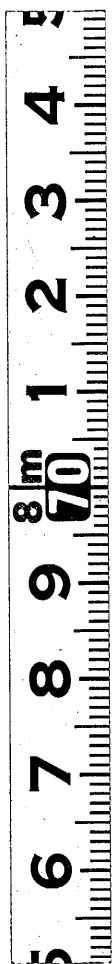


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W. P. Barton

AUTHENTIC MINUTES
OF THE
DEBATE
IN THE
IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS,
On the 20th of DECEMBER, 1779.
On receiving the Resolutions of the BRITISH
House of Commons for granting to IRELAND a
free Trade.
TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
The SPEECHES of some NOBLE LORDS, spoken
on the same Occasion, the Day following.
“If the Debate of this Day should be so foully belied as I have
seen many, it cannot be done but by the Emisary Hireling of the
common Enemy.” ATTORNEY GENERAL’S SPEECH, p. 57.
LONDON,
Printed for J. NICHOLS:
Sold by H. PAYNE, Pall-Mall; C. DILLY, Poultry;
and N. CONANT, Fleetstreet.
MDCCLXXX.

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To the R E A D E R.

AS the affairs of Ireland have now engaged, and will for some time engage, the public attention; the following authentic documents are presumed to be the best testimonies of the sense of that nation upon those affairs.

AUTHENTIC MINUTES
OF THE
DEBATE, &c.

Monday, December 20.

THE following Resolutions were introduced by the Right Honourable Mr. FORSTER, and agreed to unanimously :

“ Resolved, nem. con. That the exportation from this kingdom of its woollen, and other manufactures, to all foreign places, will materially tend to*

* The British Resolutions are as follow :

“ Resolved, That it is expedient to repeal so much of any of the Laws passed in Great Britain, as prohibit the exportation

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to relieve its distresses, increase its wealth, promote its prosperity, and thereby advance the welfare of Great Britain, and the common strength, wealth, and commerce of the British empire.

“ Resolved, nem con. That a liberty for this kingdom to trade with the British Colonies in America, and the West Indies, and the British Settlements on the coast of Africa, in like manner as trade is carried on between Great Britain and the said Colonies and settlements, will be productive

portation from the Kingdom of Ireland of all Woollen Manufactures whatsoever, or Manufactures made up, or mixed with, Wool or Wool Flocks.

“ Resolved, That it is expedientt or epeal so much of an Act, made in the Nineteenth Year of the Reign of his late Majesty King George the Second, as relates to the Exportation of Glafs, Glafs Bottles, or Glafs of any Denomination whatsoever, from the Kingdom of Ireland.

“ Resolved, That it is expedient to allow the Trade between Ireland and the British Colonies in America, and The West Indies, and the British Settlements on the Coast of Africa, to be carried on in like Manner, and subject to the same Regulations and Restrictions, as it is now carried on between Great Britain and the said Colonies and Settlements ; provided all Goods and Commodities of the Growth, Product, or Manufacture, of such Colonies and Settlements shall be made liable, by Laws to be made in Ireland, to the same Duties as the like Goods are or may be liable to upon Importation into Great Britain.”

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of very great commercial benefits, will be a most affectionate mark of the regard and attention of Great Britain to our distresses, and will give new vigour to the zeal of his Majesty's brave and loyal people of Ireland, to stand forward in support of his Majesty's person and government, and the interest, the honour, and the dignity of the British empire.”

The debate upon them was very interesting. The following is a short account of it, which can only be satisfactory from its being authentic as far as it goes. It contains but a very small part of some of the speeches, the publisher having only here and there taken down a few sentiments for his particular recollection.

Mr. FOSTER. No man can be unacquainted with the resolutions of the British House of Commons respecting the trade of Ireland—too much cannot be said in the praise of the Minister who has boldly stood forth in support of them—agreeing to the resolutions I intend to propose, will strengthen the hands of that Minister ; and with a view to that, I think this House ought to express their sense, to shew the Ministry, and the Parliament of Great Britain, that the ends they aim at will be attained by a completion of their plan,

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plan, and it will quiet the minds of the people.— I have two propositions to make, but, before I make them, wish to wipe off some mistakes: it has been industriously reported, that only two of the resolutions had been agreed to in the British House of Commons, and that we shall continue to be restrained in the article of cotton; whereas the three were agreed to, and the article of cotton is as free as any other manufacture under the resolutions, and there is not a manufacture, that the ingenuity of man can invent, that may not be exported to any part of the globe. He then stated the purport of the second resolution he intended to propose, and moved the first.

When Mr. Foster had delivered the resolution into the hands of the Speaker, several members called out, Read it, read it; upon which the Speaker said, I cannot read the resolution till it has been seconded.

Mr. BUSHE. I have not the least objection to second the resolution. Some days ago I thought we should be premature in giving any opinion upon this great subject, as Lord North's resolutions had not then passed, and as we had not time to consider so complicated a business: but now we have leisure to consider them fully, and since the resolutions have passed in England without a

division,

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division, I have formed a clear and decided opinion upon the subject. In a commercial view, every thing is promised that can reasonably be expected. The people wait with silence till this House shall take it into their consideration, and we ought not to keep back the general joy that ought, and will be felt throughout this country; a joy to which their own conduct has so eminently contributed. The formidable discretion of an armed people, I will not say, has impelled the Minister; but a Parliament, in which faction and corruption have both been forgotten, has enabled him to carry those measures. It is necessary for Parliament to give our friends in England the support of their opinion; and any coldness on our parts may freeze the current of their liberal policy. The two first resolutions of Lord North are to restore the Irish to their natural rights. He has pointed out other things that will make this business complete. He has not mixed any thing constitutional, but only commercial. [He hinted, that there were indeed some other restraints upon our trade by the English laws, but that they did not affect our prosperity, and that it would be proper for us to adopt them by laws of our own, which would take away all grounds of future jealousy between the two countries.] It is unjust to blame Lord North for not having

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meddled

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meddled with constitutional topics; he has done wisely; if he had done otherwise, we should have suspected some duplicity in his conduct, as if he intended to have armed the pride, the passions, and the prejudices, of England against us. I do not know a single restraint that would militate against our prosperity, if those resolutions should pass into laws. It might be proper in this country to prevent the exportation of wool, &c. but I shall not say any thing farther upon so delicate a point: it is better for us to be silent upon that part of the subject. With regard to the other resolution respecting the trade to the West Indies, I will not say, it is precisely the natural right of Ireland; but it is a very liberal policy, and beneficial to England. It is, as the resolution states, a mark of her affectionate regard. The minister has acted wisely in postponing it, as it is a very complicated subject, and requires time for arrangement. I have no apprehension any thing will be retracted; if I had, I would still agree with the resolutions; it would bind the bargain; it would be adopting a measure, that by giving us a claim would make our temper a little more sullen. Some persons are apprehensive that we shall be on worse ground respecting the article of sugars, than what we are at present; but it is better to import them directly under higher duties, than circuitously

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circuitously under low ones; and, as Lord North has said that our trade is to be carried on in like manner as the British, I understand that each country shall be equally protected from a circuitous trade through the medium of the other, and we cannot complain of the terms which the proprietors of the sugar islands have chosen for themselves; yet I think an arrangement better for both countries may be negotiated; and if Ireland were not to pay quite so high a duty as England on sugars for her own consumption, it would be more suited to our condition, and no injury to Britain. We should be better customers to the British islands, and the consumption of sugars and of teas would be greater, if the tax on sugars were more moderate; so that the revenue would not be a gainer by our laying it too high. But as to re-exportation, we shall be on a better foundation than Britain, if under these circumstances we should draw back the whole of the duty: for as the British merchant will advance a larger sum on importation than the Irish, he will be out of the interest of more money during the interval, which would be unreasonable: but this may be compensated, by making an allowance for that loss of interest in a proportionate difference in the drawback. We have contributed to the defence and conquest of the British settlements,

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but we are receiving a benefit beyond our contribution. Blake has fought for us as well as Wolfe. Britain has liberally shared with us all her conquests. I read, in Lord North's resolutions, the industry, the wealth, the prosperity of his native country; the consequence of their respect for this kingdom, the confirmation of that respect to our posterity. I read in them a cordial union, and the animated exertions of this country; and the new councils of Britain will be to her as a new territory, and worth perhaps that which she has lost.

Mr. DENNIS DALY. Agreeing to these resolutions, I stand upon the same ground as when I agreed to the address the first day of the session. I do not look upon a free trade as being free from all restrictions, but as free from such restrictions as are injurious, or useless; what we are to receive from England will give it to us completely. I had some objection to any specific resolutions, till I heard of the debates in England, and some publications in this country. It is now incumbent upon us to declare to the world we are satisfied, not so much to England as to Ireland, to silence those clamours some people seem ready to make use of. Who can tell what will be the consequence? I know the fashion has been to extol the loyalty of the volunteers,

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lunteers, and it is what they merit; but any man that will take upon him to answer for consequences, or to say what effect interested men may have upon forty thousand men in arms, is a much bolder man than I pretend to be.

