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A
R E P L Y
T O
SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN, BART.
IN WHICH
THAT PART OF HIS LETTER TO THE AUTHOR
WHICH MOST PARTICULARLY RESPECTS
THE PRESENT STATE OF
THE IRON TRADE
BETWEEN
ENGLAND AND IRELAND
IS CONSIDERED
By WILLIAM GIBBONS.

BRISTOL:

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and HUGHES, Dudley.

MDCCLXXXV.

ADVERTISEMENT.

UNDER an impreffion of the very extensive consequences which might ultimately attend the discuffion of what are generally call'd the Irish Propositions and from a wish, that as far as the iron trade was concerned therein, it might proceed with that temper between the two countries needful to the great occafion: The Author wrote the following letter to Sir Lucius O'Brien.

Bristol, June 11th, 1785.

SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN.

I HAVE no doubt but it remains on your memory what paffed between us in 1778, when on a free trade to the Colonies being opened to Ireland, I had the honour of negotiating for the iron trade on the part of Great-Britain, with you on the part of Ireland.

We

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We *then*, as *now*, wished nothing but *equality*, which was the basis of our proposals to you; and I have a pleasure in the recollection of what you was pleased to say on that head, viz. "That you was honourably treated by the iron trade of England."

Left, from something in the public prints, a contrary impression should be made on your side the water, respecting the conduct of the iron trade on the present important treaty negotiating between the two kingdoms; I take the liberty, on public grounds, to write you this letter, and declare to you, that the same liberal opinion still rules the trade.—They wish for nothing but equality, without asking any compensation for the local advantages of Ireland, which she has a right to use without restraint.

We wish equal duties on the import of the bar, or a continuation of the equalizing duty to those countries it was enacted for in 1778, or such a bounty on the export of our wares as shall equalize us, if
neither

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neither of the two former proposals could be agreed on. Our administration *cannot*, we presume, promise for *some*, and *will* not for any one of the three. On this account we have carried our petitions into the House of Commons, praying relief; and shall do the same into the House of Lords; and on no other grounds have we moved on the present occasion.

Our wish is, that the most friendly impressions, each of the other, should remain on the minds of the two countries, whose welfare and interest, "*si* sua bona norint*," is perfectly indivisible.

I make no apology for this intrusion, thinking these declarations due to the liberality of our intentions.

I am,

With great respect,

Your most humble servant,

W. GIBBONS.

Sir

* Printed *se* by mistake in the copy of this letter published by Sir Lucius O'Brien.

Sir Lucius on the 9th of July acknowledged the receipt of that letter, expressing himself politely towards the author, and added, that he had determined in the first instance to write him a reply, but having observed in Lord Sheffield's observations on the trade of Ireland, some expressions which induced him to believe the gentlemen of the iron trade had communicated with his Lordship; he had reconsidered that work, which had led him into a letter of such length, he had resolved to publish it, and it has since appeared. The author of the following sheets, thinking himself called upon to examine some of the assertions and opinions it contains, now with deference offers them to the public and Sir Lucius O'Brien.

His aim is to inform on both sides to the best of his judgment, and in no respect to offend either; and he shall be happy and think himself rewarded, if his endeavors to reconcile the difference of opinion now existing between the two kingdoms, should proceed but one single step towards effecting so desirable a purpose.

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BRISTOL, AUGUST 24, 1785.

SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN, Bart.

I HAVE the honor of your pamphlet by post from London, accompanied by your letter of July 19th. As I am perfectly of opinion, that a liberal discussion of some parts thereof may tend to throw the subject into a more equitable point of view, and remove prejudices which might otherwise accompany the minds of too many, in forming a judgment on the merits of the question between us; I shall candidly remark on such parts of your address, as the perusal has most immediately pointed out to me, may produce the desired effect.

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My

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My ardent wish is that the most perfect understanding and good will, should be cherished between Great-Britain and Ireland, witness my letter to you of the 11th of June last; and I hope nothing in the following remarks on your address to me, will be construed to contradict this declaration of my good wishes for the most compleat Union of the two Kingdoms, which no subject of either has more at heart than myself.

You are perfectly right in your surmises, that I have communicated with Lord Sheffield on the Iron Trade: I had the honour of being first introduced to that illustrious writer by accident, when I was called up to London for the purpose of giving evidence before the Lords of Council, respecting the new System of Commercial Arrangement with Ireland; and I speak of my own knowledge, when I tell you that Lord Sheffield had a variety of information from some of the ablest and most respectable men in the Iron Trade, with several
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of whom, I had the pleasure of a conference or two, with that noble Lord.

I communicated to his Lordship some account of our transactions in the negotiation of 1778, which he took down in writing and has since published, hence the similarity of our expressions which you allude to; and in the course of my attendance on Parliament, I furnished his Lordship with various calculations explanatory of our situation with respect to Ireland, some of which he has also been pleased to publish. I had not the least inimical intention towards Ireland, in any of my transactions with the noble Lord, who honoured my sentiments with so much of his attention, and whose writings need not the aid of my testimony to prove his philanthropy towards that country, to which he is so honourably related: I did it from a desire to give his Lordship a more critical knowledge of the iron trade, and with a view of enabling him to explain upon it, with that ability, he has shewn in his history of our other great manufactures. His impartiality as a writer

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is obvious, and I shall be happy to contribute in whatever I am able, my mite, towards the perfection of that history of trade and manufactures, his Lordship has with so much indefatigable industry collected, and with so much perspicuity, given to the public.

It has been the fashion with some in Administration, to stigmatize the opposition given by the manufacturers in general, as a matter of party; I cannot think they really believe it, but it may have suited the times, to *affect* this opinion: As far as it relates to myself, I despise the idea, I am no man of party; neither my avocations or my inclinations permit me to deal in "the dirty game of politics," nor do I care, so we have an able honest man "who is our minister for a day or a week:" and I can with equal truth add in this place that nothing but, first, the call from administration, and afterwards the united and pressing requests of the trade, both which I thought it my duty to obey, from a conviction that public calls like these are paramount

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mount to all private considerations, would have induced me to the active part I have taken in this business, to the detriment of my own concerns.

