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A D D R E S S

TO THE

LANDLORDS OF SCOTLAND,

AND TO THE

TENANTS OF SCOTLAND,

UPON THE IRISH RESOLUTIONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE

*CONSEQUENCES of the IRISH RESOLUTIONS.*

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THE  
TREATY OF  
COMMERCY  
BETWEEN  
THE KINGDOMS OF  
SCOTLAND AND  
ENGLAND  
AND  
IRELAND

TO THE

LANDLORDS OF SCOTLAND,  
AND TO THE  
TENANTS OF SCOTLAND.

**Y**OU are sleeping upon ice; it thaws around you; and you do not perceive it. There is a Treaty of Commerce going on between Ireland and Britain, by one article of which, if it shall take place, your corn-lands will fall one half in their value; for, by that article, contrary to the Treaty of Union, Ireland is to be at liberty to import her grain into Scotland when she pleases.

It is well known, that every unusual quantity of commodity thrown into a market diminishes the price of what was in it before. Merchants observe, that so small an addition as one-fifth, brought into a market beyond the common run of it, will reduce prices one half. You must have seen the difference that five or six thousand black cattle more than common, brought to the fair of Falkirk, make upon the price of the fair there; and now a few thousand or even hundred bolls of grain, brought  
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into a market town upon a market day in your neighbourhood, affects the price of that day.

This will be hard upon you, the Lairds, whose estates were twenty years ago, I know; dipt one-third in debt; and are now, I believe, dipt one-half in debt and taxes. You, however, may weather the storm for a little, because you can always sell your lands, and get for them half of what they are worth at present, and go where you please; but you the tenants cannot weather the storm; you cannot sell your leases; you cannot remove; and, with grain at a new and low value, you will be bound to pay your old and high rents. The forefathers of both of you, at the Union, and for a century before it, as appears by the statute-book, knew perfectly well the advantages of soil and climate which Ireland had over Scotland, to drive the Scots grain out of the Scots market, and therefore provided against it.

There are speculative mercantile people who think, that the best way to encourage manufactures will be to sink the price of your grain, in order to enable workmen to live cheap. But practical men know that their own country is their best market; that the manufactures exported are not one tenth of what are consumed at home, and, therefore, that, if they hurt the landed interest, they will hurt three-fourths of their best customers.

The mischief does not stop at the importation of Irish victual in its own form. By the treaty on foot it will be poured in upon you in a manufactured form, I mean in spirits made in Ireland,

to the destruction of the distilleries on your lands; those distilleries which create manure for your farms, afford a market to the farmer for his barley, prepare his ground for the richest crops after a barley one, raise your rent-rolls, bring down the price of butchers meat, for the benefit of the poor, by fattening cattle, and bestow a great revenue on the crown. The pretence for this favour to Ireland, at your expence, is, that, by the Irish Resolutions, the same tax is to be laid on whisky brought from Ireland as on whisky made in Scotland; but those who say so are deceived themselves, or deceive you. To make up the final quantum of the tax upon whisky, the malt tax and the excises must be combined; from which circumstance alone, it will be difficult to find out the final quantum to be laid on the Irish whisky, in order to make it equal to the tax which you pay. But this is not all: The value, quality, and produce of the Irish and Scots barley and malt differ; the quality and value of the spirits differ; the arts of chymistry make differences, independent of both; the severity or want of severity of the officers who collect the duties of the two countries, and the orders given by the Boards of Revenue of the two countries, in explanation of the same law, may make differences. Of this last the complaints (though I believe not very just) of the Edinburgh brewers and distillers against the Scots Board, that they follow rules different from those which the English board follows with respect to the London brewers and distillers, afford examples. From those various circumstances, all the excisemen and chymists in Europe could not contrive rules to produce an equality of taxes upon the importation from Ireland of such a subject of taxation. And, could such

such rules be framed, still the comparative cheapness of labour, and the want of taxes upon every article attending the manufac- ture in Ireland, would enable the Irish to undersell us in our own market.

The very attempt to create an equality will do mischief to Scotland; for it will lead to the question, Whether whisky made in Scotland from Irish grain, should pay the English or the Scots malt tax? and this will lead to another question, Whether whisky made in Scotland from English grain should pay the English or the Scots malt tax? and the result of such discussions may be, to abolish the distinction between the two taxes, even with regard to whisky made from Scots grain. In short, by this article of the treaty you are trading among burning plough-shares. Hold fast by the treaty of Union, and you are safe. But loosen a nail and the whole fabric may shake to pieces. The report of the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council, page 58. already proposes a system of regulations upon the importation of Irish beer and ale into Scotland. The Irish raise their own hops; you import yours; you see the consequence upon the price of the beer in the two countries from this circumstance. Should the importation of Irish victual, whisky, beer, and ale, take place, you would not only be deluged with Irish grain, but you would lose the consumption of your own.

