

CONSIDERATIONS

UPON THE STATE OF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

IN THE YEAR MDCCXCIX.

IRELAND.

“ Omnem equidem terram, sceptris quæ libera nostris
“ Diffidet, externam reor, & sic dicere divos.”

VIRG.

DUBLIN: .

PRINTED FOR J. MILLIKEN, No. 32, GRAFTON-STREET.

1799.

CONSIDERATIONS

UPON THE STATE OF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

IN THE YEAR MDCCLXIX.

IRVING AND

Printed and Sold by J. MILLIKEN, No. 22, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR J. MILLIKEN, No. 22, GRAFTON STREET.

1769

Houses of the Oireachtas

(2)

in a public discussion of them in the parti-
cular light in which they have been
brought to my view. The peculiar manner in
which the offer of Union on the part of Great
Britain has been received by the House of
Commons in Ireland, and the delicacy that
constantly occurs in a free examination of the
subject upon the side of the water, have de-
termined me to publish the following

ADVERTISEMENT.

ABOUT the middle of last year I had prepared for the press some reflexions upon the state of Ireland, which at that time appeared to me very little known, or very ill understood in the public of this country,

Upon the first intimation of the project of a LEGISLATIVE UNION, I paused upon this design, the utility of which became in a considerable degree superseded by it; and I turned my attention in silence to the progress and success of that great measure, to which it was impossible not to foresee some of the principal obstacles and motives of opposition. But it is but very lately that I perceived any advantage

in a public discussion of them, in the particular light in which they presented themselves to my view. The peculiar manner in which the offer of Union on the part of Great Britain has been received by the House of Commons in Ireland, and the delicacy that constantly occurs in a free examination of the subject upon this side of the water, have determined me to make public the following Considerations. The truth of them, I flatter myself, will be felt where it is most useful: though, perhaps, under the present circumstances, it could not so properly or so strongly be insisted upon in any public or responsible quarter, as from the calm and privacy of the closet.

CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

WHEN the great question, which is the subject of the present Considerations, was first whispered in the world, it seemed to strike upon the minds of men with a peculiar mixture of anxiety and delight, till it subsided for a time in a general suspense and astonishment.

But this situation of the public sentiment did not arise, as I apprehend, from the novelty or the magnitude of the measure, nor from any presumption of a just opposition or rational dislike on the part of Ireland, to fo

happy and so glorious a termination as it held out to her crimes, her sufferings, and her dangers.

The constant and earnest declarations of the most ostensible persons in that kingdom, of the persons highest in situation and highest in popularity, entirely forbade and excluded that apprehension. They had loudly and repeatedly announced, "That things could not remain upon their present establishment; that commercial jealousy was roused; that it would increase with two independent Legislatures; that the seeds of separation were sown in the final settlement of 1782; that separation of interests would bring on separation of CONNEXION." The public opinion had kept in even tenor with the warnings of Irish statesmen, and the sense of practical evils, the dreadful course and career of calamities which every post divulged, and which advanced and expanded with progressive force
and

and swiftness, till they bore off happiness, and peace, and virtue, from that devoted land, had prepared the public from any measure of vigour and authority, as they had legitimated every act of vigilance and power.

Still less could the novelty of the proposal have excited surprize. It had been specifically recommended, in times comparatively fortunate, by the ablest statesmen, and political authorities, upon both sides of the water: and in one period of her history it had been solicited by Ireland herself. But it was the peculiar character and quality of the remedy, compared with the excess and virulence of the evil; it was the novelty, not of the thing, but of the circumstances to which it was adapted, and the greatness, not of the measure, but of the mind which dictated it, that created suspence and astonishment.

That the local misgovernment or misfortunes of Ireland, should, instead of forfeitures

tures and penalties, be made to operate to her advantage and glory; that instead of a perpetual military government, and a trembling dependence upon the crown of England for a daily and precarious existence, the parliament of Dublin should be courted to take its seat in the capital of the empire, and mix and blend with the general representation; that the Catholic should be invited to a gradual participation of civil and political equality, and this in the midst of the crimes of one and the weakness of the other, was justly entitled to admiration and applause—but that which transcendently filled and delighted the mind of every good and honourable person, was the dignified and conscientious purity of the policy of Great Britain, opposed to the perfidious practice and immorality of her enemies. After so many years of a war, in which they had respected no right, no law, nor principle of humanity; in which the repose and virtues, the enjoyments and endearments of social life were the ob-
jects

jects of hostility, and success but a new and advanced point of attack : in which she had seen her people exposed to every artifice of cool and cruel malignity ; debauched, misled, perverted ; disciplined in revolts, and familiarized with massacres ; after she had seen her state, during seven years, assailed and mined by force and fraud, and the balance of Europe overthrown by violence and treachery ; What was the measure of her retaliation and revenge ? what was her ambition, and where did she seek her relative aggrandizement ? She turned her eyes not to conquests and equivalents, but to internal improvement, to the discovery and advancement of her own means and resources, to the amelioration of her own condition, to the unity and consolidation of her own strength, to her own defence, prosperity, and power. In the midst of warfare she cultivated the arts of peace : she repaired her own errors, recalled her people from seductions, and brought her distant

tant provinces under a nearer influence and inspection; she extended her arms to every part of her dominions, and pressed her extremest dependencies to her bosom, while she girt the mighty Whole together in one compressing chain, one common bond of interest, affection, and security.

Behold her equivalent! contemplate this augmentation of her power and greatness! examine her policy! probe her ambition to the quick!—mark if she writhes or shrinks, if there be any tumour, or any foulness there! while the pretended deliverers of mankind prolong their polluted reign, and found their disastrous hopes in the wounds and corruptions of humanity, in the disease and dissolution of society itself!

When men could withdraw their eyes from this object of honest exultation; and had turned their thought to the critical and dif-

dispassionate discussion of the subject itself, it seemed that the great measure of an incorporate Union between the two countries had naturally resolved itself on the first aspect into these important questions, by the solution of which, its fate would be decided—

“ Whether the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland were competent to treat for their constituents?” and “ whether the treaty proposed, were beneficial to the contracting parties?” But it appears to have been considered by the House of Commons in Ireland in another and a very different point of view besides that of its utility, and this of their own competency and right to decide it. In that assembly, it did not lie between the advantages and relative interests of the two countries in the Union, which seemed virtually to be acknowledged, but it was supposed to contain something humiliating to the pride and dignity of Ireland. It was not considered as an injury which England designed, but

an insult which she offered to a great and independent nation. With that feeling the House very naturally refused to entertain it for a moment. With a just and becoming spirit they rejected the discussion at once; though by a measure so precipitate and unusual, they doubtless incurred some imputation of disrespect to the crown, and of ingratitude to the parent-country.

It is necessary that this point should be clearly and distinctly understood; and necessary to ascertain whether the feelings of the House of Commons were as just and proper as their conduct undoubtedly was while they were governed by them. For it would be ungenerous to suspect of that Assembly, that they would have rejected with scorn, and refused to discuss altogether, a great national measure recommended by their sovereign, unless they had thought it on the one hand to imply some insult and degradation to the
 nation

nation they represent, and on the other to be so evidently advantageous to it, in an interested point of view, as to expose the people to the temptation and danger of overlooking the affront in the utility of the offer. Upon any other supposition it is impossible to account for so wide a departure from the established rules and practice of a deliberating Assembly as the moving a previous question upon a message from the throne, and shutting the discussion *in limine* upon a subject of the very highest moment that ever came before them. For to take it the other way: if the offer was supposed to be disadvantageous to Ireland, or unpopular to a great extent in the country, then it would have come certainly to be rejected upon disclosure and discussion; and that, with the double infamy and stigma deserved both by the affront and the injury; and the House of Commons of Ireland could have had no motive for depriving the British minister of the full mass of mortification that awaited him.

In that manner the same Assembly had acted in 1785 upon the occasion of the commercial propositions. They said that England sold them commerce for constitution, and bartered her trade for their independence. This measure, therefore, after full and long debates, and minute investigation and publicity, they refused with scorn, to the confusion and disappointment of its projector. But upon the present proposition they were not so sure of the sense and high spirit of the public. They were fearful lest the benefits proposed by the union should extinguish all sense of the affront, and they wisely and honestly withheld the temptation from the people.—I cannot but applaud the spirit and prudence of the House as one who would never expose the people to such a danger and temptation: as one who would not put it in their power to decide amiss, nor comply with them if they did: as one who thinks the obsequiousness of a government towards their fugitive and mistaken

taken will, a species of the very worst cowardice and treason, and the will of the people no excuse for the compliance of a government in any disastrous, or dishonourable, or dangerous measure.