As you question the *propriety* of our application to Parliament at this juncture, because our case is not directly involved in the fate of the Propositions, I will give you our reasons for petitioning; being desirous, that consistency as well as equity, should mark the whole of our proceedings: I freely confess to you Sir, such is my ignorance of that kind of faith which nations seem to hold towards one another, that till the propositions became the topic of conversation and informed us better, I really believed, that Ireland still imposed *or ought to have done it*, the equalizing duty of 3l. 3s. 11d. per ton on her iron wares to America; and founded such opinion on my plain untutored notions of that equity, honor, and equality, which ought to rule a contract of such a nature between two parts of one empire. I could not by the help of all my reasoning faculties conceive, that

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that a misfortune so fatal to the general empire, as the loss of America, should be permitted or expected to produce advantages to Ireland in detriment to Great-Britain; it appeared to me a solecism in politics and legislation which I have no language for; but I at first declared myself no politician, therefore leave national faith to be defined by our national conductors, and the touchstone of *convenience* and *interest*, which seems the index of faith to kings and nations.

The propositions have been held out, as the basis of a system of commerce, permanent and irrevocable, when once adopted. —As there appeared nothing in them, which gave us any satisfactory reason to believe, that the advantages in the iron trade, which had accidentally fallen to Ireland, in respect to North-America, were likely to be equalized; the Gentlemen in the various branches of the trade, thought it was just and necessary, the two nations should be put on one footing, either by duties or bounty, and therefore

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petitioned the Houses of Parliament for that purpose: We said nothing of our immense burthens of which Ireland bears no part, in any of our representations; we asked no stipulations for local advantages; we prayed for *meer* equality; and we have a pleasure in thinking, that every Irishman, endowed with that generosity for which his country is so remarkable, will say we acted honourably towards Ireland.

I shall now consider such parts of your letter, as I think the iron trade is called on to reply to; your flights in politics and reasoning thereon, I beg leave to transfer to the pen of some political speculator, who may have inclination and leisure to meet you on that ground; I declare myself to have neither, and therefore avoid entering on so *dry* a subject.

The first comment you make on the equalizing duty, fixed in 1778, is, that our native Iron was not, but ought to have been, taken into the account, in the formation of the average on which that

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duty

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duty was founded : it appears at first sight a reasonable objection, but when we consider that the duty on foreign Bar Iron, was originally laid, not to raise a revenue, but as a bounty to encourage the make of native Iron, and enable us to vie in price with foreign Iron ; and again, when we reflect that we import 60,000 tons annually, and never export in wares *one half* that quantity to all the world ; the Trade think it fair to say, that we ought in equity, to draw back on what we export, the whole difference of duty, between England and Ireland, without any regard to our native Iron, the make of which could not exist without a proper duty on foreign Bar ; and as the whole we make, is not above half the quantity we consume for internal purposes, therefore could we make it as *cheap* as we can import it without the duty, which is very far from being the case, even then your internal consumption would be supplied considerably lower than ours, because on above *half* our consumption at home we should pay 2l. 16s. 1d. per ton duty, while you on the *whole* quantity pay only

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only about 9s. 7d $\frac{1}{2}$. sterling. But had England a *convenience* in this particular, she has a right on the principles we have acted, to enjoy it *unequalized* ; for we never called on Ireland to equalize with us, for any of her internal, local or *natural* advantages.

There is but one way to establish a rule of perfect equality between the two kingdoms, which is by Ireland paying the same duty we do on Bar Iron ; every other mode is imperfect, and however fairly estimated, will leave grounds for jealousy between the two countries, which ought by every possible means to be avoided ; and what would it cost Ireland annually to remove them ? not half the expence of a single frigate fit for his Majesty's service and the protection of their own coasts.

When I fixed the average of thirty hundred weight of Bar Iron to a ton of wares, I took into the calculation, all Iron and Steel wares, from a needle to an anchor, it being my duty to include and take a comprehensive

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prehensive view of all; I was not possessed with the spirit of divination so far as to foresee, in what branches of the trade the genius of Ireland would exert itself; had it been a point determined on, that Ireland was *only* to rival us in *split rods, hoops, nails*, and such heavy wares, the only articles you are pleased to mention as likely; I should have said the average had been taken much too high; but when I reflect on the vast variety of bright iron and steel wares, which consume above 40C. 50C. nay above 60Cwt. some of them to produce a ton of wares; I still contend that the quantum I have taken for one general average, is a fair and just one: it was fixed *in one* at your own request, to avoid a variety of calculations; and though in some heavy wares it may press hard, in the lighter wares it is equally favourable to Ireland.

It is not candid to say, in proof of 30 hundred being an unequal average, that split iron and hoops consume little more than 21 hundred of bar iron
to

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to a ton of wares, and to be silent on the lesser and bright wares, which consume so much above 30 hundred. Split iron is not an article properly called manufacture, but iron removed one stage from the bar, and thereby made ready for the manufacturer; neither is it an article of export, and need not have been mentioned, but to prevent doubts and disputes. There are more tons of buckle chapes exported from Great-Britain in one year, than there are *hundreds* of split iron; nay, there are more tons of *needles* exported in one year, than of split or rod iron: What quantity of iron, do you suppose a ton of buckle chapes or needles will consume? nearer 3 tons than 30 Cwt. considerably, and I again venture to assert, that 30 Cwt. is a *fair par* for the equalizing duty between the two countries. But if Ireland still says, it is too much, I will venture to engage, the iron trade of England will consent most readily, That split rods may be classed with bar iron, and placed on a footing with that article, in all your future regulations: We do not stand
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for the difference of duty, on one hundred weight of iron, with our friends and brethren of Ireland.

But it is unnecessary to dwell on the justice or not, of 30 Cwt. being a fair average between the two countries: As the duties *now* stand, Ireland on payment of 3l. 3s. 11d. on export of a ton of wares to the Colonies, pays the difference only on *25½ Cwt. of bar iron to a ton of wares; see the calculation here added. An average so much too low, for iron wares in general, that no Irishman ought to take the least offence, when an Englishman just hints, that in this respect; Great-Britain is now the *injured country*.

Calculation

* If we calculate the Irish duty at 9s. 2d. sterling per ton, which was the duty paid in 1778, Ireland pays the difference on 25 Cwt. bar iron only, as stated by Lord Sheffield. The author was told in 1778, on his proposal to increase the duty on bar in Ireland to what it paid here, that the duty on iron in Ireland, was a part of the hereditary revenue, and could not be altered without much confusion and inconvenience; but it appears it *has* been altered, or is now erroneously quoted; the latter he cannot suppose is the case.

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Calculation to prove the foregoing assertion.