You have been told, and will be told again, that the Minister's approbation of the Irish Resolutions is founded on the report of the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council to his Ma- jesty.

jefty. The authority is high; and, therefore, it is fair to both sides of the question, that the report upon the article of victual be laid before you, not concealed from you. His Majesty did order the Committee of Council to inquire, and report to him upon the commercial arrangements between Britain and Ire- land. The object of inquiry, by far the most important to that Committee, was the corn trade; because, to all wise statesmen, the food of the people is the first object of political oeconomy; and accordingly their Lordships did inquire, and their report, page 53. contains a distinct and separate article from the others, in great letters, under the word CORN. But perhaps, in the multiplicity of the other business of the report, they were hur- ried. For how many questions, in the train of their investiga- tion, did they ask, upon the corn trade? One. How many an- swers did they get? One. How many witnesses did they exa- mine? Two. Who were these two? London corn-factors; men who have an interest that all the corn of the universe should come to England; because, whatever the nation may lose, they and their friends will always get their commission. How many pages of the report are taken up in the investigation, the discus- sion, and the judgment, upon a point of so much difficulty in it- self, intricacy in its relations, and magnitude in its consequen- ces? One page. The report is *verbatim* as follows:

" C O R N "

C O R N F A C T O R S  
 Messrs Claude Scott,  
 and  
 John Vickrass Taylor, }  
 Corn Factors;

Examined.

Q. Have you read the bill that passed in Ireland last year, for regulating the corn trade of that kingdom?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you apprehend that the proposal that is made in it, to admit British and Irish grain and flour to be imported into each kingdom respectively, when the prices are lower than those at which a general importation of such grain and flour is admitted from foreign countries, will be for the advantage or disadvantage of this country?

A. Very much to the advantage of this country; because the Irish more frequently want grains and flour from this country, than we want it from that; and because a partial deficiency in our crops may be made up by a sufficient supply from Ireland, when a general supply from foreign countries might be too much, and might discourage agriculture. The Irish having prohibited the importation of flour and ground corn from all countries but Great Britain, for the encouragement of their mills, it might be a just return to them to prohibit, in like manner, the importation of flour and ground corn from any country but Ireland; and this would likewise operate as an encouragement to our mills; we having mills enough to supply the greatest possible demand for flour.

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The Committee then desired these gentlemen to prepare such a plan for admitting Irish grain and flour into this country, as will correspond with the regulations made in favour of Great Britain in the bill passed last session in Ireland.—After which the two corn factors wrote a letter, containing a mode of settling weights and measures between the two kingdoms, for executing the Irish act, concerning which their opinion had been asked.

Such are the Judges, the evidence, the reasoning, and the decree. There is, surely, no offence in your reviewing it: Give it all the weight that is due to it; but not more. To a plain man the premises are just these: That, once in twenty years, we need grain from Ireland to supply our wants; and the conclusion is, that we are therefore to allow the Irish, at all times, to send it to us, whether we want it or not. Moreover, a plain man would be inclined to ask these corn factors, How importing flour and ground corn from Ireland should operate as an encouragement to their or our mills?

You will ask me, What you should do?—Do what all the manufacturing part of England is now doing; do what thirteen thousand weavers around Glasgow, ten thousand weavers around Paisley and Dunfermline, and all the traders and master manufacturers of Glasgow, are doing. Petition Parliament; state, in modest and loyal, but in true and decided terms, the danger which your estates and your leases are in. If you, the Lairds, are so feeble in understanding and spirit as not to dare to do so, lest it should offend men in power; do you the tenants take their

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place, and assume that dignity which they have relinquished. You depend not on men in power; they cannot serve or hurt you, as individuals. Frame your petitions in your different county towns; they will cost you nothing but a few sheets of paper. The best of your Members will present them with pride; the worst of them dare not refuse. You, the tenants, were ready enough to remonstrate against the law in favour of the unhappy Roman Catholics, because they do not worship the same God in the same way that you do. You was *then* listened to, though in a bad cause;—you will *now* be much more listened to in a good one.