But while I applaud the conduct of the Irish House of Commons under the impression which governed them, I entertain very considerable doubts whether those impressions were natural and just; and I think it very important to ascertain that point, because it is from that alone, that it is possible to combine or foresee the fate of the proposal. If these impressions were founded in right reason, there is no doubt but that that Assembly will persevere in the course they have taken; but if they were the momentary effects of warmth and national irritability, we may expect from their good sense and their virtue, such a temperament, as will at least admit
the

the discussion, and collect the public sentiment with regard to it.

It seems to me in the first place, that some of the prejudices which exist in Ireland against the incorporation, are real and honest prejudices ; and that we may have contributed to create them ourselves by fatal gifts, and flattering appellations. Whoever has attended to the course of public affairs and public opinion, must have found occasion to remark the influence of a word or a phrase upon the minds of men ; and if we had from mistaken tenderness to Ireland permitted lofty or endearing sounds to charm her ear from the true knowledge of her state, we should doubtless partake whatever blame were due to the delusion. If we had granted independence to the most wretched, ill-governed, and dependent colony upon the surface of the globe ; if we had dignified with the name of Sister-kingdom a settlement of English who had
neither

neither subdued nor gained the country they inhabited: nor won by arms, nor tamed by wisdom and generosity the barbarous natives of the soil; should we be totally exempt from the folly or the fault of the planter whose ideas we had bewildered and confused? It is impossible, without pity for the human mind, to consider the abuse of words and the mischiefs that result from it. From this perversion and uncertainty, sometimes weak, and sometimes malicious, flow as from their source those horrors which appear more glaring from their folly: and crimes, whose worst and most atrocious character is their mixture of absurdity and guilt. While we have lavished these seducing names upon our colony, and soothed her into the fond belief of imperial greatness and equality, what are the kind and grateful epithets, what the fond and endearing blandishments she pays us in return? The Sister-kingdom calls us "Foreigners," and the independent state makes a mighty merit of her preference for "British connexion." Foreign-
ers

ers and Connexion ! But we deserve no better for we began the folly, and are the first deceivers. Foreigners and Connexion ! Are we not their parent ? Are they not our own blood ? Are they not governed by our laws ? Are they not defended by our sword ? Are they not maintained in their power, in their religion, in their constitution, in their lands, by the protecting arm and parental vigilance of England.

To such an extent of prejudice does this fatal ambiguity or perversion of terms prevail in whatever regards this deluded colony, that it is become impossible (unless we are merely speaking geographically) to know what is meant by the word Ireland itself. We have occasion for explanation or definitions at every turn. Sometimes it is the great majority of the people, sometimes it is the settler ; now it is the great population of the natives in arms, and now the independent colony trembling at its disparity ; here it is the representative of a
handful

handful of protestants; there the directory, and the catholic republic. Out of this confusion it is indispensable to collect some order, and to be able to convey and express our meaning in distinct and positive language. I am unwilling to give offence any where, and am far from intending it; but I do not expect to probe these long and ulcerous sores without giving pain; if I could, the gangrene has taken place, and there is no remedy but amputation.

It is painful, no doubt, to withdraw the eye from these ambitious dreams of federal crowns and independent senates, to send back through the ivory portal these flattering images of power and greatness, and present the bloody and disgusting mirror of realities. But is it my fault if the British colony in Ireland cannot read its state, or recollect its origin, or perceive its dangers? Am I to blame, if it sleeps on the brink of ruin, or for awakening it?

D

Would

Would God we lived in times when we might slumber on in delightful or tranquil visions, when we might rock ourselves to rest with innocent flatteries and delusions. We have been roused with a mighty peal, and have armed by the flashes of contiguous conflagrations. But if we cannot see the avenging power that overturns our gates, and the trident that shakes our foundations, we shall neither save our religion, nor our parents, nor our children; and exchange at best our destiny for an unprofitable and inglorious revenge!

The history of the Irish nation begins with the conquest of Ireland. All that precede is false or doubtful, obscure or utterly unknown, a proverbial fable, forged to insult the sense and outrage the credulity of mankind. All useful knowledge of it is coeval with English "connexion." It is true this connexion was parentage with the colony and conquest with the natives. Hence followed
a double

a double duty, of which it is to be for ever lamented that we have not acquitted ourselves with equal justice ; for conquest brings duties with it as well as colonization. We owed protection and encouragement to our settler, but instruction and the gradual amelioration of his condition to the native. Such in the beginning, after Henry the second accepted the perjurable fealty of Ireland, and received the whole island into homage as a fief of his crown, was the pious policy of the time. The conversion of her barbarous hordes to christianity, the restriction and subordination of her savage aristocracy of Sheiks and Beys, were the benefits that great prince conferred upon the Irish. If in successive periods the progress of civilisation has not kept pace with the advancement of the parent country, I think it more especially to be attributed to the great impolicy of Henry the Eighth at the reformation, when the feuds of religious difference became superadded to

the inextinguishable quarrel, and rendered the state of the conquered and the settler more hostile and rancorous than in the moment of usurpation. If the sovereigns between him and his great predecessor are justly chargeable with omission in neglecting the civilization or incorporation of the natives, the colony itself from that time is to be accused of that exclusive and ungenerous policy which has depressed and degraded the human character itself in the form of the native Irish; and if England is to be condemned, as she justly may be, it is for her criminal indulgence to her colony, and her inactivity and inattention to the natives who were entitled to her protection.

But it is the more to be lamented that the crown of England should have omitted to accomplish or attempt the incorporation of Ireland before or at the period of the reformation: because by that event it became in a great measure

measure impossible for the British colony itself to effect any thing favourable to the native, or to work with sincerity for his improvement, and the advancement of his condition. They were placed at a wider distance; new barriers had sprung up between them; and while the see of Rome, which had granted Ireland to a pious prince, never ceased to contest it with his heretic successors, the colony had new dangers to provide against, or new injuries to revenge.

I am not preparing to shew the progress of these natural and religious dissensions, too legible in the worst pages of our history, but it is an object of the greatest consequence to consider it with unbiaſſed meditation, in order to determine this important question with fidelity and precision, “Whether it be possible for the British colony to ameliorate the condition of the natives?” James the first seems, of all our princes, to be entitled to commendation

ation for his salutary efforts in that amiable work, but the liberality of succeeding times has been constantly overpowered and defeated by the obstacles I have related.

It is certainly a matter very little to our honour in any point of view, that after a period of six hundred years so little progress should have been made in the conciliation of the minds of the Irish, in the amelioration of their condition, or in their fusion and intermixture with the colony. It cannot be without our own fault and reproach, that we have not effectually interfered in their favour, and compelled our plantation to a more just and enlightened policy with regard to them; and the accumulated rancour of so many centuries, now burst at last upon their heads, will be a dreadful caution to other conquerors, how long they retain these odious distinctions, and defer the complete union and incorporation of their acquisitions.

It

It is the practice of our enemies to reproach this country with every evil and every accident that has ever befallen Ireland. But if ever their accusations had been just, or they had sought for any truth or any argument to support them, they would have reproached us for our long delay, protraction and omission, of this very measure of union which we are now accused by some of our colonists of presenting premature and untimely to their independent parliament; it is our cruel indifference to the instruction and well-being of the native, and our obsequious tendernefs to the settler; it is, that the "final settlement" of Ireland has been deferred through so many reigns; that we are *now* attempting that which ought to have been perfected by every prince, at least since the reformation. It is that we have not incorporated; that we have not done our duty by the subjects we acquired; that we have suffered them to preserve the memory of an original wrong, and to remain in a state of igno-

ignorance, rudeness and barbarism, worse in its effects, and more degrading in its nature, than that in which our fathers found them six centuries before.

If we look to any part of the continent which has been conquered, inherited or acquired by any other state, we shall not find the same impolicy, and I must add, the same cruelty as our own; for though I will never vindicate or advise measures of violence and injustice, I have no scruple to say that there is no violence more cruel than neglect, and no injustice equal to the cold continuance of the miseries we found. Not that the measures we have pursued in Ireland have been always free from active violence and excesses; both Cromwell and William the Third made cruel retaliations upon the rebellious native, and exacted grievous forfeitures and confiscations. If we were reproached for these deeds of theirs by the catholic and the attainted

tainted

tainted only, I would not complain of our accuser, I would ask alone if a century of kindness, cannot efface our fathers' severity? But when the grantees of Cromwell and the King, when the children of their soldiers, and the heirs of their rapacity reproach us with their own gains, when they accuse us of their own crime, and array the spoil and plunder they have seized, amongst the articles of our impeachment, I know not, I confess, with what temper to answer them, whether with scorn, or argument: nor whether their gross absurdity proceeds from the confusion of their own understandings, or their contempt for our's? But let the crimes of centuries be blazoned out; let the annals of rancour and revenge be ransacked, and the avarice and cruelty of these conquerors be dressed in all the colours of popular exaggeration, still I think their crime of omission was greater than their crime of commission, and their cruelty in

E

not

not uniting Ireland, worse than their cruelty of confiscation. Cromwell, it is well known, would have united Holland, so that the policy could not have been unknown to him; and William had that occasion and opportunity which have occurred after an hundred years, with the same crimes, and wickeder rebellions. Another century has found the same feuds, the same massacres, and the same untamed ferocity, the same unreclaimed barbarity in the Irish people; and it has fortunately found the same power and fortune of the British arms defending their conquest, and maintaining their colony. What is the result of all this experience, what the wisdom we may learn in this dreadful school?