25½ Cwt. Bar Iron, into England, pays			
at 2l. 16s. 1d. per ton	-	-	-
	3	11	6
The same Quantity, into Ireland, pays			
at 9s. 7d½. per ton	-	-	-
	0	12	6
Difference of duty in favour of Ireland	2	19	0
Add to make it Irish Money	-	-	-
	0	4	11
Equalizing duty <i>now</i> paid by Ireland on			
a ton of wares to our Colonies	-		
	3	3	11

On reference to my statement of duties in 1778, I find it noted, there was a drawback on iron, exported from Great-Britain to Ireland and *the coast of Africa*; therefore an exemption from the duty on bar iron to the coast of Africa, ought to have been inserted in the act, which imposed the equalizing duty on Ireland: Ireland therefore, has been, in this respect, the injured country, and there is no doubt, but it would have been instantly set right, had it been noticed.

I entertain hopes, no *real injury* has been done to either country, by the inequalities
above

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above recited; still the epithet, *injured country* which you reprehend, is not in my opinion, either improper or invidious: And I dwell on it the more, because these words were used by me, in a paper I gave Lord Sheffield, and very probably, from thence arose the insertion of them by his Lordship.

In the year 1779, the very year after the compact was first made, England experienced the first taste of the *growing* inequality in the duty, in her disfavor, by an advance of 5l. per cent. on the old duty on bar iron; and another addition, somewhat similar, took place each of the two succeeding years: The trade saw it, but feeling no immediate inconvenience, did not think it worth while troubling administration for trifles, nor, would they now have done it, had the continent of North America, remained under the dominion of Great-Britain; and had not the founding words, irrevocability, reciprocity, equity, and equality, been so authoritatively applied

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ed to the propositions, so much of late the object of attention in the two Kingdoms.

When the low freight of iron from the Baltic to London, was under your consideration, you should have said, *some* (and that *some* is a very small proportion of the *whole*) of the iron is brought there at a low freight, as ballast to their naval stores; and what you say no doubt is true, that the Irish, for various reasons, find it their interest to supply themselves in part, with iron from London. The manufacturers in the *heart* of England are in this particular, *exactly* on the same footing with those of Ireland, and supply themselves with a large proportion of their iron, from London: From thence, it is first brought to Bristol at as high an expence, no doubt, as it would be conveyed to Waterford, Cork, or Dublin, which the geographical situation of those respective sea ports, will fully make appear: The iron is then conveyed, by river, canal, and land carriage, above 100 miles into the country, at *an expence*, which, from the proximity of
your

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your manufactures to your sea ports, I conceive much exceeds the like charge on iron, from the sea coast of Ireland to the place of manufacture: I am not sufficiently acquainted with the situation of your manufactures to assert this; but from the size of Ireland, from your numerous creeks and rivers, and the information I have received, a fair conclusion may be drawn, that my conjecture is well founded; and therefore until we can supply ourselves with native iron, on the spot, *cheaper* than we can import foreign, which, as I have before said, is not the case at present; we shall have no advantage over Ireland, in point of conveyance to the place of manufacture: And if a buyer goes to Hull for his iron, or gets it from London through that port, he cannot supply himself by that conveyance to the manufacture, on better terms in general, than through Bristol; which I mention, that no exception may be taken at my reference to that mode of conveyance only, in this comparison with Ireland.

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It is possible Ireland has not *yet* benefitted by her free trade to the full latitude of her most sanguine expectations; but that does not argue her inability: She lies in the latitude of our great coal and iron mines, and is frequently finding new ones; but such mines are not opened, to any great effect, in a minute; nor are new establishments of manufactories, the work of a day: Can any just inference be drawn from hence, that *years* may not produce both collieries and manufactories? of this we are not jealous or begrudging: We only wish, as two parts of one empire, that the competition may commence fairly, in respect to duties, and then let the palm be the reward of those, who most by their exertions deserve it; competitions promote industry, ingenuity, and excellence in quality, therefore may be productive of beneficial effects to both countries. It might, by way of argument, be added, that the country which has particular burthens, unfelt by the other, should be likewise entitled to particular privileges: But I wave all such speculative considera-

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tions, and standing on the broad basis of *equality*, appeal to the candor of Ireland whether there is any thing more or less than *equity* in our proposals: Let me proceed one step farther; it must on all hands be agreed, that no power on earth has any *legal right* to interfere with your Parliament, in regulating the duties on your wares exported; but when two parts of one empire, whose interest is one, and whose affections should by every means be cleared from the rubbish of jealousy, are negotiating a permanent system of equal and mutual benefits, in commerce and manufactures: If at such a time an advocate for a very important branch of manufacture comes forward, and shews that the iron trade is, by a fatal accident, left in a most *unequal* situation in respect to the two countries, and no remedy is provided by the treaty in agitation; who will hesitate to say, that the justice and generosity of Ireland is not in such a case called upon to administer it's aid to the reciprocal interests of the two countries, by removing the inequality of which we complain?

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I do not know enough of the natural history of Ireland, to form a probable conjecture, whether she may have in her own bowels, the means of supplying herself with bar iron, if she should wish to recommence the trade, at present by your account lost to her; but this is well known, that England with all its advantages could not at present support its trade of making bar iron, was the duty taken off foreign; and however jocosely you may be inclined to treat the idea of the noble Lord; this much is certain; that it is impossible Ireland should make iron with success, unless the attempt is aided by an high duty on foreign bar.

If Ireland thinks it not worth a trial, we shall hope under the sixteenth proposition, *if ever it has any force*, she may compliment her sister kingdom's native bar iron, with an *effectual preference*, as soon as we are able to supply her; and that period one would suppose cannot be very far distant, if it proves true, that one house in Shropshire, as you say, expects next

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year

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year to make 10,000 *tons* of bar iron: this is indeed a very flattering and important piece of news to the iron trade; and could I prevail on myself to believe it likely to be accomplished, and at the wonderful low price too of 11l. per ton, at which you are informed the house before mentioned will be able to produce it; it would be needless to hold a single argument with you, either on the expediency of an equalizing duty, on the part of Ireland; or of a bounty here on our iron wares exported: For, when that auspicious day arrives, the English manufacturer may sit himself down in peace under his own fig tree, thankful for the benefits he has received, and regardless of whatever Ireland or any other country has done, can do, or for ever may; to transfer any great part of the iron trade from poor old England.

I have been many years a maker of bar iron in Shropshire, my coals cost 11s. per ton at the forge, and I cannot lay down my bar iron fit only for nails, at *Stourport, so

* A port on the river Severn near Bewdley, and the usual place of delivery for Shropshire bar iron.