Mr. OGLE. No man anticipates with warmer zeal than I do the future greatness of this country; no man will feel the completion with stronger sensibility. I do not hesitate, Sir, to declare, that when I was informed of the resolutions which the Right Hon. Gentleman has offered to the consideration of the House, I had some objections, not to the spirit of them, but to the time of their introduction. I did conceive it might have been premature. I did not esteem it prudent in us to have pledged ourselves before the propositions of the British Minister had passed through every stage of parliamentary course, and had become a perfect law. Nor did the conduct of some gentlemen of the opposition in England fail to raise some doubts in my breast; but from the critical situation of the times, and from some recent considerations, I am now highly sensible, that it has become absolutely necessary for the Irish Parliament to declare their approbation of them, in as ample and explicit a manner as possible. The expectations of the people have been raised

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raised to a very high degree; any apprehensions, which they may have formed, should be appeased; they should be satisfied, that they will not meet with any disappointment in their hopes; a moment should not be lost to gratify them. The wisdom, the virtue, the steadiness of their representatives have co-operated with their spirit, and obtained for them a redress of those grievances, under which this country has groaned for a long series of years. They should know it in the instant.

It has often been the cause of complaint in this House, that the Minister of Great Britain has paid very little attention to the interest of Ireland; and he has frequently been arraigned for that neglect. If it was just to blame when censure was founded, is it not equally so to give praise where praise is justly due? His conduct on the present occasion deserves our applause, and it would be the highest injustice not to give it; as it would be the greatest madness not to support him in our own cause.

The opposition of this kingdom have acted on the noblest principles: no party rage, no faction, no personal pique; no desire of enjoying the places or the emoluments of gentlemen in office, have drawn them from their
steady

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steady course. They wished to serve their country. They have opposed measures, not men. And here, Sir, I must draw a line between the opposition of England, and the opposition of Ireland. What has the conduct of the former been? What treatment has this country met with from the gentlemen of that predicament in the English Parliament? So long as Ireland could forward their measures, so long they stiled us their friends; but when their assistance and support would have been of the last consequence to us, when the first fair opportunity invited them to prove the sincerity of their friendship, they coldly withdrew themselves from the occasion. They acquiesced, but did not approve*; they seceded, they reserved themselves. Had they wished well, Sir, to the common interest of these kingdoms, they would have stood forth like men; they would have taken an active and decisive part; they would have given the Minister every support, and they would have shared with him the merits of a measure, which, I hope, will form the cement of an indissoluble union. However, Sir, let us act consistently; let us agree to the resolutions of the Right Hon. Gentleman, and manifest to the world, that the welfare of our country, and the glory of the

* Said to be the words of Mr. Fox.

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British empire, have been the ingenuous motives of our conduct.

Mr. METGE. Though it is always painful to me to rise in this House, yet on this joyful occasion it would be more painful to me to sit silent. Gratitude prompts every man to make honourable mention of those respectable characters, who participate largely in the merit of emancipating this country from the oppression of laws which were enacted by arbitrary power, and continued by blind policy, and illiberal prejudices, for a century—continued, until an irresistible spirit had been disseminated through all ranks of men in this country, which could no longer tolerate the unwieldy burden. The Lords North, Hillsborough, and Buckingham, (the characters to whom I allude) will be of glorious and immortal memory in this kingdom; and posterity, till time shall be no more, will sound their praises. When posterity shall look back into the history of these days, and read, that in one part of the world the richest blood of England was spilt, and her treasures almost exhausted, in the impotent attempt to subdue a manly and brave people, and make them bend to the yoke; and at the same period of time, that Great Britain yielded to the just demands of Ireland, which had been so long withheld:

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When posterity shall read, in one page, the profusion of English blood and treasure spent in America, and in the other Britain's immediate compliance with the demands of Ireland; that posterity will express great surprise, upon a comparative view of the conduct of Great Britain with respect to America and Ireland; they must revere the justice and wisdom of those respectable persons, who have concurred in effecting the salutary measure. No doubt, the representations Lord Buckinghamshire was pleased to make, of the good dispositions of this country, the ability and salutary counsels of Lords Hillsborough and North, conspired to obtain for Ireland the object of her wishes; but though I wish to give every just tribute to the respectable characters, whom the sudden warmth of my affections has compelled me to name, yet I doubt whether the unconstitutional evils, which we complain of, would be yet removed, had it not been for the laudable and well-tempered spirit of the people; and I trust that the wisdom of Lord North is strongly evinced, by his benign interposition in favour of this kingdom.

Ireland was ever remarked to be a brave nation—Is she brave? she is generous, she is affectionate. Who is now the object of her bounty, of her affections? Her sister kingdom

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in distress, Great Britain. Are there in this kingdom 50,000 men in arms ready to assert their constitutional rights, prompt to shed their last drop of blood in maintaining and supporting those rights? by one act of liberality and justice, I behold those arms in an instant turned against our *common foe*. I am sure, I speak the language of every Irishman; Ireland, when gratified in the completion of her wishes (and I consider the act as done, she at least has received a large earnest), will lend her credit, for money (I lament) she has none; she will lend her heroes, to co-operate with Great Britain, in humbling the pride and ambition of our inveterate enemies, France and Spain. Lord North has peculiar merit for the handsome manner in which he complied with our request. My affections are roused by the grace of Lord North—he has acknowledged our rights—he has almost upbraided us, for tamely and passively submitting so long to laws, by which we ought not to be bound—he has shewed his wisdom in distinguishing his propositions for this country—he did not hesitate to pronounce about the repeal of the odious laws; the justice of that measure shone in the instant; with respect to our trade with the colonies, as it requires many regulations, he has shewn his wisdom in postponing it for the deliberation of the Parliament of both kingdoms.

Sir

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Sir HERCULES LANGRISHE. The ordinary importation of sugars is 200,000 cwt. in the year; the duty upon importation is 1s. 8d. the cwt. the best merchants aver, that the expence makes it 3s. 2d. the duty in England is 6s. 8d. the cwt. Now, Sir, stating the inconvenience of the circuitous trade at 3s. 2d. if we were to lay a duty to the full extent paid in England, we should lay an additional charge of 3s. 6d. One single half-penny in the pound advance to the consumer would produce to the Revenue 4s. 8d.; the importer would pay 3s. 6d.; the profit 1s. 2d. If the consumption were the same, the Revenue would receive 50,000l. a year; it would receive the whole of the difference between the English and Irish duties. I question whether an express bargain would not be the most advantageous circumstance that could be made.

Lord WESTPORT *. I desire to add my tribute of congratulation to the general joy upon the present happy occasion: it may indeed be alleged, that nothing yet is completed for us; but the prospects are most favourable, and there can be little doubt, that the greatest and most important advantages must quickly result from

* Son of the Earl of Altamont.

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them, both to England and to this country. The infancy of Ireland will be cherished by the fostering hand of English maturity, while England herself will derive fresh strength and spirit from the youth and vigour of her Irish children. Happy for England that the weakness of her adversity has pointed out to her her own interest; thrice happy for Ireland that the spirit and virtue of the people have assisted to obtain for us advantages, that I fear we might long, very long, have fought for, if the justice of our own cause had been our only claim to them. The Minister of England deserves every acknowledgment from us; he has acted wisely by supporting us; he has acted wisely by himself, by Great Britain; he has acted wisely and kindly by Ireland. There is no resolution or acknowledgment that we should not readily enter into that he could desire from us; he has deserved much from us, and, as far as we are able, should receive it. There are other men too that should not be forgot by us; there are men that should ever be mentioned with what is nearest and dearest to this country. We must not forget those men that supported us when the Minister dared not venture to do it, however well he might be inclined to us, when the very mention of our distresses was odious and unpopular, and a hint at relieving them worse than

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than treason; those men should ever be revered by their country: the names of Rockingham, Beauchamp, Burke, and Nugent, deserve to be recorded in characters of gold, in the annals of Irish History.