Shall we suffer these evils to remain, and thrive, and spring up again? or lay the axe to the vivacious root which we have lopped so often, and to such little purpose? Shall we
profit

profit by the cruel lessons of adversity, or persevere in this career of evils to new massacres and imperishable rebellions? Shall we perform that which we condemn every sovereign and every administration for neglecting, or imitate their neglect in spite of our condemnation, and in spite of the unutterable calamities that stream from it.

That the native Irish should retain their hostility, appears to me, I confess, under the circumstances I have set down, more unwise than unnatural. That, remaining in the state almost of their barbarous ancestors, they should retain their passions, and commit their excesses;—that they should remember injuries which have never been effaced, and make continual claim upon lands from which they have been dispossessed by usurpers who have extinguished their crime by no benefits, no assimilation, no adoption—that they should complain of non-resident landlords, and a chain of leases between the owner and
the

the tenant of the soil;—that they should repine at paying taxes to a colony they hate, and tithes to a clergy they abhor—and finally, that fore with real wrongs, and intoxicated with visions of liberty; deceived by foreign gold, and the artifices of domestic treason, they should be goaded or guided into rebellion—I confess it appears to me both as natural and as imprudent as the empire of the passions usually is found to be. But when I hear the colony itself complain of our yoke, and accuse us of oppressions—when I hear the very persons, guilty of all these wrongs, or for whose sake they have been perpetrated, impeach us with their own crimes, and of our connivance, I protest I am at a loss whether to attribute it to the supposed confusion of their ideas, or to the perversity of their heart. I have more indulgence for the catholic conspirator, than for the protestant complaint; his principle is to be traced in the heart of man, and his motives lie deep in the very nature of his being. I know not
of

of any calamity or danger that has reached or threatened England, where his conduct has not been uniform and direct. Has there been a disputed title, a pretender to the crown, a pseudo-prince, or a rebellion? he has joined them all, as so many occasions to assert his right, and throw off the tyranny of England. He is the ally of Perkin Warbeck, and of James the second. From Henry the seventh to the king's illness, he has watched his opportunity of emancipation and revenge. It is *now* only that his conduct is become absurd, when England offers union, and as the consequence of it, emancipation: now that she has at length adopted that liberal and enlightened policy which will place him upon the same footing as her colony, and admit him to the full participation of the blessings of her imperial, free, and equal constitution. It is wiser, indeed, to become a Briton, than to nourish an eternal and unprofitable hostility. It is wiser to be admitted into the sovereignty, than to make war upon it. To unite, is wiser than

than to tear open early wounds, and persevere in interminable quarrels.

But if he prefers the dictates of his passions; if he is the dupe of priests, of foreigners, of political reformers, of parties and promisers; if it requires still other lessons of calamity and fresh ablutions of blood to efface these revengeful hopes, and prepare a happier and more pious choice, I commiserate his error, and feel indulgence for the powerful movement of his soul; I cherish, too, the flattering hope that it is the last contest, and that the issue of it will effect this very union, the necessity of which it will establish, though too late for his own happiness and the present salvation of his country.

From this miserable and preponderant part of Ireland, I turn to that portion of it descended from our own loins, and nourished with our own blood and treasure: to that portion which is enthroned upon the necks of the

great

great population of the country, and upheld in its dangerous pre-eminence by the power of the parent state;—to that portion, our own grantees and colonists, who have forgotten their birth, and denied their name; who disown the hand that enfeoffed them, and still guard their title; which planted them on the soil, and maintains them there; which gave them power, and now gives them impunity. I turn to that portion of Ireland which must stand or fall with us in spite of its dreams of independence, which is united in spite of forms, and identified in defiance of parchments; which if our arm be withdrawn but a moment, will be trampled into the ground it usurps, and which thinks it an indignity to be incorporated into our state, and admitted to our empire.

We have read of a plant, the produce of I know not what fabulous island, the property of whose fruit it was to take away all memory of the native country, all gratitude, regret
and

and desire of it. But though our colony should have fed on it to fullness, I think they might trace their origin in the hatred and antipathy of the natives, in their own sufferings and dangers. I think they might read it in characters of their own blood, and by the light of their own conflagrations, I think the savage who tortures their cattle, who cuts down their woods, who besieges their houses, who waylays their steward and their proctor, who assassinate their witnesses and their magistrates; I think he tells them at every step that they are ENGLISH—I think the peasant who brings his writ of right in arms against their property, tells them they are ENGLISH—I think in every crime, and every calamity, they are forbidden to forget that they are ENGLISH.

Had our colony been prosperous and secure—had it grown and flourished under our shade till it were capable of empire and independence—could Mr. Foster or Mr. Grattan tell

tell us us that “ the natives are subdued by their
 “ kindness, and delighted with their yoke; that
 “ the whole country is united and incorporated
 “ within itself!— Could they say, we are in fact
 “ independent of you and all the world— we
 “ are independent of all farther support and
 “ assistance from you, we dread no rebellion,
 “ we fear no army of “ avengers,” we rule in
 “ peace, we reside upon our lands, where we
 “ bless and instruct our faithful tenantry; we
 “ watch their education, we dispel their igno-
 “ norance, we command their affections by the
 “ benefits we confer—to your armed empire
 “ we have substituted the reign of gratitude;
 “ our state is adult and firm; we exist by our
 “ own industry, by our own means and efforts,
 “ and require no future aid or interference—
 “ why do you come to interrupt our tranquil-
 “ lity? to break our repose, to disturb our per-
 “ fect happiness? have we invoked your assist-
 “ ance? have we called out to you? have we con-
 “ fessed any weakness or disorder in our state?
 “ have the native revolted? are we invaded by

F

“ foreign-

“foreigners?”—Had this been the case, and I could have heard a language like this, I have not so read the lesson of America that I should now be astonished or affected by them: I have not so studied the history of ungrateful prosperity, that I should now be surpris'd at the power of the example and the repetition of the crime. But that the stern rugged nurse should breathe the same poisonous counsels as the painted bawd; that wholesome Adversity and flattering Success should give the same treacherous advice,—I confess it confounds the very faculties and uses of the mind.

Had our Irish colony been as happy and prosperous as our American—had she enjoyed the same good fortune, and become as capable of independence, I still do not see that with the experience of that event, it would have been wise and desirable for her to have travelled in the same steps; and I think it very material to dwell a little upon this observation,

tion, because there can be no manner of doubt but that this single act of national ingratitude, has proved the signal of the dissolution of the civilized world, that it has shaken every state and every form of government to its centre, and loosened the foundations of society itself. Unhappy England! There was no Cordelia amongst all her daughters; Regan turned her from the door to the rude pelting of the pitiless storm, and Gonerill denies her hundred knights.

But it is not England that it is necessary to consider; she has triumphed, hitherto, over all her enemies and all her traitors, and over the worst of all her thankless children. When I look to America, I distinguish the crime but not its utility; I see every thing but the profit of ingratitude. Is she happier, or greater, since she ceased to be a part of Britain? Are her taxes lighter? Is her commerce protected better? Is her government more respected or secure? While she belonged to England,

what stranger dared oppress her? Who plundered her merchants, or insulted her flag, or suborned her people? What Frenchman dictated to her councils? What impositions did she lay upon her land? What disunion—what dissolution threatened her? Did she live or linger then by the care of a declining hand? Did the frail tenure of an old man's life sustain and compress her provinces together? Did she hold the empire not by her strength, but the approach of her weakness, and the expectation of a better opportunity to divide and dismember her?—Oh, but she is independent! she enjoys the sovereign rights and supreme arbitrement of empire; she sends ambassadors; she levies armies; she prepares fleets, and decides on peace and war. For these advantages, he is a feeble statesman indeed, who will not pardon a little ambition, and a little ingratitude. Prove then that these are advantages. I see her ambassadors insulted or unheard, expelled or ransomed; I see taxes raised to pay forces, but they are to constrain her own revolts:

to

to defeat, not the armies, but the plots of foreigners. I see fleets, but she dares not employ them. I see taxes and arms, but neither war nor peace. I see treaties, but it is with England, whom she abandoned and abjured. I see that tutulary alliance, that maternal flag, protect the commerce for which America sacrificed every moral duty, and so many political advantages. I see this cruel parent, whom she deserted and betrayed, maintain her among the nations, and uphold her perishable state amidst the factions that prey upon her vitals.

