, will exert ourselves to counteract him.

There are two precedents to which we may resort, to direct our conduct, on the danger with which we are menaced : our preservation, in the war of 1780, may serve to guide us to the measures we ought to pursue, whilst the memorable and calamitous events of 1793 may caution us not to provoke a renewal of them ; on the former occasion there were no partial views, no diversity of public sentiment, we enjoyed internal tranquillity in an unparalleled degree, and the enemy, although with a naval force, not inferior to our own, did not presume to molest us. In 1797 we were engaged in paltry political squabbles, and split into factions ; the rabble rose, and every frigate that sailed from the enemy's coast struck a panic in Ireland. In the American war, a descent on Ireland was projected by France, as an essential means of annoyance, but the state of the country rendered the enterprise too desperate to be attempted ; when the enemy examined our condition, he found every man who possessed property, who cherished an honest hope, or enjoyed

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the sweets of industry, in arms for the public defence, and determined on resistance. Internal disturbance was prevented, crimes were checked, and our public enemy relinquished, in despair, his project. Never at any period was the number of malefactors punished in Ireland, so inconsiderable as during the latter years of the American war; never were the lower people reduced to such habits of regularity and obedience: the good sense of the nation preserved it at that time from the confusion of a civil war. It requires little ingenuity to draw the lesson from this incident, and to contrast it with our fortune in the recent contention.

We may take one counsel at least from persons whom every description of Irishmen have just reason to reprobate: the worthy gentlemen who were the agents of France, in the last war, and who abandoned their adherents when they had involved them as deep in guilt as they were enabled by their means and talents. The pompous and indiscreet Directory of the United Irishmen, declare in their printed examination, that they advised the French to refrain from an attempt on England—for there was no probability of drawing any part of the people to favour or connive at an attack upon its government. There was no prospect of procuring a misunderstanding between the Sovereign and subject, but the temper of Ireland was found more tractable; our facility marked us for the visitation of an invader; by the favour of those kind friends, the seat of hostilities

tilities was to be transferred to us from the continent, and we were to suffer from Mr. O'Connor and his fellow-labourers, all the devastation and all the miseries incidental to a war, civil as well as foreign, whilst the prudence of England was to exempt her from the same misfortune; then, if a cordial co-operation with the Crown be the means of safety, what remains but to follow the example before us, and to draw the advantage of this lesson, from the babbling of those silly traitors, whose unguarded vanity led them to reveal the secrets of their cause, not because they were moved by the mischiefs they had occasioned, not because they repented of the iniquities in which they were plunged, but because they were indulged with the license to preach politics to a committee of parliament.

In truth the calamity of public disturbance can scarcely be visited, with material effect, upon any country, in which the middle classes of men discharge their duty and pursue their interest. They are in a great measure the guardians of civil society, and by a very wise and equitable repartition, the evil which they have neglected to prevent, falls upon their own heads, first, and with the most severe and irremediable ruin. The man of rank flies for refuge where his name will attract commiseration; if the storm passes over, he has lost for a few years, the profits of his lands; in the most unfavourable reverse of continued ill-fortune, he finds a resource in that impulse, which prompts mankind to alleviate the sufferings of fallen greatness;

ness; but who shall extend commiseration to the artisan, when he has lost the opportunity of procuring comforts by the exercise of his industry? To the farmer, whose stock has been spoiled and wasted; to the retailer and the merchant; to all those who depend on a distribution of property, to which perfect calm is indispensable. If all these bodies and individuals have every thing to lose, and nothing to gain, by great changes of power, there is no hesitation to a rational mind; we must preserve the order of things, which is necessary to our existence; upon the fact no question can arise; but, it may be of some advantage to consider by what means this end may be promoted most effectually.

The property of the country, arrayed in its natural gradations, will form an impregnable rampart to secure the peace and happiness of Ireland. Again and again I press the adoption of that salutary precaution. Do not defer the means of preservation, until the enemy is in your ports, or the insurrectionary miscreant at your thresholds. Again and again I call upon my countrymen to discard those frivolous distinctions, which in the holiday times of our former security, we unfortunately adopted. So shall we be undisturbed spectators of the contests of the universe; secure in our remote and insular situation; still more secure in an intrepidity, which never has been questioned, but which lost its effect when good sense ceased to direct its operations.