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so low as 14l. 5s. per ton. I have a pleasure in this opportunity of publickly paying my tribute of applause to Mr. Wilkinson, for the advantages the iron trade of this kingdom is likely to receive from his extensive and spirited efforts, to increase the quantity of native bar iron; and if I am ever happy enough to see the day, when he produces *10,000 tons per annum, at *any* price, but particularly at the low rate you mention, (even with the assistance and benefits expectant from Lord Dundonald's patentorial process of rendering *more cheap*, the low priced coals of Shropshire, some of which you state to *cost only* 2s. 6d. per ton;) I will then say with you the business is accomplished; and he shall have my vote, that a statue be erected to his memory, as one who has rendered more essential services to his country, than a Marlborough by all his vic-

* See a letter to the author from Mr. Wilkinson on this subject, at the end of the pamphlet, which was not received time enough for insertion in its proper place. The author feels great satisfaction from the full coincidence of sentiments between himself and the writer.

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victories. But you are mistaken in your conjecture about the Shropshire company which consumes 500 tons of coals in one day; that is *another* house of high respectability, and you will agree with me, of great consequence too, when I tell you, that I am very sure the account is not at all exaggerated; for I was present when the principal proprietor of the works (a man who by his religious and irreproachable conduct through life, has stamped sterling credit, as well on his caution as his veracity) declared at Lord Sheffield's the daily consumption of coals in their various engines, furnaces, forges, &c. was not so little as 500 tons; and he farther added, had the coal tax ever taken place, all these works would have stood still; to the ruin of thousands and an immense loss to the company, which has expended much above 100,000l. in buildings and erections, for the purposes only, of carrying on the iron trade in various branches. Your supposition is equally erroneous, that two tons of coals will make a ton of bar iron: was I to mention the quantity of coals estimated

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estimated to be consumed, in bringing a ton of iron into bars from the ore or stone; it might so far exceed the limits of your belief, as to place me in your opinion, among those whose assertions "might not stand that test, which Lord Shaftsbury has endeavoured to establish as the criterion of truth." I have seen some brother iron-makers of Shropshire, who agree with me, they cannot lay down iron at Stourport, so low as 14l. 5s. per ton: You see Sir, we small fishes need to deprecate the powers of this great leviathan, who is so soon to swallow us up and send our iron works to ruin; but notwithstanding this impending cloud, be assured, it will give me infinite satisfaction, to see the day of 10,000 tons from one man's spirited exertions; and on this ground, it is to be hoped, you will allow me some *little* share of patriotism.

That the buildings and erections for carrying on the iron trade in all its branches in Great-Britain, cost from 3 to 4 millions, I have no kind of doubt: But as I have

have never given an opinion, public or private, on the probable amount of capital employed therein; I shall not dwell on that unfathomable speculation further, than to say, I look upon it more difficult to estimate, than to raise "three Irish "turf stacks each as big as the largest "Egyptian pyramid;" and more so, no, doubt, than to explain your assertion, that "the best hold Britain has at this day of "any part of the trade of America, is by "means of Ireland, and that if Ireland "has just cause to be disgusted, Ame- "rica will be lost for ever." But I don't wonder this flight of policy is beyond *my* powers of comprehension, when declared by you of too bold a wing for modern ministers themselves. But the greater part of this immense capital is not of so novel a date, as one might imagine it to be, from some of your remarks upon it. That million, laid by and fostered with the most furious care, till it becomes a sum capable of paying our national debt, will not be so old when that desirable epocha shall arrive, as a large portion of the capital in
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the iron trade. But whatever may be yours or the public opinion, on this subject, I hope you will believe me when I tell you, that in such an infant state are the great and boasted improvements in the iron trade; I do not at this hour know any man or body of men, who have amassed a princely or even an independent fortune, by making bar iron only, in this island: The low priced iron of other countries with all its subsidies upon its back, having born down all possibility of such accumulation: We will however please ourselves with the contemplation of a dawn of hope, that some fortune may e'er long shower down on some of them, the abundance of her favors, as a reward for their valuable improvements; and till then we must look among other classes of men concerned in the iron trade for the *integers*, and among the bar iron makers, for the *parts* only, of that sum which forms the great whole of capital, I had rather wonder at than attempt to define. But as a proof of what that trade can do in other countries, and of the extraordinary profits attending it in Russia; take
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this short anecdote, no less wonderful than true. One Sava Jacoffloff, who less than 40 years ago sold fish about the streets of Petersburg, died about 2 years ago, worth upwards of 10 millions of roubles, or 2 millions of pounds sterling; mostly derived from the great profits arising from large iron works, he got into his possession: What must become of our internal make of iron, if we were not protected by a judicious duty against a country, which, while it supplies us lower than we can make our own, reserves to itself so ample a compensation.

I will now say somewhat in defence of the calculations, which you have treated a little with the rough file of your animadversions; I gave them to the noble Lord, in whose works they appear for the purposes before hinted, and to shew him the difference in the price of bar iron, rod iron and hoops, *in the first cost*, between the two countries. It was my usual wish of being correct, and within the bounds of truth, which prevented my proceeding farther

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farther in the calculations, than just in the first instances; namely, the *first cost* of the bar iron to the importers, and the *wages and waste* of converting it into rod iron and hoops: I know not the charge of conveyance to and from the mills in Ireland, therefore said nothing of it in the calculations; but have before given my reasons, why it may not exceed, or indeed come up to ours in this kingdom. Had my views been to exaggerate the percentage, as you are pleased to hint must be the design of their author; I could have done it with truth *much* beyond that exhibited by the calculations. The first cost was in my opinion the proper point for me to take up, not only for the reasons above alledged, but to shew a generous people, the very great advantage they had over us, in the first instance, and thereby the equity of our expectations to be equalized. The profit laid on by those concerned in the different stages of the manufacture in Ireland may be too large, and therefore very reprehensible; but that is no part of the present enquiry, or in any respect belongs to

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to the merits of the matter in dispute; and to shew you that I cannot stoop to misrepresentation, I will bring the comparison to a nearer test, between the two countries.

Whoever will on the maps of Europe survey the situation of Bristol, my place of residence, and your principal eastern ports; will at once conclude with me, that a ship will carry a cargo from Russia to your ports of Waterford, Cork, or Dublin, on as low freight as to Bristol: nay, an old experienced trader now unloading here a cargo from the Baltic, says he had *rather* go from Petersburg to Dublin, than to *Bristol* at the *same* price.