Mr. TOLER. At a time when the conduct of this House is looked up to with respect by every country in Europe, our resolutions must have considerable weight on subjects of such high concern as are contained in the propositions at present before you. We have authentic information that resolutions of a similar nature have been adopted in the House of Commons of England. They involve matters of the greatest importance to each country, and must tend to consolidate the interests of both. Should this house remain silent on the present occasion, it would be a derogation from our dignity, and a dereliction of our duty. When so great a subject is in agitation, we should exercise a concurrence of jurisdiction, by an explicit avowal of our sentiments, how far the intended arrangement may be considered as eligible. For my part, I am free to declare, that I think the resolutions propounded are adequate to the purpose, and expressive of the general sense. They contain the great outlines of a measure, that, if carried into effect, may give the

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fairest assurance of attaining the wished-for end of uniting England and Ireland by indissoluble ties of mutual benefits and affection, and of renovating the vigour and dignity of the empire of Great Britain. Although, Sir, the business is not yet before you in detail, yet surely the principle on which it is founded deserves the earliest sanction of the Parliament of Ireland. Our stepping forward at the present juncture will answer the two important purposes of aiding the endeavours of the English Minister, and of conciliating the minds of the people at home. The conduct of Lord North deserves our warm acknowledgments; he has, in defiance of the prejudices of some, and of embarrassments from others, not only opened to our view an enlargement of commercial advantages, but has done what I value more, he has propounded a well-judged repeal, and made a liberal recognition, to an high-spirited people, of their natural and constitutional rights. I own that in the height of the exultation of the day, I have felt not a little mortified, to read in the public prints, that expressions had fallen from some respectable persons in the opposition of another country, which, by misrepresenting the conduct of Ireland, seemed calculated to impede the benefits which it desired. That the manly and temperate wisdom of our parliamentary coun-

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fels should be reprobated, as inconsistent with the dependence of a subordinate country, that non-import agreements, originating from necessity, and that taking up arms to provide for our safety, should be represented as acts of avowed hostility, and constructive rebellion, were imputations we had little reason to expect from an Irishman*, who, in this country, had been hitherto considered as an idol, and a firm assertor of our rights. But if it be possible that such are the political tenets of that gentleman's connections, if such be the language of the great Lord of Shilelah*, I trust that there is not a plant in his wood, that is not ready to offer itself to other hands to correct the aspersion. Sir, I cannot give credit to so improbable a publication. Newspapers are not always faithful vehicles; and I will not suppose, that a man, whose services we have been proud to acknowledge, could be so agitated by the phrenzy of party, as to forget all feelings for the country which gave him birth; to make a sacrifice of its natural rights, and to forfeit all title to its future regards: I will not believe it—

“Non detrahere vellem hærentem fronti
multâ cum laude coronam.”

* Earl of Shelburne.

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I think, Sir, that it is our duty to take every step that can satisfy the minds of our countrymen; we should always act as faithful centinels; when the public safety is endangered we should give the alarm; but when kind offices are intended, we ought not to shut the gates against fair offers of accommodation: we should rather be the harbingers of good tidings, the messengers of comfort to the people. They must be persuaded that a just representation has been made of their distress. They have seen the loyal, and firm deportment of their representatives in Parliament; not looking up with an awful blasphemy to others, as to an omnipotence, that "knoweth our necessities before we ask," nor are we to be reproached for an "ignorance in asking." Parliament has paid a proper attention to the quiet sensibility of an enlightened people, who have arrived to that stage of human perfection, between native hardihood which others have forgot, and enervating refinement which we never knew. Such a people has been emphatically stamped with a character which is vigorous, but not barbarous; polished, but not emasculated. Such are the people of this country, and as such they will be treated with respect. They are too strong to be trifled with; too sensible to be deceived. They are too brave not to be generous; and too generous not to be grateful.

Mr.

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Mr. C. H. COOTE. I rise to express the pleasure I feel in an hour when every heart seems to vibrate with joy, and every tongue meets in unison; it is happy for Ireland to be at length emancipated from the cruel and oppressive restrictions of England, and therefore every man who has felt an anxious and animated zeal for that great object, is called upon to declare his warmest approbation. The present conduct of England I look upon as a prelude to future and more extensive indulgence. I wish that the Parliament of Ireland would continue to preserve the dignity of the people, as also to maintain its own, and not to suffer the voice of panegyric to outweigh the credit of the kingdom. The great question in which Ireland is so much interested did not take its rise from party or faction, but has sprung forth from the united voice of the people; from thence it found its way into both Houses of Parliament, where unanimity finally sanctified the measure, and made it a national question; as such I think it ought to be considered, in whatever form it makes its appearance; it becomes the Parliament of Ireland to treat with England as a nation, and not with individuals in England. However high the credit or abilities of those who are the administration of England, the echoing their praises can produce no advantage to Ireland, whose interest it is to keep herself

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clear of all party connexions, which conduct alone can give us respect from every party ; and while we are determined to co-operate together, and are actuated by the noblest of all principles, a genuine love of our country, Ireland cannot fail to be respected by every nation in Europe. There are men of all ranks, both in and out of administration, who deserve well of Ireland : Lord Buckingham has the strongest claim on the esteem of Ireland, for the very strong and forcible manner with which he represented our situation, to which Ireland must consider herself in a large degree indebted for her present fair prospects.

Right Hon. Mr. CONOLLY. I will mention one circumstance which has not been touched upon by any member, and which is peculiarly interesting to the city of Dublin : we have an absolute certainty of avoiding the chance of an union with Great Britain ; we shall owe next Lady-day two millions ; Great Britain will owe two hundred millions. The end of Great Britain must be bankruptcy. Ireland has hauled its wind in time, and we shall now get more than I ever expected to see. There are many Whig families on the other side of the water who would have been happy to restore you to what they thought was your right.— He then went into a short consideration

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ration of the state of parties in this country ; and said, If I were suspicious, I might say the poverty of the country has made us honest. The dear-bought experience of the Minister probably will ever intimidate him from attempting to take away the liberty of a great nation. This Parliament ought to be characterised by the first name that any Parliament for two centuries past has deserved ; it is entitled to every compliment from this country.

Mr. OGLE, to explain. I should not by any means have troubled the House again upon the occasion ; but what fell from the Right Hon. Gentleman made it necessary for me to explain myself. I do not wish that any words of mine should be misinterpreted or misapplied. I mentioned neither Whig nor Tory. No assertion can satisfy me. I mentioned a fact, that when the propositions in favour of Ireland were introduced, gentlemen in opposition did not say one word in favour of Ireland. They said, they did not approve. Assertions are weak against facts, let them come from what authority they will, however respectable. I look upon those men alone to be our friends, who will stand forth in the hour of necessity to relieve us. I repeat, they declared, they did not approve ; they seceded ; they re-

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served themselves. What did that reserve mean? what but this; that if the Irish Parliament should not be satisfied with the propositions of Lord North, the English opposition to the Minister might then reproach him with having given too little; but if well received by this House, he might be censured for his extravagance; he might be told, he had been too lavish, and might have made a better bargain for Britain?

Mr. CONOLLY. I only meant to rescue the character of a part of the minority of Great Britain.

Sir BOYLE ROCHE paid a very just compliment to Lord Buckinghamshire's administration.

The PROVOST*. From the particular circumstances of my situation, I think myself called upon to deliver my sentiments; for many years of my life I have turned over the statute books of both kingdoms, and consequently must have had the mortification frequently to peruse the restraints on the trade of Ireland. Having had the honour to serve in several Parliaments for a great trading city†, it became my duty to give particular atten-

* Right Hon. John Hely Hutchinson.

† Corke.

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tion to all questions relating to the commerce of this country. I think it necessary that the representatives of the people should now give their opinions on this great subject, because there has been now sufficient time to consider it; but I am happy it has not been brought before them sooner. I should have been very unwilling to have delivered a hasty opinion on matters so complicated in their nature, and of such great importance to this kingdom. The publick would have had reason to be displeased with men of experience, if they were precipitate in declaring their opinions on occasions where the dearest rights of the people are concerned. I have now given this subject the most mature consideration; and can say with confidence, that when the resolutions proposed by Lord North are passed into laws, we shall have the full liberty of exporting all our manufactures, and the free and direct import of every article of any value to our commerce or manufactures. If I had not a just confidence in the honourable intentions of the noble Lord who introduced into the British House of Commons the propositions in favour of Ireland, I should have moved an amendment to the second motion now before the House, that after the word "settlements," those words should be added, "and with liberty to export the goods and produce imported from thence, either

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“ either manufactured or unmanufactured, with
 “ equal drawbacks, bounties, and premiums, as in
 “ Great Britain;” without which I think the
 import under duties equal to the British would
 not be beneficial to this kingdom; but it is the
 general opinion in which I concur; this idea is
 expressed by the general words used in his Lord-
 ship’s third proposition.

If I were desired to make one principal claim
 for the commerce and manufactures of Ireland,
 I should mention, that the restraints on our
 woollen manufactures should be rescinded. If I
 were desired to make a request on the same sub-
 ject, it would be that we should have liberty to
 export our manufactures to the British Colonies
 and Settlements in Africa and America, and to
 import directly from thence into Ireland the pro-
 duce and manufactures of those countries. If I
 were answered, that we should not only export
 all our own manufactures, but that Great
 Britain would open her foreign markets for their
 reception, and that we should have the trade
 with her Colonies and Settlements equally in all
 respects with herself — justice would enforce
 from me this reply :—“ Your ancestors, and
 “ not you, deprived Ireland of those benefits
 “ which Nature had given her; but you not
 “ only restore her to the full possession of all
 “ her

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“ her own natural advantages, but, at the same
 “ time, with a liberal hand bestow the most im-
 “ portant of your own, and give her all those
 “ means of acquiring which every part of your
 “ empire in Africa or America can supply.” I
 must take notice of other favours conferred of
 late years by Great Britain on this kingdom; the
 bounties on Irish linens exported from Great
 Britain, now extended to persons resident in
 Ireland; the bounties lately given on flax-seed
 imported into Ireland, and those on our fisheries
 equal to their own---and all paid by Great
 Britain. It is true, that the loyalty, merits, and
 sufferings of this country have entitled her to
 every thing that our sister kingdom can bestow:
 but what the conduct of England at former pe-
 riods had given us little reason to expect, what
 former Princes would not have recommended,
 and former ministers would not have proposed,
 it has been the glory of the present reign to
 accomplish.