I am not prepared at this moment to investigate the pretensions of the several parties which have divided Ireland; they are indeed upon the decline; but it is to be expected, that on the present occasion, attempts will be made, to reanimate to them; this is the natural game of the foreign foe, or malignant native, who hopes to profit by our disasters; and who, in the harmony I recommend, will see the extinction of his pretensions. If he can succeed in weakening, by dividing your efforts, he may overpower, and will annihilate you. In these parties, as in every thing of the kind that has existed, there probably is to be found, on every side, a great proportion of passion, spleen, and weakness, and probably also somewhat of justice; let those whom such objects have hitherto interested, consider for a moment, the matter and the season, let them compare their causes of complaint with their experience of redress; let them weigh their supposed grievances, against their actual enjoyments. If any body of men repel the active exertions of their fellow subjects, if they receive them with coldness and distrust, and chill the ardour which they ought to encourage and enliven, however high their pretensions to loyalty, they are not the useful friends to their king and country; the British empire is not at present in that state of vigour, that she can dispense with the co-operating aid of any portion of her people: the defence of Ireland ought not to be undertaken on a contracted scale; rest assured you will require every

every hand ; then do not wait for the moment of danger to receive them, when, perhaps, pique and the artifices of an assiduous enemy, may have made some impression. Those who pride themselves on loyalty, should propagate the principle, by cordially admitting their countrymen amongst them ; by example and a powerful communication of sentiment, they should fortify those, who perhaps may waver, and guard men, whom they may one day want, against the possible danger of seduction.

That simple reason which I lay before the one party, will apply equally, or perhaps with more force, to the direction of the other ; "you are depressed, you have not equality of privileges," say those, who seek to frustrate the loyal coalition of the people. I will not turn from my subject to take up the merits of this discussion. Suppose the fact to be true, is Revolution a remedy ? The reply to that question is to be read in the conduct of your fathers. They had stronger motives of discontent, but they were not revolutionists. In every war from the reign of Queen Anne, France thought to assail Great Britain through this country. She marched troops to the parts of the coast, which appeared to be the best situated for the invasion of Ireland. She had Irish forces in her pay : she offered a prince, who might have been supposed to have partisans, and a popular religion ;—she tried the temper of the country, but she suffered, and she tried in vain. The Roman Catholics of that day, who were ex-

posed to the temptation, felt as I presume, the same description of persons will shew themselves to feel at present, that spirit of attachment to order and established authority, for which their religion claims to be distinguished. They saw, that the animosity which was directed against them, and which prevailed to a very vehement degree in the early part of the century, gradually yielded to time, and to the lenity which the Crown was studious to preserve, encourage and inculcate. As citizens, they adhered to their Country with its imperfections—as subjects, they espoused the cause of their King—as men of sense, they deliberately and wisely chose rather to deserve the protection of a power having a permanent concern in their welfare, than to promote or be subservient to the temporary convenience of strangers. A new æra of peace and happiness seemed to open to their Country, and they refused to interrupt it. To that prudent forbearance the Country is indebted for the prosperity it arrived to. They have drawn back and overpaid themselves the injuries of very cruel civil wars ; civil liberty never was so widely diffused : the protection of law has become steady and uniform, *the political privileges in which every sect and party participate alike, are many ; and they are the most solid and most useful* ; those which are withheld are few, and, in the actual state of property, they are of very little moment. To him who speaks of privileges withheld, I would ask, does the British Constitution present no object

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to animate a proud and patriotic mind, beside the right of legislating? What comparison does the Country, and the condition of even the most unfavoured person in it, at this day, bear with that Country and that condition which their forefathers refused to abandon. If ever human objects deserved to be upheld by great exertions—if ever they deserved to be redeemed by blood, every man in Ireland possesses at this hour, objects of that value and that magnitude. Then, my countrymen, do not suffer the most futile, flimsy, and frivolous delusions, to divert you from the great concern of self-preservation; act in your respective spheres with vigour, permit not any violation of the law, hold no compromise with discontent, afford no refuge to the turbulent; to be cold in the present circumstances, is to be disaffected, and disaffection is the most unmeaning folly, unless when assuming the shape and meaning of hideous vice, it tends directly and actively to revolution.