America, however, had driven her savages behind her frontiers; she had conquered and repelled the wild barbarian whom she could not civilize. By the impolitic peace of 1763, we had delivered her from the neighbourhood and hostility of France, and she demanded to be foris-familiated, like a prosperous child whose fortune has corrupted his heart. Has our settlement in Ireland even this
excuse?

excuse? Is there any thing in common between the state of these two colonies? In Ireland, the native prowls unconquered and untamed, confined within no pale, and forced behind no barrier—France is at her door and in her chamber—and while she bellows “independence,” she is the prey of miseries unknown and unheard of by the rest of men; of crimes, for which the names are un-invented, of which the knowledge must be buried in dark eternal silence, where no sound is heard, nor eye may penetrate, sealed by disgust and horror, and guarded by the wounded dignity of humanity itself?

America, as it appears to me, I own, was happy and respectable, was fortunate and secure, when she began her crime, and affected her independence. Her independence too was real and effectual. It was perfect in all its parts; she abjured our crown as well as our legislature, and she became a sovereign by her ingratitude. Yet if I look at this
sovereign

sovereign state, and all her dangers and divisions—if I contemplate the peculiar evils of her constitution, admired I think by none of the wise and provident, and commended only by the speculatist and the Jacobin as example of revolution and impunity—if I consider her present state, and the circumstances upon which she advances, I am scarcely to be restrained from affirming that there is nothing but union—this very measure of union and incorporation, of all her Provinces—that can save and defend her: or extricate her from the dangers and perplexities of that federal independence, which has neither defended Holland, nor Switzerland, nor the empire of Germany.

From the case of America, who has seperated, we are naturally led to that of Scotland, who has united herself with England; and I confess it appears to me not a little singular, that I should have been so little anticipated upon one of the great and leading
 points

points of that argument; which does not appear to me to be half so interesting, nor half so powerful from analogy as from contrast. The analogy extends no farther than the probable consequences of a parallel experiment—but the contrast comprises the whole general circumstance and position of the two countries previous to the experiment; and the inference follows with accumulated and, I think, irresistible force, in favour of the present measure; since experience has shewn, that under circumstances of so unpromising a difference, that Union has still proved fortunate, and surpassed the most sanguine predictions of the great statesmen, who were the authors of it. In the Scottish union, I am at a loss to discover any circumstances of resemblance to the present measure, besides the accidental union of the two crowns upon the same head. Was Scotland a colony of ours? Was Scotland planted and watered by our hand? Had it grown and flourished under

our

our protecting shade? Was the property of Scotland in the hands of Englishmen? Was the parliament elected by Englishmen, and composed of Englishmen to the exclusion of the antient occupants of the soil? Had the laws, the religion, the constitution, and the language and the state, been transported thither from this parent country? From the first union of the crowns to the beginning of Queen Anne's reign, the legislative union had been a subject of deep deliberation. Scotland had to melt and blend with a nation of "foreigners," and with foreigners her antient, and, as it was then said, her natural enemies. Her wounds were yet green and stiff: reciprocal hatreds, alternate triumphs, a frontier desolated and famous from eternal warfare, and a history full of nothing but the injuries and invasions of England, were but little propitious to this new and wise design. There was much to be forgotten or forgiven—natural jealousies, old antipathies, national

G pride

pride and family resentments, were all to be soothed and won over by the evident utility and advantage of the union. Scotland besides possessed an actual and efficient independence; she had a real sovereignty to subscribe and surrender to the united parliament; she had a valuable consideration to contribute for the wealth, the security, and the dignity she received.

But is this the case of the Irish planter? is his independence real, or any thing but a dangerous and delusive sound, which tempts him to the rock, and draws him to the whirlpool? Is he independent of France, who pours her avengers upon the land? or independent of three millions of natives, who claim his estate with title-deeds and pikes? or independent of England, who defends him with her ships, her foldiers, and even her militia? Yet Scotland preferred to yield this real independance, so dear to her early prejudice. She preferred the substantial useful glory of a common
sceptre

sceptre and an imperial legislature, to the dull privilege of provincial greatness and municipal ambition. After centuries of cruel hostilities, fruitful of wretchedness and glory, she subsided into her true and just position, and incorporated with her mighty neighbour, to whom fate and nature had awarded the seat of empire. Now then comes the question of analogy. Has she repented of her prudence, of her true and wise magnanimity? Is the British name less glorious than the Scots? Is population, is commerce, is internal peace, a motive for repentance? Are improvement, arts and civilization, or the well being of life, motives for repentance? Have we violated the treaty—have we imposed tribute—have we abused our imperial power, or betrayed the confidence of the kingdom we united with? If all this experience is lost and thrown away; if this analogy and contrast are both ineffectual,

tual, I know not what argument can reach the deep rooted prejudice of Ireland.

If the offer of union therefore cannot be taken as an insult to our colony; if America has not been much benefited by seperation; if Scotland has never charged us with breach of faith or partial exercise of dominion over her; if there be upon the face of the earth no condition more glorious, or more happy than that of Britons; and if to extend, participate, and fully communicate all the blessings we enjoy, be entitled to some commendation and to some return, it will not I trust be too much to expect from the returning good sense and temper of the majority of the Irish House of Commons, that the discussion may at least be permitted of this measure; the principle of which appears to have so many claims to their gratitude.

The question of competency (if that is seriously a question) is the next in order; and then the general utility and fairness of the measure itself. But it is not my intention, for the present at least to examine the particular merit of every clause and condition, which can only be discussed with any beneficial effect, and I fear only with any candour, by commissioners on both sides, who shall be already satisfied of the pure and honourable character of the proceeding of the competency of the two parliaments, and of the reciprocal advantage, dignity, and security, which it is their object to procure and confirm to both kingdoms.

As to the question of competency, I shall add but one argument to those which have been urged with such resifless energy on both sides of the water and that, because it is addressed to those persons whose fanciful and dangerous doctrines would unhinge the civilized

lized world; who deny the power of states and governments and legislatures, and would assemble in plains or forests upon every new case and occurrence; the population of an empire, to collect the votes of labourers and shepherds. I think the absurdity of their opinion is merged and drowned in its depravity; the bitter malice and subtlety of their scheme swallows up its madness and impracticable folly, But I would ask them upon their own principle, and according to their own reasoning, what right the British Parliament possessed in 1782, without consulting numerically the people of Britain, to surrender the sovereign controul and supremacy of the British legislature over their colony in Ireland? What right had Britain to abandon three millions of Catholics to the discretion of the colony, without the consent of every shop and every cabin in the four provinces? I would ask them what right the parliament of Ireland possessed in 1782, to accept that fatal
boon,

boon, without consulting the people of Ireland in the same manner? Do they mean to say that parliaments are competent when themselves approve their measures, and incompetent when they differ from them? Does the authority of the state, and the exercise of the constitution, depend upon their approbation or concurrence? or is parliament competent to contract, and not to rescind a contract—to bind, and not to loosen? Do they mean to say we had no authority to cede the colonies of America? or that we have no competence to sever Ireland and abandon it France? they will not go this length. I know it, but their argument does; for it denies the validity of every legislative act, of every great national settlement, because the votes of the multitude have not been collected *per capita*. It would neither leave order, government, nor authority in states, nor peace between them; it would revoke into doubt and litigation every act, every treaty,

treaty, and every principle, by which the conduct of nations has been governed or their misfortunes terminated.

If it is contended that parliaments are competent to procure advantage and general good, but not to part with or alienate them; I shall answer, that this is a begging of the question; for we assert the union to be advantage and general good. But it is not only a begging of the question, but a confusion of the terms; for competency does not intend, nor conclude, nor respect wisdom. An usurper has made wise and wholesome laws, and a legal prince absurd and unjust ones: yet the competency is with the legal prince. For competency depends upon a just authority, and not upon the the use of it. This is material for me to state, who am preparing to shew, that the act of 1782, (the legality of which who doubts must, in my opinion, be very weak or very wicked) was an act
 very

very imprudent and very prejudicial to the people of Ireland.

By that act, I confess I think that the parliaments of the two kingdoms did mean to come to a FINAL SETTLEMENT; though there exists great authority to prove that there were statesmen on both sides the water who saw either the danger, the insufficiency, or the nullity of the act. I think the public of both kingdoms interpreted it in that light, and in that light I think it was condemned, and lamented by every man of feeling, reflection and sagacity.