—“ Quod Divum promittere nemo
 “ Auderet, volvenda dies en-attulit.”

I know of no articles of import in which we
 shall be restrained, when the proposed laws
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are passed, except glass and hops*, which are of little or no value to our commerce; in the latter it is understood we are to be relieved, and I hope in the former. If I had the honour to offer my humble opinion to the British Ministers, I would recommend the repeal of those acts; and would then propose to this House, that we should pass a bill never to import those articles from any country but Great Britain. This would not be inconsistent with the idea of a "Free Trade," for "law jars not with liberty, but well consists;" we shall owe such a return to Great Britain for the favours we are now in the course of obtaining from her. She supports armies for the defence of those Colonies and Settlements, and fleets for the protection of the trade with them; and she intends to give us a full participation of the whole of this trade, without our sharing any part of the burden, which we are not able to bear. I declare my entire approbation of the two motions now made.

Great and noble have been the exertions of Ld. North in favour of this country; his speech was a most masterly performance; his Lordship

* By a resolution which passed the British House of Commons, February 2, 1780, these are allowed to be imported.

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went through the several acts of parliament as clearly as if they had been the study of his life; the most experienced lawyer could not have done it better; and I am happy in thinking that the great advocate for Ireland is not only one of the ablest, but one of the honestest and most amiable men in Britain. But while I dwell with pleasure on the merits of the British Minister, I must do justice to the Minister of Ireland; the exertions of the former must be acknowledged to have proceeded from the strong representations in our favour, made by our present Chief Governor, to whom I think this kingdom ought ever to consider itself as highly indebted.

Mr. O'HARA. We have not received our information from the proper channel; and to say they have given us more than we expected, is not prudent.

Mr. CONOLLY. I said, that we had received more than I ever expected to see.

Mr. O'HARA. I alluded, in general, to what had passed.

The PROVOST. I assure him, I never meant to say this country had got more than I had reason

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son to expect. It might have a bad effect if it went to England that such expressions had been made use of.

Captain WILSON concurred in the resolutions proposed, at the same time in those alluded to.

Mr. FITZGIBBON signified his approbation of the resolutions, as, he said, it would frustrate the designs of interested men, who seemed desirous of disturbing the peace of society.

Mr. YELVERTON. I most cheerfully give my assent to the resolutions; they appear to me to be founded in wisdom; I therefore hope, they will pass without a dissentient voice; and that the unanimity of the House on this occasion will quiet the apprehensions of the multitude, and disappoint the views of wicked incendiaries (if any there are) who would direct the spirit of the people to an improper object. I am happy at the idea, that the swords of the Volunteers of Ireland are never to be drawn against any but the common enemies of the empire. Our situation is so much improved that an intemperate exultation is one of the greatest evils this country has to fear. But though I approve heartily of the resolutions, I must express my concern that I cannot follow several of my honourable friends

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friends to the end of their career. I think the joy of Parliament ought not to be less correct than the measures that have brought about that resolution which is the subject of it. The Minister of England has himself informed us, that he has not yet completed that system which is designed for our relief. I own therefore, Sir, that I do not think it wise in gentlemen to rise in their places and say, that we have got every thing to which this country is entitled, or which it has any reason to expect. What have we asked unanimously the first day of the session? A Free Trade. The idea I always entertained of a free trade was this: a trade subject to no controul but that of our own Parliament. As the condition of a subject is said to be free, when he is governed only by laws to which either by himself, or by his representative, he gave his consent; so the trade of any country is said to be free when it is regulated only by the legislature of that country. Ireland had a free trade before the legislature of Great Britain interfered; let that interference be withdrawn, and the trade of Ireland will be free again. While, then, Sir, there remains a single restriction upon the trade of this country, imposed by another Parliament, I will say the trade of this country cannot be said to be completely emancipated; but at the same time I say this, I would not be understood

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derstood to express the least apprehension that the trade of this country will not be completely emancipated. I am persuaded, from this extraordinary illumination of British counsels, which has taught them what is due to this country, and salutary to themselves, that we shall get every thing we have a right to expect, in point either of justice or policy. The British Minister has spoken such a language, that one would imagine, the most sanguine friends of this country had dictated to him the terms. I have in this House, upon former occasions, distinguished between what I conceived to be the right of this country, and matter of concession in England; between a trade to foreign parts, and a trade to the Colonies. I must therefore be very much flattered indeed, when I find the Minister in England has expressed himself in almost the same words in which I had expressed myself in his House. If the resolutions in England should be carried into a law, I am happy in saying, there is hardly a restraint remaining that can be considered as a commercial grievance, though it may as a constitutional affront. I will mention a few of them: one is the restraint of 5 George III. upon the exportation of raw silk. I acknowledge, that, in the present condition of Ireland, she has no great reason to complain of it; but, when our woollen trade is extended, we shall have the trade

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trade to the Levant*, and shall bring back silk in exchange for our cloth; it will be injurious to this country, if the re-exportation of that silk is not allowed; another is the article of hops†; a third is the 19 George II. the restraint upon the importation of glass: here I must observe, at the same time, that it would be a wise thing in Ireland to impose a restraint upon the importation of glass, now that we have got a right to export it. The last, and only remaining restriction that I can recollect, is that on the exportation of tobacco to any country but Great Britain: this, as an article of commerce, would not be deserving of notice, but, as it affects the constitution, calls aloud for animadversion. Indeed they are all rather constitutional than commercial grievances; for if a negotiation were set on foot between us and Great Britain, and we imposed those restraints by our own authority, by way of barter for the Colony trade, I doubt whether Ireland would not have the best of the bargain. But why should we furnish factious men, if any such there are, in the opposition in Great Britain, with an opportunity of saying, You see how intemperate their exultation was!—Speaking to the Minister, they will say, You outran their wishes—you might have conciliated Ire-

* See the third Resolution of the British House of Commons, Feb. 2.

† See note on p. 31.

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land upon cheaper terms. My whole object is to correct the intemperance of that joy, which has escaped from gentlemen in the openness of their hearts, and to disarm opposition in another place of a very dangerous argument. There are many situations in which even silence is wisdom.

Mr. GREEN. I congratulate the House, and kingdom at large, upon being soon one of the greatest commercial kingdoms in the world.

Sir HENRY CAVENDISH. I rise only to a single fact, which I think at this time particularly necessary to be known, because I would not have the smallest suspicion remain upon the mind of any man, respecting the conduct of Lord North in this business; and though I believe no gentleman suspects that he has acted merely upon the spur of the present occasion, or through fear, yet our debates are so grossly and maliciously represented, that it is possible something that has passed to-night may tend to deceive some people. The name of Lord North, and the armed societies of this country, have been mentioned so nearly together, that I am apprehensive lest any individual should suppose that his conduct has been actuated by fear of those armed societies, and that what he has done has been merely upon the spur of the occasion. I rise therefore to state to the house, that near
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six years ago, when an application was made to the British Parliament from this country, from Scotland, and from some manufacturing counties in England, respecting the linen trade, I had the honour of being nominated with General Conway to wait upon Lord North, respecting the linen trade of this country; I then had repeated opportunities of knowing the sentiments of that noble Lord, respecting the trade of this country; they were such as gave me great satisfaction; for I was persuaded, from the principles upon which he argued, that whenever he had an opportunity of doing essential service to this country, he would do it. Several acts of Parliament have passed since that time, beneficial to this country, under his administration; but finding those acts of Parliament have not been so beneficial to us as were expected, he has taken this opportunity of gratifying his own wishes, founded in judgment, in the mutual interests of both kingdoms, and has completed that system of trade which will do him infinite honour, and be an advantage to this country never to be forgotten.