The resolutions of the counties of Aberdeen and Dumfries will show you in what expressions to pursue the paths of public duty and public honour, and how to frame your *petitions*; for the minister himself has told you, that nothing but *petitions*, signed by the petitioners *themselves*, can possibly be listened to. The resolution of West Lothian will, by its contrast with theirs, show you what you are to avoid; for, like the two first, you are to tell Parliament what you know, and what you believe you have reason to fear; but you are not, like the last, to be trifling in unmeaning compliments to the wisdom of Parliament, which wants none of your compliments; which wishes to be instructed, not to be flattered; to know the state of the country, not to be lulled into a fatal security, by being kept in the dark. Mr Pitt is said to have declared, in the House of Commons, that he will hold all those to be for the articles of the Irish treaty who do not object to them. He invites, he calls for

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your opinion: When *he* does so, will *you* be silent? Silence if *you* is criminal; to *him* it is unjust.

I have asked some men of large estates, and of the best families, particularly on the west side of Scotland, which must first suffer by the treaty, whether the importation of Irish victual would not sink the price of theirs? they answered, yes. Whether it would not diminish their rent rolls? they answered, yes: I asked, Why did they not say so to Parliament? their answer was, That petitions against the Irish treaty were considered as matters of party, and they were hampered by their politics.

The idea contained in this answer requires to be analysed. It means, that men are restrained either by loyalty to their prince, or by respect to his ministers, or by the fear of not getting a place to themselves; but, do they think the prince will believe that men can be loyal to *his* family, who are not loyal to their *own* families? or, that the minister can believe men will be attached to his interest, who, in a point so material to their estates, are not attached to their own interest? The fear of not getting a place, by giving offence to men in power, is somewhat more intelligible; but, consider the weight of that motive even in a *prudential* light. There are about three thousand land proprietors holding of the Crown in Scotland, and perhaps as many holding of subjects. Look in the end of your almanacks at all the places held by all the country gentlemen of Scotland, or that can be held by them, and they do not amount to three thousand pounds a year; that is, to each laird, upon an average,

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about ten shillings a year; and to you the tenants, who have no places, not a penny. For this pittance, or rather for the chance of it, you are, by the repeal of the article of Union which prevents the importation of Irish grain, to submit to sink the value of your lands perhaps three hundred thousand pounds a year in a quarter of a century; those lands, which, by an adherence to the articles of Union, have risen three-fold in their rents since that treaty was signed.

The English nobility and gentry are as fond of party and politics as you are; they, too, feel loyalty for their prince and respect for his ministers. But mark their *generous* movements to manifest these sentiments, contrasted with your *prudential* ones. When a pretender to their prince's throne invaded it, England, and all the treasures of England, were laid at their prince's feet. When his foreign dominions were attacked, England lavished thirty millions of her treasures in a quarrel that was not her own. When his empire was attempted to be dissevered, she spent a hundred millions of money to keep it together. But when his minister, last summer, introduced a new system of taxation, by taxing manufactures in their infancy; by burthening the indigent and ingenious; and, by extending the excise laws into the recesses of the workshops of manufacturers, whose profits often arise from the secrecy of their inventions; then England thought the best way of showing loyalty to her prince, and respect for his ministers, was to declare, and declare aloud, her sentiments against that system. The same minister, in a treaty with Ireland, has proposed commercial and revenue arrangements that are still  
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more fatal. The English think, that the same loyalty to their prince, and their respect to his ministers, oblige them to remonstrate in modest, yet firm, in true and decided terms, against the ruin that impends over them. What are the consequences of such open and manly conduct? That minister dropt some of his favourite taxes last summer; and he will drop the articles of his treaty this summer. But, had the English imitated your example, and like you sat silent, he would have ruined his country, and lost all the fair fame his father had won.

Consider, even in a prudential light, what return these wise Scots politicians get for their politics from English ministers. Men who know not to respect themselves, will never meet with respect from others. It would be well if the disregard shewn to such politicians was to be confined to them; but it is extended to their country. Of this too many instances have occurred of late. Five of them strike us all. 1. The badge of distinction between slaves and freemen is the use of arms; for he who has arms is always master of him who has not. The best spirits of this country have five times asked a militia from English ministers, and parliaments, and five times have been refused. 2. The English, knowing that their property and their honour depended on the independence of their judges, some years ago made them independent, by an augmentation of their salaries. Did they give an augmentation to the Scots judges, whose salaries are indecently low? No. Why should they shew respect to the property or honour of men who prefer what they call their politics to both? What else could they think men deserved, whose own  
representatives