And are we in Ireland that idiot race, or rather is such the characteristic of any description amongst us, that they shall be attracted by the scare-crow, which deters the universe; that they shall look as a boon to that scourge, which is felt by our neighbours to be the most dreadful visitation? No—no, such is not the accomodating dullness of Ireland,

*Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Pæni  
Nec tam aversus equos Tyria sol jungit ab urbe.*

It is in truth on the part of this kind enemy, who desires to become our protector, a very poor compliment to our common understanding, to suppose

pose that we are to be influenced by such pretences ; that when the cant of revolution has become thread-bare all over the world, we should prove insensible to the benefit of experience, We enjoy the peaceable protection of law, the sober comforts, and increasing advantages of industry ; we will not exchange these benefits for some unknown good, which the tyrant of the world may vouchsafe to confer. We cannot envy the independence of Holland, or the republicanism of Switzerland ; and those amongst us who have most reason to murmur on the subject of religious liberty, enjoy that freedom to a greater extent, than ever was conceded to the subjects of the French government ; indeed, in whatever point of view the state of France is considered, an awful and impressive instruction arises from it ; the disappointments which the revolutionists of that nation experienced, in their expectations both of liberty and affluence, will be the jest of the world, whenever the events of that revolution shall cease to fill the mind with horror and commiseration—and can the imitators expect to fare better than their model ?

The people of France were instigated to rebel against their lawful and hereditary monarch, and from the unfortunate weakness of that prince's administration, they were successful. From that hour to the present time, the country has been the agitated scene of a series of contemptible intrigues, and of the most cruel and desolating carnage and atrocities ; and was this unfortunate people eased of any burdens, no—despotism never was so severe—

vere—taxes never were so high. Those paid in money are exorbitant, but the most grievous imposition, and one to which the old government never resorted, is, that every man is compelled to serve personally in the army, in whatever manner and upon whatever occasion the government think fit to order. With a nominal superiority over Europe, every individual is wretched and more oppressed than the subjects of any other government. A temporary possession of power devolved upon mean adventures, whom no man ever could respect, and a few, very few upstarts, without any thing to recommend them, have obtained fortunes. This was the entire fruit of the French revolution, and such will be the consequence of a revolution, wherever it shall be effected. Ireland deserves, indeed, the imputation of blundering idiotism, if it engage in such a cause with a certainty before its eyes of such disasters, and with an equal certainty, that the ruin in which so many individuals are to be involved, cannot lead to any advantage personal or public, immediate or consequential.

I shall sum my argument in a few points, which have, I apprehend, been satisfactorily proved in the course of this little essay.

That France is not sufficiently interested in the subjugation of Ireland, to make any material effort for that purpose.

That France is as little concerned to establish an independent government in Ireland, which, following the example of America, and the dictates of that interest, suggested by its natural position, might

might the very next day after its independence had been recognised, abandon the connexion with France, and cultivate an intercourse with Great Britain.

That the malcontents of Ireland never can succeed without foreign assistance in any effort to displace the government; that such foreign succour would be very difficult to be given, and is in no wise likely to be obtained.

That the Irish, who are seduced into these designs, are mere dupes, whose lives and toil France squanders without care or concern—that their leaders or seducers are despicable adventurers, making a profit to themselves from the blood of the silly people whom they influence, and that that people are doing the business of France, and favouring its projects, at the price of immense mischief to their country and themselves, a mischief which there is nothing to compensate, and which is in truth not to be compensated.

That exclusive of the atrocious wickedness of the enterprise, the greatest folly any man can commit, is to act against the order and authority established in this kingdom, and next in the degree of eminent and stupid simplicity, is the conduct of those who do not exert all human means to reclaim the deluded, and to punish and resist the villains who mislead them.