It was an act extorted by the base ingratitude of our Irish colony, from the feebleness and calamity of our state. It was an act of ambitious violence, imposed upon us while we lay weltering in our blood, and faint from defeat and disaster. It was an act of unfilial and unmanly artifice, plotted by the

H

basest

basest of intriguers, and conceded by the weakest of ministers.

That this "final settlement," was impossible to last, and that it did not require the misconduct of the colonial independent parliament upon subsequent events, to open men's eyes upon its absurdity and danger, I am ready to admit; and if the injustice or folly of any measure could shake the competency of the act, I will admit that this might be invalidated for incompetency.

Fortunately, indeed, the independence of the Irish colony which it established, as far as lay within its power, was a nullity and a cypher. But the dependence of the native upon the colony, it did fully create and establish—an act of injustice, I am sorry to say, which cannot be palliated by the general conduct of the colony towards him. An
act

act which carried despair into the bosom of the catholics, and placed their only hope of emancipation upon the assistance of foreigners, and the misfortunes of this country.

It seems to be the fashion, to under-rate the capacity and understanding of the Roman catholics of Ireland ; but though the ignorance and bigotry of the lower classes of that persuasion are no doubt the cause of many excesses, and the instrument of all, I cannot discover that the leaders of it have so conducted themselves, as that we should contemn or look down upon their abilities with any conscious pride of superiority. They knew that an independent Irish parliament—they knew that the representatives of a protestant colony, would not and could not dare to trust the immense majority of their nation with an equality of political rights and condition. They saw that what they

H 2

looked

looked for from the power and magnanimity of Britain, became hopeless from the hands of settlers, whose weakness made them jealous and afraid. They were too conscious of their own strength, and too fond of their title, to desire or expect they should be ever trusted by an usurper, whose force they despised, and whose right they disputed. They felt themselves abandoned, and turned over to the generosity of a handful of proprietors, who were too powerless, and too timid to be merciful: and if the independent parliament had been compelled to make the concession, they would have been too sensible of the cause from which it sprung; they would have called it fear and not liberality, and they would have seized the proffered boon, not as satisfaction and content, but as a step in the ladder of their ambition, and an advanced post in the march of revenge!

Such

Such I apprehend were the sentiments of the catholic and the colonist towards each other, that there could not be a greater misfortune to the one, or injustice to the other, than the removal of that supremacy and controul of empire in Britain, which could alone respectively maintain and repress them. And if I were to contemplate the act of 1782 in no other point of view, and without relation to the internal state of the colony itself, I should not hesitate to condemn it, upon this account, as the most unjust as well as the most unwise upon the statute book. I confess I see no means that are left us by that act while it remains in force, (and it cannot be rescinded without the consent of the Irish parliament,) of putting an end to those calamities and crimes that have flowed from it, except in this measure of union alone. And if I could be brought to consider it with less dislike and aversion, it would be because I regard it as having prepared and accelerated that happy and glorious

glorious event, by the evils it has accumulated, and by the legal facility it has created.

I shall shew, before I conclude these reflexions, what are the peculiar advantages it offers to the Roman catholic, and upon what motives, alone it appears possible for him to reject it; at present the course of my argument leads me to enquire whether the final settlement and independence of 1782, have been more favourable to the British colony than to the native population.

The persons who are inclined to think or speak most favorably of that act of "final" settlement, are those who consider it as an experiment upon the part of Britain, whether her colony, which had seldom conducted itself with wisdom, prudence, or justice towards the native, being at length entrusted with the entire dominion of the country, and invested in the complete legislative authority, would
be

be able or willing to devise any wiser or more liberal measures for the general government of the people. But besides that, it is difficult to connect the words *final* and *experiment*; it seems more natural, if we are to suppose any free consent and foresight at all, upon the part of England at the close of the last disastrous war, to suspect that it was not intended, by the government at least, to surrender the imperial rights of the parent country for ever; but to convince the ignorant ambition of the colony of their unfitness for empire, and to prepare, as has been already stated, their free and formal consent to their incorporation; while in the mean time it took away from the independent colonial parliament all occasion and pretext of charging the metropolitan country with any part of their own misgovernment or inability to govern.

But even this hypothesis, I confess, appears to me violent and improbable, because all the
real

real and effectual change that was operated in the colony by this pretended experiment in the gift of independence, was the mere substitution of influence in the room of prerogative, and of ministerial favour for parliamentary controul. The dependance was not, nor could be changed ; but the mode and application of the principle were adopted to a new and a worse position, and transferred from the constitution to the treasury. Dependence is the natural and the necessary order for every colony that ever was or can be planted, so long, at least, as it requires the aid and protection of the parent country ; and to give it the name and qualification of independence, while nature and necessity forbid the substance of the thing, is to betray and expose it to corruption, and all the base and little passions of avarice and left-handed ambition. Did the Irish colony receive nothing, then, by the act of 1782 ? Did we confer nothing by this high-sounding

ing term of independence ? Unfortunately we gave a fatal boon, the kindness of which will be better conjectured than explained, when we consider the present state of the independent parliament ! There are, or there were at the time when the union was first proposed in the House of Commons, one hundred and sixteen placemen in that Assembly, whose complete number does not exceed three hundred. I will not comment upon this blushing text, nor will I search into the red-book of the civil list of Ireland. I wish only to be understood, and I draw a veil over every thing that can disgust or inflame. The privilege obtained, therefore, was not to be independent, which was impossible, but the privilege to be paid for obedience, which was but too easy. Prerogative had disappeared with the statute of George the first, and corruption by the law-politic had taken its place. I withdraw my eyes from this filthy spectacle ; I leave to others to detail a venal peerage,

I

and

and pensioned lubricity ; the Empire of the Custom-house, and commissions in the army given for sale to provosts or to priests. But let the colony declare if this be the independence she desired in 1782 ? If these be the blessings she aspired to ? If this is the sovereignty she affected ?

The colony, however, gained other advantages from her independence, of which it is difficult to appreciate the extent and the value. She augmented the number of her absentees by that portion of her wealthy and ambitious peers and commoners whom she annually deputed to court promotion and emolument in the antichambers of the Treasury, and the drawing-room of St. James's. She derived an addition to this mighty benefit by the despair and revolt of the catholic, which rendered residence altogether impossible, or converted every feat and every park in the island into a camp or a garrison. These were but trifling advantages,

however, of her independence, for it was a general, comprehensive, and pervading power which detached, and loosened, and dissolved the very cement of her civil state. The tenant became independent of the landlord : the peasant of the farmer ; the child and the wife of the husband ; the individual of the laws, the multitude of the government. It tore the subject from the state, from morals, from customs, from religion ; it armed every sect against each other ; it invaded the country, and it still invites and provokes invasion.

Do I deny or palliate the participation of the English government in the corruptions of the colony ? Necessity is a plea I will never sustain for fraud or force, for tyranny or seduction. But it requires a very stern and rigid virtue to reject it altogether here, where the alternatives were so dangerous and so cruel ; for the colony, as I have already shewn, by her own ingratitude and violence,

had extorted from her bleeding parent that Pandora gift; and she continued to abuse her fatal weakness with new demands, and even menaces. But the question is not here to impeach a delinquent, but to shew and prove the body of the crime. It is of the guilt, and not the guilty, that we are enquiring; but if we should fix the person, and deliver up the criminal, how can this "independent" Parliament proceed or prosecute? At what bar, and before what tribunal can it impeach him? Do you not see at every step, how visionary, how false and illusory is this fatal present? This independence which corrupts and cannot save, which betrays and cannot protect, which injures and cannot even avenge?

We hear now, indeed, but for the first time, and from those who, till now, have never ceased to deplore the wretchedness and calamities of the colony, that it has improved and thriven since her boasted acquisition of independence;

pendence ; or as they affect to call it, in the language of commerce, instead of policy, since the dissolution of the partnership. But both their assertion and their term are false and ill-chosen ; for it is easy to prove (and it has been proved beyond the power of replication) that she has improved only where the partnership remained and flourished, and that she has decayed and perished wherever the connexion has expired, or been suspended. She has improved in industry and commerce, because for these she remained dependent upon the power, the tutelary care, and generosity of England. She has thriven only in matters beyond the reach, control, and authority of her independent parliament, and there only, and precisely so far as she has been upheld by the providence and the purse of England. Can her independent parliament prevent the legislature of Britain from repealing the duties she imposes upon foreign competition, or the bounties she grants on the re-exportation of Irish manufactures ? or are these favours the gift

gift of the parliament of Dublin. The cause, therefore, of this prosperity is not independence; and in her political state, where indeed she has dissolved the partnership, and become as independent as I have shewn, I should not fear to ask of Mr. Grattan himself, whether she has improved there? if she has—her folly has been prosperous; her corruptions and her misgovernment have been wise and happy. Her promises and compromises with the catholic and the dissenter, with emancipation and reform, have been prudent and just; her conspiracies, her insurrections, are fortunate and good. If she has improved in her internal state, it is because rebellion and martial law are advantages, because anarchy and murder are boons from heaven; because rape and massacre, and pillage and fires, and desolation are benefits and blessings to mankind!