Mr. GRATTAN. As I was the person who first pressed the House this session to speak definitively upon the subject of trade, I shall trouble you a few moments, by declaring how far that
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object

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object is obtained. I did at first think the time rather premature; but I do conceive the three resolutions alluded to, in substance to be adequate to the wishes, and adequate to the distresses of the kingdom. I conceive the repeal of the prohibitions on our exports, a reparation to an injured constitution; as I conceive the plantation trade an act of kindness, and justice on the part of England, to a country that has bled in her cause, and contributed, by an heavy military establishment, to the maintaining those settlements with which hitherto we are forbidden to trade. I consider both together, the export of manufactures, and the plantation trade, as a cause of immediate satisfaction, a foundation of future prosperity, and of indissoluble affection. I am guarded, however, in the praise of ministers; an extravagance of joy is always undignified, and generally insincere. But let me remind gentlemen, as this country has by public spirit, and public pride, placed herself high in Europe, and by her own virtue recovered her own rights, an adherence to the same spirit is the best way to guarantee them. I do remember the time, when confidence in every administration, diffidence in Parliament, and diffidence in the people, were the creed of political wisdom; I do recollect the time when a confidence in the exertion of Parliament, when an application to the

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the people, and reliance upon their spirit, was thought the height of immoderate opposition. I have seen my country reduced to impending ruin by the former opinions; I have seen that ruin averted by the latter. When therefore gentlemen praise so lavishly a minister, who is, I allow, highly deserving, I mean the Lord Lieutenant, I hope they will not forget themselves; that they themselves, returning at last to constitutional and national sentiments, are the principal objects of approbation, and the efficient causes of a free trade; and if ever this country shall again approach that state of impending ruin, they will depart from such councils as prevailed during former sessions of Parliament, and recur to other councils, which they once called immoderate, but by which that ruin has been averted. I think it the duty of every member, as much as possible, to make the people understand the benefit they have received. The people of Ireland are not disposed to licentiousness, or to faction: they are exactly in that state of true health which has departed from political torpor, and has not proceeded to political violence; they are ever ready to believe well of every minister who seems to intend well by them; they have not only done honour to themselves, their late conduct will be a prodigy in history. Would it have been believed, that in a

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country where there have been so many apprehensions about entrusting the subjects with a militia, these very subjects should array, accoutre, and discipline themselves, to the number of perhaps forty thousand, and from that popular armament, that no confusion, no disorder, but an unknown tranquillity should have proceeded? The law seems to have waited upon the arms of the people, for it was never so well executed before. There seems to have been in the deportment of these forty thousand men, in the armed majesty of the people—I say, there seems to have been something providential. We stand now in point of constitution restored, or certainly very near a full restoration; capable of defending our Country and King, without any addition to the military establishment: capable, Sir, of defending both, without any increase of public expence. Sir, I might add another wonder; this island seems to have changed its place on the globe, and, instead of being a corner of the earth, it is now the centre of things; the medium of communication between the old world and the new. I rather have dwelt upon the advantages this country will derive from those new laws, than on the personal merit of the men who have obtained them; because the former are nearest my heart: for I am more gratified by the contemplation of public benefits

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than of personal services. I shall be ever ready to acknowledge great merit in the Minister of England, great merit in the present administration of Ireland, retaining always a profound and constitutional respect for the dignity of this country, and a recollection of that public spirit which has prompted three millions of men to exert more than human fortitude, and more than human discretion.

Mr. PONSONBY spoke next for the resolutions.

Sir HENRY HARTSTONGE expressed his approbation of the resolutions; and said, he must profess himself a courtier upon this occasion.

Mr. BURGH *. After the very handsome and very able manner, in which some of the most distinguished characters of this, or perhaps any other country, have testified their approbation of what has been done, I should think it utterly unnecessary for me to say any thing upon the subject, if I did not apprehend, that silence itself might seem to speak, might be thought to intimate a difference of opinion from those gentlemen who have gone before me, in whose sentiments I most heartily concur.

* Late Prime Serjeant.

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I have never, in public or private life, had a wish in which my heart was more ardently engaged; than in that of establishing *the trade of Ireland*. That being accomplished, the next great object is to secure *the peace* of Ireland.

This country, Sir, is now in that state in which Virgil describes the husbandmen—happy indeed if they but know their happiness. Nothing can defeat our prosperity, but our being insensible of the blessings we enjoy. If a spirit of faction or discontent should go forth, a free trade is given in vain; there is an end of that industry, which alone can make it profitable: the infancy of commerce must be nursed in the lap of peace.

Sir, I say this, hoping that people without doors will pay some little attention to the voice of a man, who, I think, they are assured is their friend. I have promised to scrutinize those propositions with a jealous eye: I have done so; I have sifted them to the bottom; I think them satisfactory.

I would not however be understood to say, that every thing that is to be done is included in those resolutions. I agree that there are some articles omitted, which have been particularized by my honourable friend on the second bench *.

* Mr. Yelverton,

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I may add one to those that he has mentioned: Fuller's Earth. And perhaps I might enumerate a few other instances; but, from the language that accompanied the introduction of those resolutions in another place, I am satisfied that these omissions are to be imputed to error, and not to intention. When they shall be stated by the Minister of this country, I am persuaded they will be rectified. I consider myself, therefore, as giving my approbation to *an entire plan* (supposing it to be complete, as I make no doubt it will be) of which these resolutions are no more than the outline. And now, Sir, as almost every one has said something on the subject of gratitude, let me call gentlemen's attention to one object of it, that I am certain is in every man's breast: it now appears, that our most gracious Sovereign has turned his thoughts, not in vain, to the distresses of his faithful subjects of this kingdom.

Sir, I am as willing as any man to give credit to the British Minister; I am persuaded, he deserves it. But let us not make enemies of any body of men; let us not give partial praises, which amount to partial censure. We owe these benefits to his Majesty; to his Majesty's Ministers; to the Parliament of England, to the people of England; to the Parliament of Ireland—to the people of Ireland.

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I must not, Sir, pass over in silence another object of our gratitude, to whom great praise is certainly due: I think, I may declare, without a breach of confidence, that I have seen representations sent over to England, under the hand of our Chief Governor, that almost deserved to be called remonstrances, in behalf of Ireland. Sir, I think myself bound, in justice, to give his Excellency this praise, because I had a particular opportunity of knowing that he deserves it. I am in a situation, in which I may praise him thus far without meanness; it is the testimony of a man, who never wishes to be obliged to him.

If, Sir, the people of this kingdom shall view these benefits in their true light, if they will allow themselves with peace and industry to enjoy those advantages, this will be a happy country indeed. Let us not, at least for the present, busy ourselves with mere points of speculation, with dormant claims that may never be revived. Let us, Sir, be wise enough to reflect, that, as we grow in strength and opulence, our constitution must invigorate of itself. The chimerical idea of binding us by foreign laws will drop by its own weakness. Sir, this kingdom has lately been very emphatically called "Young Ireland." Let our Young Ireland be like Young Hercules: Let her content herself, during her infancy, with strangling

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strangling those serpents that threaten her existence; it is time enough to think of encountering the Hydra.

Mr. FLOOD. I have listened thus long, Sir, to hear whether any person rose to express any thing like dissatisfaction; determined, if any one had, to endeavour to remove it to the best of my power. I need not say that nothing of that sort has been expressed; and therefore I should not rise now, if so many gentlemen in every particular superior to me had not done so without occasion, as I am obliged to do also. Indeed, Sir, I am led to it by two things that have happened; one on the one side of the water, and one on the other; that is to say, by the conduct of a great body of men in England, who have often sustained the character of Friends to this country, and to all the connections of Great Britain, but who, on this occasion, seem a little to have deserted the cause of this country. I will not call it an unhappy country notwithstanding, sheltered as it is, under the favour and justice of its Sovereign, protected by the integrity of its ministers, supported by the wisdom of the British Parliament, founded upon the broad basis at home of popular virtue; that virtue justly represented by the integrity of this House, and defended by men armed in the cause of their King and Country, and

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and who, I am persuaded, never once thought of using those arms in any other cause, but against a foreign enemy. That desperate ministers, by iniquity and oppression, could not have roused a great, a magnanimous nation to resistance, I will not say; but nothing was before me to make me think that we were verging to such extremities. We have seen the fetters of our commerce for some years falling off gradually. In Lord Harcourt's administration, many have been taken off; our fisheries were extended; a bounty was given in England upon flax-seed imported into this kingdom, and we were encouraged in exporting cloths and accoutrements for the army in our service abroad. In the last session of parliament, you obtained many further advantages in the trade to Africa, and the West Indies. Woollen, cotton, coals, glass, hops, and gun-powder, only, were excepted; I think, except coals and gun-powder, you may consider these as now obtained. The Minister has expressed himself positively with regard to glass; he has expressed himself positively with regard to hops*; he has concluded with saying, 'if there is any thing more any man can name that Ireland can desire, that is not an immediate, and essential injury to Great Britain, Ireland shall have that also.' But, Sir, it is not merely the skeleton of

* See note on p. 31.