I am an old importer from Russia, and in the last 2 years, have had a large quantity of iron from Petersburg of a very good quality for nails, which did not cost me on Bristol Quay, above 13l. per ton: Had that iron gone to Dublin from Petersburg, on your Quay, it would therefore have cost only 10l. 13s. 6d. sterling, which is much
less

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less than 11l. 13s. the price at which you say none was ever sold in Dublin: Irish importers may be too fond of profit, and your assertion be a truth; but that proves nothing against the price at which my aim is to shew, it was, or ought to have been imported on Dublin Quay, which is all I want to establish: and in farther proof of my caution, not to make an unfair statement; I now assert, that the best new fable iron which I calculated on at 14l. in London last year (*where it is imported materially cheaper than to Bristol*) cost me no more on Bristol Quay last import than 13l. 13s. 6d. (equal to 11l. 7s. sterling at Dublin) and the best *old* fable which I stated at London 14l. 10s. (equal to 12l. 3s. 6d. at Dublin) cost me several shillings per ton *less*, on our Quay. I will mention another advantage, not taken into calculation, which Ireland has against us from her low duty: the iron wasted in the operation of converting bar into rod iron, costs us almost 2s. 6d. in the Cwt. more than it does your flitter; and had I been inclin'd still to swell the difference,

I might

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I might have dwelt a little on the extra duty of ten or eleven shillings per ton, paid by England on the iron we import in foreign bottoms. One item more in proof of much lower prices than I took for calculation; I have myself bought an inferior Russia iron fit for nails, imported into London last year and there purchased, at 13l. 3s. 6d. per ton at *third* hand; two houses having before made each an handsome profit by it; *that* iron imported directly *here* from Petersburgh would not have cost me 12l. per ton, and direct to Dublin, would have been laid on your Quay much under 10l. Had I been inclined to have gone as far as truth would have supported me, I should no doubt have been warranted in taking *this* fact into my estimates: but it is so much under the general value of Russia iron, that though I might have magnified the difference per cent. greatly; yet it would have had so much the appearance of a partial statement, I could not reconcile the use of it to that scale of equality, I wish should be considered as my

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my guide through the whole of this business.

Let us just see how much per Cent. Ireland has the advantage over us in *best new-fable iron*, the sort mostly imported and which last year cost at Bristol 13l. 13s. 6d. per ton.

Into Bristol it cost in 1784	-	-	13	13	6
Ireland pays less duty	-	-	2	6	6
Cost into Ireland in 1784	-	-	11	7	0

If 11l. 7s. gives 2l. 6s. 6d. that is in the ratio of above 20 per Cent.

If 13l. 13s. 6d. gives 2l. 6s. 6d. that is about 17 per Cent.

Take which you please of the proportions, in either the difference is too considerable, to remain unequalized between any two parts of one Empire, both in the habit of manufacturing the same articles, and both well situated and open to the same markets; without being the constant source

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source of discontent or worse consequences to one or both the contending countries.

It is with reluctance, I find it necessary to state such a variety of particulars, which ought only to appear on the pages of our accounts; but Ireland has called upon me, and they appeared needful to explain our real situation, and smooth down a little, the objections of Ireland.

If an importer of iron into Dublin, says he did *not* import last year at the price I have quoted, I reply, he *ought* to have done it; he is on terms of equal ability with a merchant of Bristol, and it is a disgrace to him to be outdone by one. We have no import of naval stores in quantities sufficient to bring iron lower than it may go to Dublin; to which place if the importers pay the freight you have declared, and I am sure you must be inform'd they do, it is a reproach upon them and I warn them to look better to their charters. If your statement of the London freight from Petersburg was a just one, viz. that iron is

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is "ordinarily brought for five shillings "per ton," there seems something absurd in Ireland having *any iron whatever* direct from Russia, and she should thank me for pointing out to her a better way; see below,

Average freight from Petersburg to Dublin direct, is, you say	- - }	1 13 0
Ordinary freight from Petersburg to London	- }	0 5 0
Freight London to Dublin	-	0 10 0
Charges at London, extra duty at Dublin, and Insurance	- - - }	0 10 0
		<hr/> 1 5 0
Cheaper through London than direct from Russia	- - - - }	0 8 0
		<hr/>

Freight from London to Bristol, and why not to Dublin? is often 7s. per ton only, (it is so now) which will enhance the difference, just so much in favor of Ireland and this circuitous conveyance.*

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Should

* That the buyers of foreign iron in Ireland may not, from what has been said of last year's prices, form conclusions to the prejudice of the importers, from their price of iron the present or any future import; the author thinks it his duty to say, that iron is this year considerably advanced at Petersburg, and will come in much dearer than in 1784.

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Should a flitter of iron in Ireland say, he cannot cut iron on as good terms as an English flitter; he may speak truly, while his mill has not a regular and full, but only a partial employment; an increase in your manufactures will certainly produce such full employ, and will enable a mill in Ireland to cut its own iron as low as we can do it, even if the coals cost the Irish flitter 20s. per ton; for as much is saved in the duty of the iron wasted in the process of flitting, as will pay the difference in the price of coals to a mere trifle; and wages of such common mechanics are surely as cheap with you, as us; for the most ignorant of your "Bog-trotters," if he has but strength enough, and knowledge sufficient to take his fingers off red hot iron without bidding, will in a very few weeks make an useful hand in the subordinate labor of a flitting mill.

It is stated that rods are 19l. per ton in Ireland, which I suppose is 20 Cwt. 112lb. each: if so, fie upon the feller of the rods or the importer of the bar, or one or more
be-

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between them; such men are not friends to their own country; extravagant profits on a material for manufacture, are a national evil. I wish you a fair exertion of your natural abilities, and am proud in the liberal voice of England, to say with you; "let Ireland thrive if she can by her own industry, if she should be my rival, is she not my sister?"*

It does not appear to me, you have exhibited your usual candor, in the calculation you have given us, in page 107 Dublin edition, shewing the difference to the prejudice of Ireland, in a ton of rod iron to the West-Indies: this would have justified me in taking for my calculation, when bar iron was under consideration, the inferior quality I have mentioned, which might have been imported into Dublin for less than 10l. per ton:—I should only have
c 2 gone

* Another part of Sir Lucius's letter places the words *rival* and *sister* in a very different point of view, to that, in which we have the pleasure to see them, in this his very generous and patriotic apostrophe here copied.

gone a part of the way towards the extream, while you have gone, I had like to have said, beyond it, to shew apparently an hardship upon Ireland, which when examined into will not appear to exist, as will be seen directly.