I have fully insisted on the necessity of a very general appearance in arms; when that populace, so easily prompted, and so easily imposed on, perceive in every vicinity, a power sufficient to baffle

baffle their enterprise—they will necessarily be kept in awe, and may be withdrawn from the desperate courses they seem at present disposed to engage in ; but let me in an eminent degree press the duty of example, and let me press it especially on those, whose habits of life or situation draw them closely in contact with the lower people. Never shall we know repose, whilst the turbulence of the multitude seems to derive sympathy or compassion, from men whose opinions are recommended by their success in life or situation. I do not advert to persons of elevated rank and education, their conduct is important ; but for the present, at least, it is usually correct. The salvation of Ireland depends upon those in a condition somewhat removed from the common people—when these are vigilant to repress offences, and ready to punish the offenders—when they no longer hesitate to enforce the laws, and assist the civil magistrate, then, and not till then, shall the country be secure, and all its members participate in the advantage. It is not wise to alienate this class of citizens from the state, and as little wise in them to be easily susceptible of provocation. This is the language of a friend to every part and description of the Irish people, and I trust it will be found by every reasonable and reflecting person, to be the just, the genuine, and the unbiassed dictates of

COMMON SENSE.

## POSTSCRIPT.

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I HAVE asserted (page 15) that, if Ireland became the seat of war, the country would be found unequal to the support of the hostile armies, and that either, if it could not calculate with certainty on receiving supplies from abroad, must moulder away, and be obliged to yield almost without contest. Ireland is a country of resources totally artificial, it could not be cultivated, subject to the interruption of two numerous military bodies, moving from place to place, experiencing and inflicting the vicissitudes of warfare ; I shall appeal to history to corroborate the assertion.

In the war against the earl of Desmond, that chief was in possession of Munster, and had the population of the province at his disposal ; no considerable force was ever sent against him, nor did he ever sustain a regular defeat ; but the province which was the scene of war, was desolated to that degree, that his followers could not subsist ; they disbanded, their chief became a fugitive in the woods, was taken and beheaded without resistance.

O'Neil

O'Neil was an able man, and eminently popular, he was acknowledged as a prince by foreign states, and had numerous bodies of men at his disposal; he was never encountered by the English, unless in inconsiderable skirmishes; he, nevertheless, was obliged to yield, was glad to receive a pardon; and, returning to the condition of a subject, made a display of very great and abject contrition.

In the war which commenced 1641, the great duke of Ormond commanded the English or royal army. In every engagement he was victorious,\* he was a man of great talents for command; of considerable resources in the country, extremely devoted to his cause; popular and indefatigable; but the parliament would not support him, and the King was unable. He was obliged in the midst of his victories to dissolve the conquering army, and abandon his government. The confederates experienced little or no opposition, but hostilities had now been so long continued, and so very much did the country feel the effects of them, that when Cromwell landed, it was found impossible to collect an army to oppose him. The Irish were perfectly aware that Cromwell brought over the most ruthless determination to destroy them, but their strength, not recruited from abroad, had been completely exhausted:

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\* The battle of Rathmines, the only one in which the Duke was unsuccessful, was not fought until after his return to Ireland.

they solicited the aid of foreign princes, and unable to procure that relief, they made no resistance to their exterminator. Cromwell marched unmolested over the island, executing whom he thought proper, and offering to those inhabitants whom he spared, every indignity which the wantonness of success suggested to his soldiers. The account of Cromwell's campaign in Ireland, given in Lord Castlehaven's Memoirs, and in Carte's Life of the Duke of Ormond, fully prove, that the career of that general would have terminated ingloriously in Ireland, if there had been any possibility of supplying or subsisting a defensive army. The accounts of the desolation occasioned by king William's war, are equally conclusive. The Irish were impatient of controul, and very badly commanded; they made no great stand in the field, yet the havoc occasioned by the marches of two armies, was not for a long time recovered. History records a period, when the market of Dublin was supplied with meat from Holyhead and the ports adjacent.

Now to suppose that the British empire would permit Ireland to be dismembered from it, without a very serious struggle, is something little short of insanity; and if the struggle take place, whichever way it may determine, an inevitable consequence is desolation. If there be a single reasoning man engaged in this present atrocious confederacy against established order, let him reply to me; what is the vice in our political system that requires to be expiated by a civil war, which the country

country is unable to bear, and which necessarily must lead to the disasters I have stated?