these

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these resolutions to which I advert; it is the great and noble principles upon which they are founded. The Minister of Great Britain, in the face of the Parliament of Great Britain, in the face of the clamour of the manufacturers of Great Britain, in the face of the interested prejudices that have been established for above a century in that country, has dared to tell them; and that man is a great minister who dares to tell great truths to a great nation; it is the true character of a great minister to do so; he dared to tell that great people, that Ireland had a right to an unlimited trade with all foreign countries. What Irishman could have expressed himself in larger terms? I will pay every compliment that is due to ministers, though under no particular obligation to them; but I will flatter no man with understating the pretensions of this country. What is a free trade? I was one of the first, and the most decided, in using the term: It is a trade to all the countries in the world, subject only to the restraint of your own legislature, or that of the country with which you trade; consequently in Britain, and the British Colonies, subject to the restrictions of the legislature of Great Britain. This is a principle as clear as that sun which I hope shines on our reviving Empire, and as wide as the universe itself, if the universe were wider than it is; it was in that sense I used it, and

and in that sense it is in effect admitted and obtained. I mentioned, Sir, that a circumstance on this side of the water made me think it necessary to say one word; and that was, Sir, the ungenerous and mistaken report that seemed to have circulated for twenty-four hours about this metropolis, which required to be corrected, and it stands now corrected. It is the business of this House to favour the rights, and to correct the prejudices, of the people. This House has stood a monument of mighty virtue. No assembly of men that I have ever read of, have ever appeared with more majesty, because none with more rectitude. The voice of this House has been truly the voice of the nation; not of this man, or that man, however respectable; there was not one man, or one set of men, in this country, that could have made, or unmade, that which you have done; it was the voice of the nation, it was the voice of the people. You have been treated as that conduct deserved; not as mercenary individuals; but the nation of Great Britain has spoken to the nation of Ireland, and it has spoken satisfactorily. Thank God it has! My heart is full of the subject: and if I were not sensible that I have trespassed too much upon you already, I should endeavour to say something more; I should, amidst all the calamities that impend over this nation; I should congratulate

tulate you, that you have a King who has effectually interposed in favour of this Country, that you have a Minister who has dared to state a truth as bold as any minister has spoken to the people of England. I remember a great minister, now in his grave, who was often depreciated while he lived, though we wish for him now that he is dead. He said, he never heard any man but Sir John Barnard speak dispassionately of the trade of these countries, and he has known him, when he spoke of our claims, to be thought almost a madman, when he spoke of what that minister thought to be oracles of truth. Ministers are obliged often to give way to the interested thousands that swarm about them, and are driven from the great principles by which nations ought to be governed. One of the greatest causes of the misfortunes that have happened to great nations is, that they have not had ministers who would adopt liberal, avowed, noble systems; who would appeal to the conviction of the people, and govern by the good-will and by the confidence of the governed. At the same time that I justly pay, among his Majesty's ministers, the principal tribute on this subject to that Minister who holds the first station in the British cabinet, who moved these resolutions, and who anticipated an objection that might be made by narrow minds only to condemn it, namely, that the

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the English bounties on linen might be taken off, as what has been called the compact about woollens was given up—‘do not dream of such a thing,’ said the noble Lord; ‘the people of Ireland have a right to a continuance of the participation of that bounty.’ I beg pardon for having diverged into this circumstance; but, as a mark of liberal sentiment, it deserves commemoration—though I have, I say, paid the principal honour to him, amongst his Majesty’s ministers on this subject, I do not by any means wish to pass over many great and deserving men in the administration of England, or amongst the principal peers and commons of England; one of the ministers, a native of this country*, who professed that he took employment upon condition that this country should be relieved, cannot be forgotten;—here give me leave also to pay a tribute of private friendship. In the ranks of opposition stands an honourable gentleman†, who, by honour, by ability, by many social and public virtues, is loved and esteemed by those who know him: His words in the English Parliament, as represented in the papers sent over here, have been so represented as to displease some of his best wishers, and best friends. I think it an act of friendship to say, that he has

* Earl of Hillsborough.

† Mr. Fox.

contradicted

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contradicted them, and has begged his friends to say, those sentiments have not fallen from his lips. I feel myself involved in a multiplicity of things, and fearful of trespassing upon you; yet I will not take my leave without saying one word, one valedictory word to the Volunteer Corps of this kingdom. When the vessel of the state was driving before the wind, when the defence of it was avowedly left to itself—instead of stooping under a mean despondency, they covered the country with military bodies, self-arrayed, self-accoutred, self-paid—paid by the dignified reflection upon their own virtue, and by the anticipated veneration of an applauding posterity. The sober energy of their military ardour exhibited a spectacle which Lycurgus, amidst the severity of Sparta, might have smiled to look on. Forty thousand men have assembled casually to every neighbouring standard; and yet in a country once blemished by levity and riot, from the East to the West, and from the Southern to the Northern boundary of it, you have not heard the accent of riot. Amidst all this civil and military virtue—amidst all this integrity in the representatives, and in the body of the people, what have you to fear? It is impossible but you must succeed in every thing that is right, and in every thing that is moderate;—and nothing that is wrong, and nothing that is immoderate, can dwell within your breasts.

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Mr. PARNELL. The highest compliment I can pay to the English government is, to say that their present conduct is the reverse of their former. I hope their conduct may be ominous for the good of the whole empire. The proof they have given of their justice and integrity in this instance will be of more service to them in their future negotiations with America, than any thing they can derive from the disappointed efforts of their unfortunate army.

Mr. FLOOD. Just as I sat down, I recollected I had been guilty of a great omission; I had paid a due compliment to my sovereign: I did not pay a compliment due to his representative; that, amongst many other things, escaped my memory.

Mr. ATTORNEY GENERAL *. I rise to return thanks, not only to persons who have received particular compliments from men, the ablest in this, or any part of the British empire, but to return my thanks to gentlemen who have distinguished themselves in consequence of a conversation I had the honour to promote on a former day. Whilst we are looking upon what has been done, let us consider whether some advantage may not be derived from what we are

* Rt. Hon. John Scott.

doing.

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doing. I consider these resolutions, as resolutions in aid of our friends in Great Britain. It is impossible for our friends on the other side of the water to recede; because they know now to a demonstration, that they are acceptable to the people in Ireland. We have now put the great seal of the people to sanctify what has been done. Let me mention one word more; I think it will be of use: there are a set of gentlemen in another country, individually very respectable, loved and honoured in this country, admired all over Europe, much further. I fear, for the first time, they have brought their characters in this country into hazard. Let them shew what they meant by that silence; let them shew that they wish to see every thing done for Ireland; let them from this day shew not a dissentient voice in Great Britain; then, Sir, the very respectable gentlemen in this country, who pay a tribute to private friendship, will have an opportunity in the same language to applaud their conduct. If they shall persevere, if they shall mark their discontent by a conduct inimical to this country, let them beware of their vengeance: let them beware of the vengeance of Heaven.

I have been fortunate enough to foresee (for I am no prophet) that Great Britain would, and

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must

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must do, because it ought, what it has been doing. I have said, and I am sure it will not be an unpleasant circumstance to the recollection of a sincere friend of mine; I have long since said, when those Volunteers were in their infancy, they would be one time or other the salvation of this country. I know not whether what proceeded from me had the effect I wished it to have. I have lived to see this great truth established, that Great Britain has done every thing we thought it ought to do; that the Volunteers, as far as they have gone, have been the salvation of this country. Let me descend from the degree of grandeur this debate has been carried on with, to offer a piece of advice: to what purpose is it, that men speak sentiments in this House equal to any of the ablest orators, if that voice is to be conveyed contaminated, misrepresented, and abused? if it be in the power of any man to convey those sentiments, he will deserve ten-fold penalty, if the sentiments shall come distorted, or misrepresented either to the public of this country, or any other. It is of great value that your sentiments should be faithfully represented, because they have been honourably expressed. If the debate of this day should be so foully belied as I have seen many, it cannot be done but by the emissary hireling of the common

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common enemy, hired to misrepresent our sentiments in this country. I love the press; I always stood up for it. I hope it will be understood that the misrepresentation of this debate shall call for parliamentary censure, if ever it shall be called for.

Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY then spoke; and Mr. FLOOD said a few words in answer to him: to which Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY replied. The second resolution then passed, *nem. con.*

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DEBATE

D E B A T E

IN THE IRISH

HOUSE of LORDS.

Tuesday, December 21.

THE EARL of SHANNON, after a short preface, moved the House to agree to the two following Resolutions.

“ Resolved, That the exportation from this kingdom of its woollen and other manufactures to all foreign places will materially tend to relieve its distresses, encrease its wealth, promote its prosperity, and thereby advance the welfare of Great Britain, and the common strength, wealth, and commerce, of the British empire.

“ Resolved,

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“ Resolved, That a liberty for this kingdom to trade with the British Colonies in America, the West Indies, and the British Settlements on the coast of Africa, in like manner as trade is carried on between Great Britain, and the said Colonies and Settlements, will be productive of very great commercial benefits, will be a most affectionate mark of the regard and attention of Great Britain to our distresses, and will give new vigour to the zeal of his Majesty's brave and loyal people of Ireland to stand forward in support of his Majesty's person and government, and the interest, the honour, and the dignity, of the British empire.”