I have already said that rod iron is not an article of common export, and I question if one ton has been exported from both kingdoms, to any place included in the compact of 1778, since it was enter'd into. When the equalizing duty of 3l. 3s. 11d. was enacted on a ton of rod iron, the same sum *only*, was likewise imposed to be paid on a ton of scissars, penknives, needles, buckle chapes, and the vast variety of other bright steel and small iron wares, as well as on every other kind of manufactured iron wares; in many of which, true equality would have demanded double that duty to place the two countries on a level: From the multitude I will select one article, and when I have shewn the true equalizing duty on that and on rod iron, we will

will take the mean of both; it will then be seen how far 3l. 3s. 11d. was a fair average between us.—I shall not take an article, which has never reached the manufacturers hammer, and is not speaking technically a manufacture; but that finished and important one of buckle chapes, in which more than *900 tons of iron are annually consumed; and of which I believe there are double the quantity of tons exported in one year, than hundreds of rod iron: I have therefore in this respect abundantly the advantage over your calculation.

3 tons

* One maker in the town of Walsall, near Birmingham, consumes above 160 tons of iron annually in the article of buckle chapes; and he supposes his quantity is about one sixth part of the whole which are made in the year: a quantity so large, that if the Author had not *full* reliance on the veracity and knowledge of the Gentleman who gave him the information, he should have been afraid to mention.

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* 3 tons of bar iron say estimated to be consumed in a ton of chapes,	7 5 6
duty here - - - -	
Same Quantity into Ireland - -	1 7 6
	<hr/>
	5 18 0
Add to make this Irish money -	9 10
	<hr/>
Difference in favor of Ireland on a ton of chapes - - - -	6 7 10
	<hr/>

If an equalizing duty had been made on rod iron and that *only*, it would have stood thus

21 Cwt. bar makes one ton of rods,	2 11 0
duty thereon at 2l. 8s. 6d. -	
Same quantity into Ireland - -	9 8
	<hr/>
	2 1 4
Add to make this Irish money -	3 5
	<hr/>
	2 4 9
	<hr/>

Take

* Six tons of bar iron will scarcely produce one ton of chapes, finish'd for sale; but as there is a large quantity of waste iron left, after the chapes are cut out, which is afterwards made of some use, the Author not wishing to exaggerate will estimate only on three tons as really consumed.

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Take the mean of these two ends of the general average, on which the equalizing duty was founded in 1778, and it will stand thus

True equalizing duty which a ton of chapes ought to pay - -	6 7 10
Ditto on a ton of rod iron - -	2 4 9
	<hr/>
	8 12 7
	<hr/>
Take half for the mean of both -	4 6 3
	<hr/>

By this view of the calculations, it appears, that 4l. 6s. 3d. should have been the equalizing duty imposed in 1778; at least that I have as much right to say, that is a just one, as Ireland has to say 3l. 3s. 11d. is otherwise. Give scope to a fanciful speculation, and the mean difference might be magnified most wonderfully, by descanting on the quantity of iron necessary to produce a ton of pendulum springs for watches, and the authority of your letter may be quoted for mention of the article; you know, the equalizing duty was founded on the *weight* of iron consumed, not on the

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the *value* of the article produced : It might be opposed to rod iron for another reason ; because, perhaps as much of that may be exported from Ireland, *as of* rod iron : But I have no desire to travel into the labyrinth of speculative hypothesis, on a plain question between the two kingdoms, whose champions may box the compass of argument to eternity, without adjusting this topic to the satisfaction of either party ; and the whole must finally dissolve itself into a proof, that to do away the uneasiness and altercation on this head between the two countries ; it will be a laudable measure in Ireland to impose the same duty we now pay, on bar iron imported.

I will take my leave of this part of the subject, by opposing a calculation of rods made on the quantity of bar *really* consumed, to that you have deduced from the prices stated for London and Dublin in your letter page 107, to shew how the difference will then stand.

Rods

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Rods in London the ton	-	-	15	10	0
Rods in Dublin ditto	-	-	13	3	0
Export duty to be impos'd being the difference in duty, between England and Ireland in 1778, on 21Cwt. bar consum'd in making 20Cwt. of rod iron	-	-	*2	4	9
Rods in Dublin with the export duty thereon	-	-	15	7	9
Balance in favour of Ireland	-	-	2	3	

You see, Sir, taking even this article on its own distinct merits, the balance is in favor of your country : And as your iron trade has now in this necessary article for manufacture, so decisive a superiority ; and when *you* declare that 3 per cent. with the advantages of capital, low interest, &c. is enough to destroy any wholesale trade on earth ; what do you think must become of our manufacture ? unless you meet us as brethren, or we are aided against the inequality by our own administration.

The Lord Chancellor some time back, did me the honor of taking my opinion on the

* See the calculation in page 38.

the propriety of a bounty or drawback, on the exportation of our iron wares; (of which more hereafter.) After stating my reasons for the expediency of it, I proposed to his Lordship; that the wares should be divided into 2 or 3 classes, and a bounty or drawback be fixed on each, in proportion to the quantity of iron consumed therein: This certainly would be a more just way of regulating the equalizing duty of Ireland, if the duty on your bar iron is for ever to remain so much under ours, than by imposing it on every article alike; and this will be most beneficial to Ireland, if she exercises her industry in the manufacture of heavy iron wares only. As it *now* stands, no doubt the maker of the gross or heavy articles, has cause of complaint, when his goods pay as high a duty, as those which consume double the quantity of iron: But this was the act of Ireland, and it is worth her consideration to alter it, unless the necessity of doing it is removed by a judicious bounty on iron wares exported hence; when

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of course, the equalizing duty will be no longer imposed by the Parliament of Ireland.

I have restrained myself from entering more diffusely into the minutiae of the iron trade, and of being more particular in some parts of my reply; from the consideration, that there are in other nations, some no doubt very attentive to the abilities and situation, publickly estimated, of any of our great manufactories. I wish not in the least respect to inform our rival neighbours, or enable them to compare with too much accuracy, the powers of their manufactories when opposed to ours: I had rather be deemed deficient in explanation and reply to you; than looked on as a vade mecum to other countries, on the present state of the iron trade in this kingdom.