Now I would ask, if it be possible to devise a milder or a kinder remedy for all these evils

(for

(for as such I am perverse and blind enough to consider them) than that of union with the parent state? With a state, whose manners cannot fail to soften and civilize this wretched and exasperated race? With a state whose power can compress these factions; who has strength to be generous, and courage to be just? The colony has learned in a bloody school the vanity of her ambition; she feels that she is not, and cannot be independent of this sustaining hand, which succours and upholds her. Three millions of natives and catholics forbid it. And though there may be men of ferocious minds, who would exterminate the natives; though I have heard an atrocious policy avowed in the public councils, by which they were to be armed, and let loose upon each other; though I have heard the offer of union condemned as a remedy inadequate to the evil, and the salvation of the few asserted to depend upon the extirpation of the

the

the majority ; that the catholics must be extinguished, and put out; that not a single Rohilla of them all can be left with impunity ; though I have heard these sanguinary doctrines pollute the walls of a House of Parliament, I am satisfied they are confined to a very few breasts not wickeder than they are weak. I think the British ministry are entitled to the highest praise for the candour and the loftiness of their councils. I think the attempt is worthy of the great and generous nation over which they preside ; and as it appears to me impossible to reconcile the native and the settler without incorporating the whole, and adopting them both into the virtues, the moderation, and the magnanimity of Britain, I am desirous of giving to this measure of theirs the fullest and most unqualified applause and approbation. Independence is out of the question ; it is of the forms of dependence that it is alone important to enquire, and if I knew of
any,

any, milder, more liberal, and more beneficial to Ireland than union is, that form of dependance I would prefer and offer for the government of our colony. For it is only when the colony and the natives are united and lost in each other, that the Anglo-Irish will cease to be dependent. It is then that they will fuse and blend together with the empire at large, and become as independent as Scotland is, or Yorkshire or Cornwall.

It is with considerable pain and disgust that I dwell upon those obstacles to the accomplishment of this generous plan, which appear to me as the most powerful and effective in the minds of our own colony, and of the Roman catholics of Ireland. For as to the motives of the United Irishmen, it were absurd in their opposition to seek for any, but their love of anarchy and confusion, their project of pillage and revolution, and their devotedness to any cause and any power that

K

can

can protract the miseries and convulsions of their country. To search for political objects in the bosoms of conspirators who have none but to prolong their crimes, and procrastinate their punishment; who seek in revolt revolt only, and in evil evil, is to put men's reason to a harder task than is necessary or practicable with success.

Certainly it would not be possible for any great part of the British settlers in Ireland to prefer their present state of anxiety and suffering to the plan of union and incorporation that is held out to them, unless there lingered in their mind some hope or longing after another issue of their present difficulties and evils. It is the Jacobin of nature only, that delights in the continuation of the present wretchedness; but I am afraid there is a Jacobinism of policy, which induces some men to bear with or prolong evils susceptible of an earlier termination, in the hope of more
advan-

advantage to themselves, or greater triumph in the issue. I confess I fear that there are amongst our settlers in Ireland some unrelenting minds who expect and prefer another conclusion of the contest, and very different from ours ; the horrible principle which has been disclosed even in England, induces me very strongly to apprehend, that there is no obstacle in a part of the colony more hostile and formidable to the projected UNION, than the hope of being enabled by the arms and treasure of the mother-country to obtain such decided and definitive success in the civil war, as to enable their " Independent Parliament" to attain and confiscate the remaining part of the property of Ireland not actually in the occupation of that colony.

I know this ungenerous and sanguinary sentiment is partial and limited indeed ; and I trust the executive and paramount authority indefeasible in England, tho' no longer

legally existing in its legislature, will never sanction this atrocious and premeditated scheme of insatiable avarice, and unnecessary revenge. For it is absolutely impossible to suggest upon what ground their private avarice can be recommended as a national and public scheme, or by what motives our colony will attempt to induce us to purchase for them through seas of guilt and blood, this cruel advantage, of treading out the native Irish, and becoming, in a very new and different sense, " independent" of ourselves. I confess I do not think they have so used the nominal and fictitious independence they enjoyed, as that by any sound and rational policy we could be authorized to concede a more real and effective separation.

If the only obstacle to union in the bosom of our colony is this criminal and flagitious hope of deriving from our victories an unjust and miserable success of slavery and
plunder,

plunder, I am fearful that it is impossible to assign, after every allowance for passion and for prejudice, a better or a more pardonable plea for the refusal or the silence of the catholic. Revenge, and the hope of prey, are his undisguised motives; and he is only so far less absurd or less guilty than the colonist I have described, as he believes himself to have a right, according to the doctrines of imprescriptibility, to possess the lands, which no time, no length of possession can alienate, no acquiescence transfer; and as he relies for his hope of success upon a government, which as it were from the very center and focus of robbery, adopts and assists every system, and every species of plunder, every attack upon every possession, every innovation of right and principle, and law and property.

I think neither of these hopes will be crowned with success, because the British govern-

government will never espouse the crime of the colonist, and because the French directory will never be able to gratify the vengeance and the avarice of the catholic. The catholic republic may sound well in the ears of inebriated rebels, whose crimes have cut them off from their country as long as it shall be administered under any form of government, under any order whatsoever. It may sound well and lofty in the ears of ignorant and inflated conspirators, and the absurdity and solecism of the term itself may not be discovered by minds confounded by their terrors, and furious from their crimes.

The "*Catholic Republic?*" at another time I should be tempted to ask how a catholic republic could exist, or how could it be projected by men, who in all their dreams of innovation and reform have had no vision of a presbyterian monarchy, or a democratical nobility. The "*Catholic Republic?*" and what

what is to become of the hierarchy? what of divine right? what of indefeasible succession? But this absurd and contradictory term may teach us something; it betrays the measure of their capacity for whom it is designed; it shews how low, how ignorant, how obtuse is the dupe, how mean the victim, the priests of anarchy prepare. A catholic republic! what? by the side, and under the wing of a republic of atheists? a catholic republic guaranteed by the ex-bishop Talleyrand, and the doating theo-philanthropist Lepeau? What! will the titular bishops of Ireland, will men of learning, humanity, and piety, do homage to the see of infidelity, and receive the ring and the crozier from the apostate Syeyes, or from Ali-Buonaparte? Do they not see this catholic republic is a republic of chairmen and fruit-pickers? That it is the despotism of ignorance and strength, of brutal vices, and of numbers? That it is the downfall of all religion, and of all order
 and

and gradation, the pillage of property, and the first half only of a revolution ?

Surely the virtuous catholic will prefer even the existing order, and the existing oppressions, to this species of emancipation and liberty. He will not trample on the cross of Christ, for a licence to trade in municipalities and departments; he will not deny or abjure his faith, to traffic in anarchy and republics; and he will rather try at least this new and kinder order, this christian union, by which he is called into the free privileges of an Englishman, and placed by the side of a sister and a tolerating church.

It is impossible to suppose that a greater duty can ever be laid upon men, than what has now fallen upon the sincere and enlightened catholic of Ireland. He has revenge and hopes of interest to sacrifice in the cause
of

of God and man; but revenge is almost fatiated in seas of civil blood, and his hope of personal advantage, is the pillage of a wreck in which he runs the common danger—He has early prejudices to conquer; but adversity is a great teacher, and the wholesome lessons of calamity still vibrate on his ear—a great change is propounded to him, and he is called to the rights of citizenship, not by the desperate cry of infidels and regicides, but by the free, spontaneous, and liberal voice of a great and christian kingdom, speaking his own language, governed by the same laws, having the same interests, the same mutual relations, the same endearing bonds, the same defence, and the same necessity—by a kingdom to which he is united by the natural order before the political, and by the division of the globe itself, before the civil inventions and relations of society.

L

His

His duty, and his real interest, I think it cannot be denied, are evident upon the same side. His religion is not less threatened than the state and property of the colony. Will he suffer the protestant to take the lead, and to do that for his temporal good, which he himself shall neglect or oppose, though for his eternal good? Will he delay to undeceive an ignorant population, that look up to him for instruction and example? Will he defer to unfurl the sacred banner, and to call back the deluded rebel from the colours of Infidelity? Will he refuse to tell him that he is deceived and misled, and that the sole danger he ought to apprehend to his religion, is from his infidel allies, from his impious confederates, the persecutors of God and man, who have sworn to extirpate it from the earth, and crush the cross to dust?