The ARCHBISHOP of CASHELL*. Having very lately expressed my sentiments upon a subject similar to that now under consideration, I shall trouble your Lordships with a few words only on the present occasion.

Any man who knows the commercial state of this country, must have often lamented and condemned those cruel restrictions which ignorance suggested, and prejudice imposed, upon the industry and the ingenuity of this country; restrictions which have almost rendered desolation

* Dr. Charles Agar,

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familiar

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familiar to us. The Genius of Trade sickened under their baneful influence; and the arm of Industry grew weak through disuse. But the memorable day is at length come, when we have obtained in the English Minister (Lord North) an advocate as able as he is just, and as wise as he is generous. He has stood forth an advocate for the distressed; and as justice, reason, and liberality, were his theme, when he pleaded the cause of this country, we found (what we might have expected) a friend in every man, whom prejudice had not marked for her own. If justice as well as favour had been delayed, we should remember that insurmountable difficulties often retard the execution of schemes, which in themselves are obviously right. The private interests of some men, and the prejudices of many, too often obstruct the way. Nor is it always in the power of a Minister to defeat the meanness of the one, or to conquer the obstinacy of the other. But, in the present instance, the propositions of the English Minister were received by the Commons of Great Britain with a concurrence suited to their justice, and to our merits; a concurrence, which is as honourable, and will be as advantageous to them, as it is beneficial and grateful to this nation; a concurrence, which will give to this country every thing which poverty can desire, loyalty deserve, and liberality bestow;

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a concurrence, which must remove every shade of dissatisfaction, and establish the most perfect union and harmony between Great Britain and Ireland; a harmony which (if improved) will be the basis of our mutual strength, wealth, and happiness.

But, to preserve this harmony, we must reprobate the conduct of those who would diffuse through this kingdom jealousy and discontent, in the moment when public safety and public gratitude require unanimity and vigour.

While the heads and the hands of Great Britain and Ireland co-operate, our situation cannot be desperate. But if we would be safe, we must be upon our guard, as well against domestic enemies, who would sow dissatisfaction in our minds, as against foreign foes, who would invade our property.

If we wish to promote either the particular interest of our own country, or the general welfare of the British empire; if we wish to give efficacy to the councils of those who plan, or vigour to the arms of those who execute, for the safety of the state, unanimity should be the proof of our sincerity: and our only contest from this moment should be to promote, as far as we are

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able, the honour, the glory, and the welfare, of his Majesty's dominions in general.

For this purpose, our wishes and our wants should no more be concealed from Great Britain than from ourselves. But the sense of the nation should be spoken by the Parliament of the nation, and not by factious and designing men.

And as the resolutions, which have been moved, contain every thing which is necessary to gratify our wishes, and to supply our wants—to remove jealousy, and establish confidence, between Great Britain and Ireland—to excite our industry—to promote our commerce—and to diffuse through this nation wealth and happiness, they have my hearty concurrence.

LORD IRNHAM. Every praise is due to the British Minister, and the chief Governor of this kingdom; but the persons stiled the opposition, in another country, have deserted us; and shewed, that their enmity to the Minister was alone the motive of their actions, for they have denied their support to this country when most wanted. However, as the present resolutions are merely giving an opinion of our sense of what is doing for us, and not praising ministers, or thanking them, they have my concurrence.

LORD

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LORD DESART. The address of the first day of the session would be imperfect but for these resolutions; and the natural enemies of these kingdoms will be apalled, when they hear the unanimity and loyalty of the Irish Parliament.

LORD ANNALY *. Thanks are due, first to Providence; in the second place, to ourselves; and, lastly, to our gracious Sovereign, who has bent his royal ear to the voice of his faithful people. The people of England are likewise entitled to our thanks, in that they have concurred with us; and though the conduct of our sister nation has lately been illiberal in regard to us, yet their prejudices seem to be dissolving, and we are not to forget, that we have long since been under singular obligations to that kingdom; they first rescued us from barbarism, and next delivered us from popery and arbitrary power; for on that very chair (pointing to the throne) a pageant of a Monarch, an abdicated bigot, fat, and with one dash of a pen attainted most of your Lordships' ancestors; so that it is to England, and its Deliverer, you owe your seats in this House; and if Britain, since that time, has not behaved with all that affection we could wish, she has now

* Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench.

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done it away, and all jealousies and animosities must be buried in oblivion.

EARL of BELLAMONT. The merit of our present emancipation is principally to be ascribed to the Father of his people.

He then made some very severe observations on the conduct of the persons styled the opposition in England: many of them, he said, he knew, and respected in their private capacity; but in their public one they merited not the confidence either of the people of this kingdom or the other; their only view and sole aim being merely to cry down the ministry, in order to get into their places; *measures* indeed was the pretence of their opposition, but it was evident the removal of the *men* alone was their object. If (continued his Lordship) the public papers have rightly informed me, their late conduct in the House of Commons, when the affairs of this kingdom came on, deserves the severest reprobation and contempt: while they thought the Minister did not mean to go into the business of Ireland, they called loudly for censure against him, for not doing it; but when they found him sincerely inclined to enter upon this business, they forsook us, and basely seceded. No future conduct of theirs can do away this, not even if they should crouch to us for favour and confidence;

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fidence; though like serpents they should lick the dust, we are bound to spurn the reptiles from our feet!

EARL of FARNHAM. These resolutions have my hearty concurrence. I have for many years taken an active part in the affairs of this kingdom, but never expected they would have taken the favourable turn they have now; I never expected to live to see this happy day, when the name of Englishman and Irishman shall no longer be distinguished; we are embarked in one bottom, and our voyage must be alike profitable or unsuccessful; and though some lowering clouds and gathering storms may now threaten us, if we are unanimous, we must safely arrive into port. England and Ireland united can never be subdued. I thank God, I have lived to see the day, when the Minister of Britain advances towards us, the messenger of our King, with the Scales of Justice in one hand, and the Cornucopia of Liberality in the other.

Viscount MOUNTMORRES. My Lords, when first it was intimated to me, that resolutions were to be proposed in Parliament, in consequence of the proceedings relative to our trade in the English legislature, I was against that measure, because I was aware of the extreme difficulty of framing them; but I have since changed my mind,

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mind, in consequence of the complexion of the public prints last Monday, alluded to by the learned lord who spoke last; I shall therefore begin now with an aphorism, with which I concluded my speech when last I had the honour of addressing myself to your lordships, and which, it seems, was not heard below the bar, That I did not think it the part of a consistent man, to vary his opinion, as the pilot does the navigation of his vessel, according to the tempest and situation of the state.

The learned Lord has alluded to the various obligations we have been under to England from time to time, and more particularly at the Revolution. If it were necessary or expedient to thank them now, precedents are not wanting: your Lordships ancestors, in 1692, returned thanks by letter to the two Houses of the English Parliament, for rescuing this country from popery and arbitrary sway; but these propositions of the noble Earl do not want precedents, for they rest upon their own merits, and are a far more dignified proceeding.

These propositions, if carried into effect, will assist the intentions of our friends in England; they will make our conduct appear in the most respectable light; co-operating and vying with
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the Parliament of England, in giving life, vigour, and efficacy, to the requisition of a Free Trade; making that proposition practicable; realizing and carrying into effect a great truth, for the benefit and advantage of this country.

I am well pleased, my Lords, that Parliament have taken this matter into their consideration; if they made use of an indefinite expression at the commencement of this session, they are now called upon to define it, otherwise the ill-intentioned to this country may put us in the wrong; licentious tribunes may put their own construction upon it; they may put their *veto* upon measures evidently calculated for the benefit of Ireland. If they succeed in this, things may be thrown into anarchy and confusion; and the next thing they may propose, perhaps, will be an Agrarian law; Parliament are therefore called upon to be explicit, and to take the lead; and this measure is still wanting, to round and to accomplish their proceedings.

With regard to the propositions themselves, indenting with, and corroborating the resolutions proposed in the British Parliament, I conceive the first to give us freedom of trade in the fullest sense (for I will not differ about trifles, the
essentials

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essentials are given up). The ports of this country are now open, manufactures of the growth and product of this country may soon be carried to the remotest parts of the earth, as far as winds can waft, or sails can carry them; our trade is as free as that of the freest nations (for England and Holland have their monopolies and their East India companies), subject to no regulations but what we ourselves, or the nations in amity with Great Britain, may impose upon them. Thus the claim of right is satisfied, and justice at length is done to this country.

By the second, my Lords, a treaty of the most friendly nature is held forth by Great Britain, a trade with her Colonies upon equal terms with herself; a commerce is offered to you with all the dignity of compact and negotiation, a treaty of equal with equal, and friend with friend. And here, my Lords, though I do not intend to go out of my own province, thus much I will say, that if the principal produce of the West India islands, that of sugar, will come dearer to us, when the duties are equalized upon direct importation, than through the circuitous importation through England; yet I submit it to the able and intelligent, whether the back carriage will not make us
amends?