I have not been able to discover the equivocal use which you attribute to Lord Sheffield of the word *manufacture*. It is not necessary that an historian should treat

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on every branch of business, in the true technical phrases of the trade; and therefore he may not have handled the subject so as to convince an Irish manufacturer, or suited his arguments to the meridian of Ireland; but he certainly has explained the present state of the iron trade with more ability and perspicuity, than any other writer on the subject. The difference in the prices of sundry iron wares, in his observations on the trade of America, and in his observations on the present state of Ireland, on which you remark, are most readily accounted for: the former I have heard his Lordship say, were the local prices given for the London market, at the end of the war; and those in the latter publication, I know were intended as the average prices of the kingdom at large in 1784. Had you adverted to the beginning of the remark, his Lordship has with so much candor given in his observations on the trade of Ireland, page 211, where he says

“ The author in his observations on the
 “ commerce of the American States, fell
 “ into

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“ into the same error, and his remarks
 “ relative to the duty on import of foreign
 “ iron were founded on the state of the
 “ manufacture of iron in Great-Britain a-
 “ bout 15 *years ago*, previous to the late
 “ improvements. He finds that the mak-
 “ ing of iron is a greater trade than his
 “ former information had led him to be-
 “ lieve; and as it may be said to be in an
 “ infant state, and undoubtedly is increas-
 “ ing rapidly, it would be dangerous to
 “ give it any check at present, &c.”

I am convinced from the liberality of your sentiments, you would have thought unnecessary, some of your remarks on the different manner with which the noble Lord has treated, on some particular parts of the iron trade, in his two publications. In some of your quotations from his works, you seem not sufficiently full, and the force or drift of his arguments may be thereby misunderstood; but as any investigation thereof, is no part of the plan on which this letter to you is grounded; I forbear entering minutely into the particulars. In

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In respect to the European trade, you seem to have over rated the expectations of the English manufacturers. We have not in any of our representations to Government, attempted to make them believe it was necessary " That England must either
 " become a tyrant over Ireland, impos-
 " ing new taxes on her trade with foreign
 " nations, or old England must be un-
 " done." The markets in Europe have for a considerable time, been too unimportant to our iron trade, to be any bone of contention between us; we are unfortunately so cramped in our abilities, and so much underfold in them, we have no chance of recovering any part of that lost trade but by a bounty; and at this we may reasonably hope Ireland could not take offence, or even object to our being on a fair equality with her :---But perhaps you mean *America* by the word foreign nations; if so, We undoubtedly are guilty of petitioning for relief, against your particular advantages with respect to that country, and have prayed to be put on a *level* with you: this surely is a reasonable request and
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what one subject of our most gracious King may ask of another, with an assured and open countenance.

If instead of aiming at every species of manufactures, Ireland would more particularly cultivate her staple commodities, and seek rather a barter trade with us than a rivalry: The language of the two countries to each other might then be, You shall take our provisions and linens; We will in exchange, take your woollens, iron wares, cottons, &c. to an equal amount if we can consume as much; this is my idea of reciprocity, and this *mutual* dependence drawing the two countries closer together, would unite them by the bonds of *interest*, which history shews us, supercedes the faith of the most solemn treaties: In all our compacts it must be made our *interest* to deal with you, and *yours* to return the favor: every thing short of this is *meer* expedient, too much in use with the administrations of this country, and the *echo* only of reciprocal benefits.

If

If the charms of that fascinating word independence, have not deluded too many, and disabled them from coolly ruminating on the consequences of it, in all its effects; and on the probable events which may arise therefrom: It may be worth the while of Ireland to recollect, that no nation on earth has the means of supplying her on equal terms with Great-Britain, the articles she in general stands in need of, or can give her the credit we are enabled to do: And she should likewise remember, that her *provisions not many years ago were prohibited here, a proof we can support ourselves without, and spare to our foreign dependencies. In respect to linens, it is well known Germany can supply our consumption as well, if not better, than Ireland; and to encourage our importation from her, would in a particular

* At present there appears a partiality in our laws in favor of Irish provisions, against our own; for we supply Ireland with salt free of duty (great quantities of which are smuggled back upon our coasts) while the salt us'd for curing our own provisions which are exported, draw back no more bounty now, than when our duty on salt was one-third less than at present.

cular manner favor our cutlery and hardware trades in exchange. It cannot be wished by any friend to the empire at large, that the mal-administration of either country, should render it necessary to adopt or impose any protecting duties on the commodities of the other, or *partial* bounties on their own: such a warfare must inevitably ensue as might end in ruin to the competitors.

A new inconvenience just now stares me in the face, and others of the same kind no doubt will occur, which will for ever be pernicious to our manufactories, while the two legislatures are guided by distinct interests, and do not act in union with each other. A *law is just passed in this kingdom, forbidding the exportation of certain tools in the hardware way: many of our European rivals have been using their endeavours

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* The last part of the clause in this act, which enumerates the prohibited articles, is couch'd in such general and comprehensive words, that it is hard to say if any of the most common blacksmiths' tools may be exported without the risk of being construed as included in the prohibitory clause, and consequently liable to confiscation with all

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to procure both our tools and manufacturers with too much success; this, as much as possible should be prevented, as it strikes directly at the very existence of our valuable and extensive trade in that branch. If we say to Ireland, co-operate with us in the good design, and forbid the exportation of such tools from your country; she says we legislate for her, and is in wrath with us; if no such act is passed with you how nugatory are all our endeavours to prevent such tools finding their way all over Europe. If a clause had been inserted in the English act, forbidding the export of such tools even to Ireland, till an act had been passed with you prohibiting the like exportation; which in all such cases, is the only mode now left us to pursue; this still would be declared legislating for your free country, and an insidious attempt on the powers of your invigorated
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all other goods the package may contain. This is a doubt which must be cleared up another session, or the trade will be subject to infinite trouble and vexation from any officer of the customs: indeed unless Ireland passes a similar act, the whole is futile to the last degree, and can answer no other purpose, but to embarrass the trade and throw impediments in the way of legal export.

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constitution: What is England in such a case to do, and how are such of our laws to be executed with any effect? here I beg leave to look back on this complication of difficulties, and pause.

It is much to be wished we could on *sound* grounds compare the two kingdoms to two adjoining counties, as you do very aptly to the discussion of the merits between us: I should most cheerfully acquiesce in your sentiments thereon towards the conclusion of your letter, if the two countries were to each other, as Yorkshire and Lancashire now respectively are.--- Those two *counties* pay the same customs on all imports---are both taxed equally to the excise---are governed by the same laws, none of which militate in favor of one county against the other---when the necessities of the state call for new taxes, each county pays proportionably thereto, and an endless train of etceteras might be adduced, all which in the comparison would be similar and equal; but if Great Britain and Ireland are put into the balance, pray, Sir, in which of the preceding situations,

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tions, or in what other does the equality appear? The equilibrium is lost at once, and the lightest kicks the beam.