representatives did not even attend the house when the interest of those judges, and, consequently, their country's interest, was under discussion, and when one, and only one, Scots member of parliament, I mean Mr Dempster, espoused the cause of the independence of justice in Scotland, when all his other countrymen abandoned it? A general election ensued, and you chose almost the very same men into parliament who had shewn so shameful an inattention to their own interests and yours. 3. Parliament sent five judges to India, to bestow the blessings of law upon fifteen millions of people, who had been long robbed of them. Scots lawyers, by the necessity they are under of being masters of the Roman Law, and the *Jus Gentium*, were perhaps more proper to be sent to fulfil this great object than English lawyers, who, from their education, are obliged to know only the Common and Statute Law of England. Parliament not only did not admit the Scots bar, but positively excluded it. Why? because the Scots bar bear insults upon the honour of their body with the same patience which the Scots lairds shew to dangers hanging over their estates. 4. The excise laws of England were lately applied, in all their detail, to the distilleries of Scotland; an application impossible to be made, from the different circumstances of the two countries, without the absolute destruction of the Scots distilleries, on the existence of which, the rents of all those who have barley estates very much depend. Instead of going to parliament like men, you crept to the treasury, or to those who tell you, I believe not very truly, that they keep the keys of the treasury. What was the consequence? The treasury gave you an act of parliament which turned the best born men of this country into spies and  
informers

informers upon one another, and made them liable for offences which others had committed. When it is asked, Who drew this bill? nobody can tell; all deny it. It is not to be wondered at, that persons who want the spirit to assert their own interests like men, should see them neglected by all, and attended to by none. But you are in the right to prepare your minds for the misfortunes of your distilleries. The importation of grain from Ireland will supply the loss of your corn, and the importation of spirits from Ireland will supply the loss of your whisky. 5. Last summer a proposal was made by the King's minister, for laying a tax of two shillings a ton upon coals: You know as well as I do, that, in a country in which, from the nature of the climate, fuel, as much as food or clothes, is a necessary of life, that tax must have desolated the land. 'You all said so in private. You escaped from it by a miracle: But, Was that escape owing to your silence, prudent as you are taught to think it, or to English clamours, insolent as you call them? Some of your members who represent counties, in which are coal estates worth many millions, were as mute (though loud enough at other times) as yourselves.

It was the consciousness of those disadvantages which, some years ago, forced the merchants of Glasgow to form themselves into a *Chamber of Commerce*, in hopes that their remonstrances in parliament, and elsewhere, might procure that weight to which the landed interest had given up all pretensions, and no longer enjoyed, because they no longer maintained it. That Chamber, with the dignity of British merchants, are, in concurrence with  
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their English friends, now asserting the privileges of British trade, against those articles of the Irish treaty which affect them; while you, the lairds of Scotland, are made to believe that petitions to save your estates from ruin, are considered as matters of party; and you the tenants of Scotland are making no remonstrances against innovations which are to take bread from your children, and fill the jails with your persons.

Provost Colquhoun was the man who first gave a form and a soul to that society at Glasgow; and he deserves a statue from his fellow citizens for the luminous idea.

It was the same consciousness of those disadvantages, which, within these few weeks, forced near an hundred Noblemen and Gentlemen of this country to form themselves into a society, called *The Independent Friends*. The members of it, almost at the first start, found they had, or were heirs to, near two hundred thousand pounds a year of land-rent.

That individuals of it have friendships with persons who have been in power, and may be in power again, is true; but that the Society itself is a party one, is false. The first objects of that Society are to watch over the liberties and interests of Scotland, in order to preserve them alike from the oppression of power and the violence of faction; to make the press free, and, through the medium of it, to animate you to what is politically right, and to warn you against what is politically wrong; no matter whether that right or wrong comes  
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from Mr Pitt or Mr Fox, Lord North or Lord Lansdown. It is said, but I hope not truly, that the publishers of newspapers in Scotland are likewise *hampered in their politics*; but this Society, with the influence it possesses, will convince those publishers that they are to give light to their countrymen, not to keep them in the dark, and that their papers are to be as independent of party as the Society of Independent Friends are.

Mr Erskine, the late Lord Advocate of Scotland, was one of the persons who first gave the idea of the Society; a man whose sentiments are as noble as his blood, and who, having the sense to live within his income, is not tempted to be dependent on any one; in whose very looks and manner, the open, gay, affectionate, unassuming, but animated and decided gentleman, shines forth; familiar with his inferiors, without insolence in his familiarity; respectful, without meanness, to those who happen by accident to be his superiors in the world; faithful to his promises and his friendships, and to those who have obliged him, because he knows he has a character to lose, and puts a value upon it; full of invention and resources, and even of design, because he has genius; but incapable of deceit, because he has honour.

Follow the views of those two Societies in the affairs of this country, and you will seldom go wrong. They have heads to see what is right, and no interests or bad motives to make them lead you to what is wrong. When you do so, you will then recover that consequence which, for many centuries, your ancestors possessed, to which you are entitled, and which you lost only by you or your forefathers losing the sense of it.

F I N I S.