If

If any well-disposed and enlightened Irishman, of either religion, is averse to the Union, I think it is incumbent upon him to shew, either that the present order of things is good and desirable in itself, or else that it is capable of modification and amendment. But these are tasks I am confident no such person will undertake; the first, because the direct converse is palpable and confessed; and the second, because the conspirators themselves have declared upon oath, and in contemplation of death, that no modification or change, no reform or emancipation, will satisfy or appease them. Their fanaticism is of a higher order; they will accept of nothing but this very catholic republic, under the protection of the atheist republic; and to be a free and imperial part of a christian empire, neither meets their devotion, nor gratifies their ambition.

Another reason why such a person will not support the argument of modification, is this : because he knows the unhappy victims of the refined malice of republican atheism are led away, not by the hope or wish of reform or emancipation, but by suggestions that their religion is in danger ; because he knows the cruel power of artifice and design upon the devout and agitated bosom of poor and honest ignorance, sacrificing all things, suffering all things, and daring all things in the cause supposed of religion.

I am not often tempted to use hard words ; but if ever there was a devilish artifice on the earth ; if ever there were any wickedness more near and natural to hell itself than other crimes and atrocities, it is this foul, unrelenting, common mockery of both persuasions, this cruel sacrifice of christian blood, by the instigation and malice of infidelity.

It

It is the arming of religious sects at the bidding of impiety ; it is the massacre of christians by the practice of atheists.

That this order therefore can never stand is made certain, by the hatreds it engenders, by the factions that attack it, by the conviction itself of its approaching fall. But that the precarious and partial connexion between the two islands cannot last upon the present footing, is not so clearly deducible, from the experience of the past, from the debates in Ireland upon war and peace, and the separating policy of its parliament in the regency bills ; as from the nature of the thing itself, and the real, necessary, and indefeasible dependance of Ireland, in spite of the legal and formal independence. The present order is at war with the order of nature, and the law of necessity ; and whether it shall be overthrown or not by a separate regency, or by contradictory votes upon peace and war, it

it only exists at all by being constantly evaded, and in exact proportion to the violence it receives. In times of tranquillity, (if one might dream of those) it must be tamed by corruption into the control and obedience of England: in war it must either partake of force in the dangers of England, or be subdued by her as her first and most dangerous enemy. It is suspended altogether by the present divided state, and the colonists having thrown themselves into the arms of their parent country, for protection against France, and against the nation where they have settled, have fully proved how impossible is the reality of independence, and how dangerous the illusion.

That the present order cannot last, and ought not to be re-established, arises also out of the state, dangers, and necessities of England herself. It is impossible for her to adopt as any part of a settled and permanent policy, the protection of her colony under the
 present

present circumstances, and to affect to hold her up in every danger, commotion, and general insurrection, to which this fatal system exposes her. It were better for England that her colony, and the whole island of Ireland were precipitated to the bottom of the ocean, than that they should remain to her the charge, the danger, and the distraction they have been, in a war in which she possessed no hope of escape or victory, no chance of salvation, but Unanimity. It were better Ireland were blotted from the map, and expunged from the list of nations, than that she should remain this diversion of our power and force, this arsenal of attack and injury, this source of danger and annoyance, and this devouring gulph of our blood and resources.

It results clearly, and beyond the power of equivocation to contradict or evade, that if the settlement of 1782 were final; if it were meant and designed not only, as I think it
was,

was, by the two parliaments who contracted, but by the ministers who planned it, as a definitive settlement ; I say, it results clearly in point of fact, that the ministers and the parliaments have been deceived ; that it has not proved what they intended ; that it has not produced the effect they had in contemplation ; and that they did one thing, while they stipulated another. Instead of a final settlement, they procured eternal feuds and rebellion—instead of independence, a corrupt dependence—instead of imperial identity, distinct regencies and contradictory titles in the crown itself, with discussions upon war and peace—instead of content, commotion—instead of order, treason—instead of gratitude and affection, and tranquillity, foreign counsels, bloody conspiracies, and general insurrection.

What then are these final contracts, which no mistake nor error, no repentance, nor experience

rience of ill can loosen or unbind? What are the grants, which neither deception in the giver, nor injury to the endowed, can defeat or avoid? Shall an improper grant of the crown be set aside in the courts of law for want of the presumed information in the sovereign, and an act of state, in which nations are deceived and misled, be perpetual, in spite of experiment and remorse? Are the people of Ireland massacred and starved? Is England exhausted, and exposed to every wound of war and insurrection, and yet we must stand to the condition? We must inherit, in spite of our own disclaimer; we must take unwilling, the benefit of the entail, and enjoy the fee-simple of our calamities? Would I break then the treaty we have signed? Would I violate the faith of Parliament? would I resume the controul we have abandoned, and the independence to which we have subscribed? I would *not* do it; because we can do better, because we can incorporate and ad-

M

mit

mit Ireland into our own imperial state; because we can advance instead of receding; because we can confer advantages, and privileges, and safety, and perfect liberty, instead of returning to the crude state of colony and metropolis—because, instead of dependence and protection, we can offer union and identity of power and state; instead of inferiority, participation; instead of humiliation, glory. But would I do it in any case, and under any circumstances? It is not left to do—it is done already by necessity, and the nature of things themselves, which parchments cannot alter. But I would do it. By what law? By what right? Not for error, not for incompetence—but by that law which Heaven itself has ordained, that the safety of the people should be the law supreme; by that eternal paramount authority, by which every lawful constitution, under every form and name of human society, holds, at every moment, the full, absolute, entire, and perfect

fect ſovereign right, (with its correspondent duty) to redreſs every evil, to provide for every emergency, to defend the people from every danger, and to ſuccour them under every calamity.

The more I examine the antient policy and conduct of England, with regard to Ireland, I beg leave to repeat it, the more kind and generous I find it towards the colony, and I think her only real reproach has been, neglect of the natives: even now, that the miſgovernment and miſfortunes of the colony ſeem, perhaps, to call for acts of rigour, and forfeiture; what is the conduct of the parent ſtate, and what the language ſhe holds to her libertine? Does ſhe reſume her charters? Does ſhe cancel her grants? Does ſhe revoke the independence he has extorted from her, or place him in a ſtate of pupilage again? No. She entreats with maternal fondneſs to draw cloſer, for the common benefit and ſafety,

M 2

thoſe

those bonds, which have always knit them together in interest and affection. She desires but to confirm and strengthen that REAL UNION, which has always subsisted between them, in spite of political names, and legal distinctions. She wishes to protect him still, but with more efficacy and vigour, and to be able to extend her beneficence to three millions of wretched natives, whom he cannot oppress but with her arms, nor deliver but with his own ruin. But what are the terms of this protection, and what the price she sets upon her beneficence? Is it the surrender of territory? Is it taxation? Is it the abandonment of any good, or of any power? America complained that she was taxed without representation, but Ireland is invited to send an hundred commoners, and an equal proportion of her peers. But is not this number adequate and sufficient? Scotland, with more than double the population of the colony (for the native is not yet represented at all) has never made this complaint.

plaint. She has never complained of any combination of the English majority to oppress her counties, or suspected such an injury, more than Yorkshire or Cornwall. She has never complained that her people did not enjoy their full proportion of public office, emolument, and power, and of the favours and countenance of the crown. Her influence in the British cabinet, on the contrary, has been the burthen of English jealousy, the theme of constant invective, and sometimes, of deep and serious accusation. But England has never been accused, by the blackest malice of irritated recrimination, of the least injustice, unkindness, or prejudice, against the united kingdom. What just, or rather what possible reason is there for Ireland to apprehend, against the experience of a whole century? Were the thoughts of England hostile and designing, she would not present this Union. She would say to her colony—You have abused and misgoverned,
and

and are incapable to govern, and therefore your power is forfeited, and your right reverted;—you have been a bad master, I cancel your authority;—you have been a bad child, and I disinherit you. This would be the language of the angry parent.—Let us listen to her accents: “ Let us govern together.” Is that cruel, or oppressive, or unjust? “ Come and take your seat in my council and my senate:” Is that hard or unnatural? “ Come, and let us consult together for the common cause in the imperial senate of both islands; depute your portion of wisdom and virtue; take your share in the general administration:” Is this partial, or exclusive, or ungenerous?