Events have taken place within a few years back, which must have brought under the review of a reflecting mind, every question that arises from the relation of Great Britain and Ireland. A man whose thoughts are impressed with a sense of right, can with difficulty draw his senses to contemplate the matter of separation. What! are not 600 years sufficient to form an indissoluble compact? The Union of England with Scotland has not existed above one-third of that period—Wales has been long since added to the crown, and the combination of the several parts of England under one head is only about 200 years more ancient. Subsequent to the annexation of Ireland to the British Crown, the several provinces of France and Spain have been drawn together. There is in fact not a sovereign in Europe whose dominions are held together by a prescription of equal antiquity with the rights of the crown in Ireland; within this country there are not five landed estates, whose title of every nature is not subsequent to the submission of Ireland to the throne his Majesty enjoys. There is, perhaps, not a man in the island, whose descent is not from some description or other of English settlers. I am at a loss to determine how the feelings of the human heart are to be moved, if these considerations do not determine every man in the land, to make a common cause with his King and with his fellow subjects in the present contest.

The rights of the crown are prior to the foundation of any inheritance in the land. If these rights be capriciously assailed, what is the protection of private property? Did your ancestor derive immediately from the crown? but that title is now impeached, and subjected to the power, or, as it stiles itself, the will or convenience of the people. The title of the grantee cannot be valid, unless that of the grantor be held sacred. If you have acquired by purchase, you have taken subject to the original disabilities of the seller. The same rule holds, with respect to every derivative interest in the country. If English dominion were usurpation, so were English grants, and neither do families of English or Irish origin hold by any other. I admit these consequences are very ridiculous, but they are exactly what flow from setting up any Irish claim against the established monarchy. To declare every gentleman's tenure invalid, or even every poor man's lease, is just as plausible in argument, and surely to the actors, more convenient in fact, than to examine into the rights of the established monarchy in Ireland.

The direct conclusion from this wicked nonsense would be, that we are to revert to the Brehon law, and to the savage condition of the country 600 years back, and to abolish civilization, on a charge, that some reprehensible circumstances took place in its progress.

A man must know nothing of the state of Europe, who can suppose that Ireland is qualified, if Great Britain were even madly disposed to acquiesce,

aquiesce, to assume the situation of an independent country;—could it cope with the established power of France, or with the growing power of Russia? Our vicinity to Great Britain, renders combination with her most easy, and hostility most inconvenient. If I were not bound by the duty of a subject—if Ireland were actually an independent state—if law or honour permitted me any option, thus should I reason: I would say, “that it is not desirable to be the subject of a small state, which is exposed by its feebleness to the insolence and to the depredations of the great and overbearing powers which have been formed in Europe. Combined with Britain, the Irish may contribute to controul the ambition of France; we may form part of a powerful state, and every individual has the protection of that condition, a protection in the actual circumstances of the world, extremely essential. If the power of England were diminished by the alienation of this island, we must necessary fall under the controul of France, although we were even permitted to hold the appearance of a nominal independence. As England could ill bear the subtraction of Ireland, from the common stock of imperial energy, and as our strength bears some proportion to that of Great Britain, but none to that of France, we are certain to procure a greater degree of respect from the former than the latter, and with that state we are equally certain to live more upon a footing of equality, than with any power possessed

“ possessed of opulent and continental dominions.  
“ Connected with France, we should even in the  
“ most peaceable state of things, be teased with  
“ unremitting jealousy and unsuccessful faction ;  
“ for we are too remote to be left at our own dis-  
“ cretion, and yet sufficiently contiguous, if the  
“ dominion were once established, to be easily  
“ overpowered, on any effort to get rid of it.  
“ England must cultivate the affections and im-  
“ prove the resources of this island, as a valuable  
“ and necessary accession to her strength ; but  
“ we should be trampled under foot by France,  
“ in the event of a junction with her, because  
“ she does not stand in need of our assistance.”

Upon this view of the interests of my country, if it were divided from Great Britain, I should, as an Irishman, point to the policy of forming the most close, intimate, and indissoluble connexion ; but being blessed with the actual existence of that connexion, I cling to it with my last effort, with my fondest hope, I follow it with my most fervent benediction, as the system best calculated to promote the opulence and happiness of my country ; and to preserve its internal and external strength—its internal and external liberty.