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amends? whether our ships going and returning with merchandise, instead of returning empty, as they do at present, will not remedy that inconvenience? If, my Lords, these propositions passed into a law will not amount to a Free Trade, satisfying our claim of right, and exceeding our demands, sure I am I know not what will; let sophists define what a Free Trade is, for plain and ordinary men are unequal to the task.

So much has already been said, on a former occasion, of our particular obligations for the advantages which open to our view, that I should gladly pass that subject by for the present; something I must say, however, though not much.

In the first place, then, I conceive we are indebted to ourselves. Every man in private life is his best friend or worse foe; the same principle is applicable to the public. Nations, like individuals, are the principal fabricators of their own fortunes. To talk, however, my Lords, of compulsive necessity operating upon the Parliament of Great Britain, would be unworthy and unwise; unworthy—because we should speak vauntingly of our own prowess; unwise—because, if force has gained us these

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advantages, the same principle may operate against their continuance, if in the vicissitude of human affairs Great Britain should regain her wonted ascendant; whereas, founded on the claims of right and equity, they will be lasting; their duration will be commensurate to the principle from which they flow, and endure and be perpetuated to this country.

I adhere to the opinion of a former day, that we are indebted to a noble Marquis* and his friends, for opening our cause. I will not believe what I see in the public prints, from what I daily observe here; the eloquence which one day charms your ears, is represented to your eyes the next as mutilated nonsense. I cannot suppose that able men, candidates for that power and office to which their rank and abilities may lead them, will unwisely forego the fruits of a well-earned popularity, by either opposition or tame acquiescence to measures originating from themselves, and thereby lose the affections of three millions of their fellow subjects.

I freely acknowledge, my Lords, that I think we are indebted to the noble Lord, the leader of administration, though I still think earlier relief might have been given to this country at

* Of Rockingham.

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the close of the last session of Parliament but the late merit of the Minister has done away that consideration, for if the propositions themselves gave a free trade, the mode of introducing them secures and entails them upon this country; they were not founded on the ready foundation of expedient or necessity, but upon the solid rock of equity and justice.

My Lords, I do not mean to pronounce a panegyric, but to render severe justice. I will not compare him to a Ximenes or a Chaham; I will not profane the tombs of the dead, raise up flattering altars to the living. I must stop here, though I will not go farther, or enter into a detail of American affairs, lest it should appear invidious, and intended as an abatement and draw-back of acknowledged merit. I speak as a member of the Irish Parliament; his merit with regard to us is finished and complete.

My Lords, it is recorded of one of the great ministers that I alluded to (cardinal Ximenes), that when Ferdinand the Catholic had passed a grant of the silk works at Granada, founded in monopoly, vexation, and injustice, and it was brought to him to ratify, he took it in his hands and tore it to pieces, in the presence of the whole court, and made such a strong representation

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fention against it as at once gained him the approbation of his prince, and endeared him to the people. The historian of his life further tells you, that the friends of their country gathered up the torn fragments, and deposited them among the archives of the kingdom at Alca, where they remain to this day, a lasting monument of his firmness and inflexible integrity.

When posterity shall read those laws, my Lords, which so long have kept this country in commercial subjection and servility, let those canceled and abrogated laws remain upon the code, but let them remain there as a monument of the conduct of the minister, who has dissipated the prejudices of a century; let the same justice be done to that minister who first told great truths to a great people, and who dared to appeal from the prejudices of his countrymen, and from the mortals that perish, to that justice which is eternal, and to that truth which never dies.

DUKE of LEINSTER. When I mentioned to your Lordships the conduct of the noble Earl lately come into high office in another country, a near relation of my own *; when I spoke of

* Earl of Hillsborough, his Grace's brother-in-law.

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his intentions, I was apprehensive of what I knew to be his darling scheme—the idea of a Union with Great Britain. I consider that measure as destructive to this city and to this country, and I shall ever oppose it, let who will adopt it; but now that these propositions are not embarrassed with that condition, and it seems out of the question entirely, I must do justice to his declarations, I believe them fair and honourable to this country.

My Lords, I supported the motion for a free trade at the beginning of this session, and I am glad to find the intention of the friends of this country crowned with success. I withheld my approbation till there was a certainty of succeeding. I shall now give my consent to the several propositions, to enable our well-wishers in England to carry it through; and when these propositions of the Minister are passed into a law, I shall move your Lordships to agree to an address to his Majesty, for his paternal care and attention to our interests. I should be sorry my country was unreasonable in its demands or expectations; and I think if these propositions pass into a law, they ought to be content.

My Lords, I cannot help thinking the noble Lords, who have spoke lately here, have been

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ere upon some friends of mine in the opposition in England, who were the first to propose relief for Ireland, and who deserve better of your Lordships.

A noble Duke, my Lords, a near relation of me *, I have ever respected and adored, and think his conduct in public most praise-worthy and unexceptionable. Another friend of mine †, in the House of Commons of England, has the best wishes to this country; and I am sure his intentions are not less sincere in the public cause, than his abilities to defend it are known and acknowledged.

The LORD CHANCELLOR ‡ rose from the wool-sack; and declared, that if he had been present the last day, when business similar to this was mentioned, it was not because it had not his full approbation, but that he knew it would come on again, when their Lordships should have had time to turn it in their minds; that he approved of the resolutions proposed by the noble Earl, both as an Englishman and as an Irishman. He said, that before he came to this kingdom he

* Duke of Richmond, his uncle.

† Mr. Fox, his first cousin.

‡ Lord Lifford.

was

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was much prejudiced in its favour, from the accounts he received of it; but that he really had not been six months here when he found that the true interests and importance of this country were but ill understood in England; in short, they knew nothing about it. That he exulted in the thought that this kingdom had now formed a real and commercial union with England, which must have the best effects, by shewing the natural enemies of these kingdoms, that they were not to be conquered, because they were united in interests—That on the other side the Atlantic it would have the best effect, by shewing them that Great Britain still possessed liberality of sentiment; that the idea would rouse the long-lost affections to the parent state, and be a motive stronger than the force of arms to bring them back to their duty.

VISCOUNT MOUNTMORRES. My Lords, I am ashamed to trespass again upon your patience, and to raise my voice again within these walls. My Lords, the noble Duke has filed an amicable bill against me: I trust the prompt discovery of my intentions, and the ratification of my words, will be acceptable to the noble Duke, as they are to me when I repeat them.

I said that the motions in our favour originated with a noble Marquis and his connections in

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the Parliament of England; that I would not believe the misrepresentations of the public prints, from my daily observations here; that I could not suppose wise and able men, candidates for the first offices in the state, would forego a well-earned popularity, and would by opposing, or tamely acquiescing in measures for the relief of Ireland, disoblige three millions of their fellow-subjects.

The leader of opposition in England, the near kinsman of the noble * Duke, is indeed a pillar of confidence to his country, "Par negotiis, neque supra;" equal to business, but not above it; qualified as an able and a practicable statesman, equal to any station which his king and country may call him to.

With regard to the honourable gentleman † alluded to, "the pride and flower of the state, the observed of all observers," I must do equal justice to him, and trust that he means well to our interest. The honourable gentleman is possessed of every qualification of the public man,

* Duke of Richmond.

† Mr. Fox.

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the eloquence of the Roman orator without his timidity. My Lords, I should not follow the gravest example, even that of the noble Lord on the woolfack, in quoting a poet upon a serious subject, unless it were a poet who adheres to historical truth, I mean Shakspeare. I wish to see the honourable gentleman complete in every respect; I should be sorry he had that defect which Shakspeare ascribes to Cicero, "That he would ne'er pursue what other men began."

While I do justice to the authors of the measures which are the objects of your Lordship's approbation, I must not forget to do justice to his Majesty's representative in this country. The claims of this country to a freedom of trade, made formerly by the integrity of an Ormond, and defended by the ability and eloquence of a Nottingham, but in vain, the noble Lord has represented, and with complete success; to his representations, or rather remonstrances in our behalf, we are much indebted. I trust we shall not be unmindful of them—Ingratitude is not a plant of the growth or production of Ireland.

The resolutions passed *nem. con.*

It may be proper to add, that, since the above, the following propositions, moved by Lord North, have also passed *nem. con.* in the British House of Commons :

“ I. For repealing the act that prohibits the exportation of gold coin from Great Britain to Ireland :

“ II. For taking off the prohibition to import foreign hops into Ireland, and the drawback on the exportation of the British hops :

“ III. For enabling his Majesty's Irish subjects to become Members of the Turkey Company, and to export woollens in British or Irish ships to the Levant.”

The last proposition his Lordship thought was necessary ; for the exportation of woollens having been granted to Ireland, the Irish would naturally expect a share in the Turkey trade, which at present was not possible, as it was a received opinion, that an Irishman cannot at present be admitted a Member of the Turkey Company.

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