Is it ungenerous in England, to give this aid to the local calamities of Ireland, and call

call her to the full participation of British blessings? Is it ungenerous to take her share in the crimes, and accuse herself of the misgovernment of her colony? and instead of taxing it with ingratitude, to blame her own preposterous indulgence, and that fatal weakness, which misled and deceived it? which granted a boon it was not able to receive, and exposed it to seductions and perils beyond its strength to combat, or its power to repel? What is there in all this conduct injurious or over-bearing? Is there any insult, as a part of the Parliament of Ireland thought, in offering the condition of Britons, and the participation of empire to our own colony? Is there any insult or any injury in offering it to the descendants of those natives, who have always been oppressed by our colony, and done homage to our crown? It is not a French incorporation, it is not a republican fraternity that Britain offers. She
does

does not take their magistrates as hostages, nor impose contributions, nor drag away the youth of the kingdom in fetters and chains by military requisitions. She does not en-throne mechanics and felons in the govern-ment, in order to govern it. She does not throw down the altars and erect impiety. She does not ordain licentiousness and terror. What, I ask of any honest colonist, what is it you are afraid of?—Of being independent, who have only the name and miserable mock-ery of independance? of being in tranquillity, who are torn and tortured with civil wars and hostile invasions? of seeing the condition of the catholic by degrees ameliorated and im-proved, who have no hope of a momentary reprieve and safety, but in granting him a complete emancipation? of seeing your ab-sentees encrease, whose troubles have caused an host of emigration, which can never re-turn into your bosom but with Union, and

as a consequence of Union? of seeing your representatives dependent upon the imperial cabinet of the united realms, who have now in your representative body one hundred and sixteen placemen, with threescore and ten aspirants of the law, and with all this a factious aristocracy, which outweighs even your corruption? of seeing your industry and your trade decline, whose industry is turned to the forging of pikes and the lopping of trees, and the maiming of cattle, and the murdering of men, and who owe all your trade to British consumption, and British bounties?

To the catholics of Ireland, I think Britain does not address a less kind or less generous language. She does not tell them —“ You are incorrigible rebels, whom no time can soften, no kindness can subdue :” but she invites them to such an order, as will

N

comport

comport with kindness, and permit her without cruelty to her colony, to place them on the same footing with the best and faithfullest of her subjects: as will melt and obliterate all memory, and rancour, all invidious distinctions, all civil and political difference. Of the candid catholic, I will ask once more if he expects emancipation, and a full participation of power and situation from the colony? If he expects it from the united monsters that deface his country, and have sworn that they will not accept emancipation? If he expects the catholic republic from the atheist usurpers of France, who have overthrown the religion and the republic of their own country, and overthrown every religion and every republic, wherever their crimes or their arms have led them?

If he expects emancipation from the parliament of Dublin, I will ask him if a
handful

handful of men can emancipate a multitude? If an armed regiment will liberate a disarmed host? It is a mystery not very profound, that fear is a coward, that weakness cannot confide, and that injury never pardons. I will tell him plainly, the parliament of Ireland *dares* not to set him free. It is the imperia parliament, it is the power, greatness, and superiority of England which alone can break his chains, or contain him in the first transports of liberty. It is the preponderance, the invulnerable greatness of England, which enables her to be generous, and permits her magnanimity. Will he refuse the boon at the end of six centuries of calamity, of fruitless struggles, and tenacious oppression? Will he confirm and fortify the oath of reprieved or expiring traitors, that it is not liberty, but revenge, and plunder, and revolution, that he fights for? that it is the property and the blood of the English settler

for which he thirsts? Will he give this cruel right, this active cause of tyranny to the colony, after he has abjured the mercy and the interference of the metropolis?

Surely, for ourselves at least, it is more just and wise, that we should assay to quench these interminable quarrels, and extinguish these ever-springing evils, in UNION.— Surely, as an experiment alone, it is better, both for the settler and the native, than the prolongation of so many crimes and calamities.—I trust it will be *tried*, before we decide once more to follow up our victorious arms with bills of confiscation and attainder—I trust it will be tried, and that the act of Union will be an act also of amnesty and forgiveness. Since it is clear, *de facto*, that our colony is still dependent upon us, I trust we shall not aid nor permit her to repeat those acts with which she has not blushed

blushed to reproach us.—I trust it will be tried, not only because it is innocent and merciful, but because it is politic and wise. For confiscation has been too often tried, and it has failed too often ; but union is a new and hopeful measure. In Scotland it has succeeded under other auspices, and triumphed over other obstacles. It was then a mere speculation, but it now furnishes experience: it was there choice, but here it is necessity. I say necessity, because the alternative that remains is such as nature sickens at, as humanity rejects, as instinct flies from: because it is rebellion, and military government; because it is imprisonment, and torture, and sudden execution; because it armed prosecutors and juries of soldiers, with their serjeants learned in the law; because it is the curfew, and the passport-bill; because it is invasion, massacre, and rape, and pillage, and conflagration; because it is the wretchedest and most degrading condition of humanity, the most disgusting series of misery and guilt, the blackest and

most lengthened scene and procession of crimes and sufferings that ever humbled or afflicted man!

It has been said, that the colonial parliament is able and resolved to provide a remedy for all these evils: that they have turned their eyes at last to the barbarism of the people, and to the defects and dangers of their constitution. That they have discussed a regency-bill, and are preparing a national institute for the education of the people. But when have they done so? In March 1799. After they have rejected the Union, they are at least sensible that something is wanting to secure the British *connexion*, and to render the condition of the native tolerable. But are these remedies, or only confessions of the disease? what hope of a cure is there for him, who refuses the specific, and trusts his chronic to palliatives and delay? I wish to bring this point to the most direct
and

and clearest issue. If the parliament of Dublin can emancipate the catholics, and thinks emancipation prudent and secure under the present precarious connexion with Great Britain; if the parliament of Dublin dares to admit the native to equal rights, and a participation of the independent legislature, then let them reject the Union, and try their own expedient. But I consider every man who does reject it, to stand in this dilemma. Either he must declare for emancipation, or declare that he is contented with the present condition of his country. Either he must admit the immense majority of the Irish into the independent parliament, or he must prove, that the independent parliament is competent and able to govern the immense unrepresented majority, and does govern it, with tranquillity, content, and success. But is it not both more prudent and more natural, for this independent parliament to melt into the imperial, than to receive the Catholic

par-

parliament? Is not its independence more likely to survive its fusion with the parent state, and in the arms and bosom of Great Britain, than when its doors are open to the Catholic majority, and its power divided with three millions of malcontents?

The Catholic enemy to the Union I imagine to stand in another dilemma of equal difficulty. He must declare that he expects something better than emancipation, or that he expects emancipation from a different quarter. And though he should be ashamed to make this criminal confession, it will not the less result from his silence and affected neutrality:—nay, it will not the less result from the denial, or the disbelief of his own sentiments. Unhappily for men, their passions keep secrets from their heart, or their heart dares not reveal, or submit them to the examination of the mind.

After

After having discussed so minutely the motives, interests, and relative situation of the colony and the catholic, it might be liable to misconstruction if I were to take no further notice than I have done incidentally of those clubs and conspiracies, and of that invisible empire exercised in Ireland by means of filiation and correspondence, and secret oaths, more particularly as these treasons and dangers have reached our own state, and pervaded to the very heart and metropolis of the empire. Yet I think a little reflexion will suffice to shew, that they are not entitled to much consideration in this place; and that in referring them to the general condition and calamity of Ireland, I have confined them to their proper situation and importance. For certainly the catholic and the colony, the native and the settler, are respectively entitled to our care and protection. They are the matter of legislation, and the objects of policy and justice; they com-

O

pose

pose the civil state. To reconcile their interests, to adjust their differences, and to render them happy and contented with their condition, is the duty no less than it is the object of government. But what state or form of government can admit of jacobinism as an element of its constitution? We blend democracy; we blend nobility; we blend monarchy. But to admit hostility to all government, and to every state, to all power, and order, and authority, to every class and every form of the administration of human affairs, as a quality or component part of a regulated society; or to admit the revolutionary principle as we admit and regulate the three powers of which our constitution is compounded, were of all errors the most fatal and unwise. I have, therefore, thrown it out altogether, and consider it not as a limb, or part of the body politic, but as an ulcer and a plague. I think the jacobin will neither be contented nor subdued by the
 Union,

Union, nor in the defeat of the Union; but that he must be subdued by the execution of the laws, and hunted down by the magistrate wherever he is found. To offer him a government who is the sworn enemy of governments; or a constitution, who hates all constitutions: to admit into the state the common conspirator against every institution and every form, is to make peace with tygers, and treaties with Frenchmen. Whether, therefore, there shall be Union, or a prolongation of the present calamities, the United Irishmen will remain alike to be put down, or to be put out by the colonial parliament, or by the imperial.

In this point of view there is but one question—Which is the most powerful and most likely to put him down? and as that, which I confess appears to me (under the present circumstances of both countries, and of all countries in the world) to be paramount

mount and pre-eminent above every other, I address it with confidence neither to the colony nor the catholic, but to both, and to every virtuous and reflecting mind of both persuasions, and in both kingdoms.

London, April,

1799.

F I N I S.