Let Ireland unite with us and become one people; then will the comparison hold good in the most comprehensive latitude, and we may truly say the success of one country is the interest of the other, and the riches and strength of either kingdom, are the property of both. Though it is no part of the plan on which I sat down to write, to treat on so important a consideration as the union of the two kingdoms, yet so well assured am I, that nothing short of it will ever conciliate the affections and interests of both; I could not refrain expressing my wishes for the accomplishment of that most desirable event. What energy has the union of England and Scotland given to each, and how much has it added to the power of the empire! Scotland, though it can neither in climate, fertility, resources, or situation for trade, bear any comparison with Ireland; yet, under the lenient and fostering laws of Great-Britain, it has thriven to an amazing

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ing degree; and nothing but a solid union with us, ever can or will give full vigor to the abilities of Ireland: the ferments now caused in the state by popular prejudices and clamor will then cease, and the minds of men will then be left at ease to pursue their own interest, and with it, that of their country. If the Irish ten, or English twenty boasted propositions, do but pave the way ever so little to the great event; they may hereafter be more favourably spoken of, and deemed the patriotic and bold measure of an administration not in the habit of meer expedients. I ask your excuse for this digression, but I could not resist the wish of bearing testimony to what I think the true ultimatum of the two countries, and the *one only way* to adjust the present infinity of jarring interests, and give *real* security to both. Partizans in Ireland, no doubt may be tenacious of what they consider as local and municipal advantages in their distinct government, and may hesitate; our natural enemies too, will intrigue with them and endeavour to keep the countries at an unfriendly distance; but it is to be hoped the good sense and better

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better stars of Ireland will in the end prevail against every popular delusion, and unite us for ever. Englishmen then considering Ireland *really* as an adjoining county, and sensible of her natural advantages, will soon avail themselves thereof and settle among you.—Manufactures and capital will no longer be wanting,—Your landed property must double in value and ten years purchase for estates will be no longer heard of in Ireland: Great-Britain will view your improvements with delight, for then your strength is *truly* her strength and the happiness of both is *one* for ever.

I have now explained on all the considerations which appear necessary to ascertain the comparative merit of the iron trade, between England and Ireland. A necessity of some attention to my own concerns, and my dislike to public discussions, has induced me to be as concise as possible: perhaps more so than I ought, when the importance of the case is considered. My design has been to soften down the most striking features of your objections,
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to what the iron trade of England calls justice and equality between us: That body are not among those manufacturers (if such there are) who claim the right of “restraining, of taxing, of legislating for you, just as might suit their own “conveniency,” they know too well the nature of your free constitution, and the temper of your countrymen, even to dream of such an interposition; and have only attempted to convince you, how far you are in honor bound on the point between us, to restrain, to legislate and tax yourselves; in return for a participation generously relinquished in 1778 by them to Ireland. I have by facts, which rest not for solidity upon assertions only, endeavoured to combat other parts of your letter on matters wherein you have been misinformed, or have thought Ireland either misrepresented or aggrieved: how far I have obtained this desirable purpose, must be left to your better judgment, and that of the iron trade in the two kingdoms.

Let us now turn short about, and look at the iron trade of Great-Britain in a point
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of view very different to that in which it stands with respect to Ireland; I mean as opposed to the foreign manufactories of Europe, *now* open to America as well as ourselves.

We have a right on your authority to suppose it *impossible*, that Ireland can ever rival us successfully in the manufactures made of foreign iron; I will not contend that point further, but in deference to your judgment and better knowledge of that country, will admit that must for ever be the case; still the discussion of this subject may have its good effects, as it will tend to conciliate, and induce one country to relinquish more readily the idea of rivalling the other. The man who can allay one spark of discontent between the two kingdoms, deserves well of both. Though Ireland may not oppose us, you have justly said, we have powerful opponents in Germany, Sweden, and Russia; and now our late colonies are or may become their customers, it is of the highest im-

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importance to that *invaluable branch the iron trade, that we provide, before it becomes too late, against their superior advantages; by granting a drawback on iron wares exported, of all, or such part of the duty on bar iron, as may be judged sufficient to protect the trade. From the prospect you have shewn us of the foreign iron trade in Ireland, and the present and probable future state of her native iron; we must conclude she is very little interested in this necessary measure of a bounty on our wares exported; and we shall look with more confidence for her chearful acquiescence in the plan, because we have not in the least degree aimed to place our iron trade, on a footing preferable to hers. We have no wish to curtail any advantages you have long enjoyed in the European markets; and on the other hand, you ought

* The iron trade, if not of equal magnitude with the woollen, may be said to be in one respect of greater importance to this kingdom; for the materials of which it is compos'd are worth nothing, 'till call'd into value by the different workmen, in the various processes of manufacturing iron from the ore to the finish'd goods; and whether the article when compleated, is worth 30l. or 300l. the ton, the *whole value* of it is *labor* only and is so much added, clear of all deductions, to the riches of the state.

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ought not to deny us a power of going on equal terms with yourselves to the same countries. While an equalizing duty to our plantations is imposed in Ireland, no bounty should be granted to our wares to the same markets; when such equalizing duty ceases in Ireland, then and not before, our wares should be entitled to a bounty on export to those places. You have very judiciously shewn the practicability of our colonies being supplied with *foreign* iron wares, from the free ports in the West-Indies; and interest, that most forcible of all motives, will inevitably take our planters there to purchase, if we permit ourselves to be much underfold by them. We know by what *has* happened in Europe, what *may* come to pass in America; and the markets of the latter may be in the same manner wrested from us, unless by a well regulated bounty, we are enabled to look our continental rivals in the face.

I will in this place do you the justice to believe, you do not class the gentlemen concerned in the iron trade, among the
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number of those to whom any "consolation will remain, that Ireland certainly " will be excluded this trade." I consider this sentiment as a little ebullition of that impatience, with which the warmth of argument inspires a patriot, rather than your real opinion: I entertain a very different one of the inhabitants of our sister kingdom; for I can hardly suppose there is a man in Ireland, who, finding the trade not likely to be transferred to his own country, would have any consolation in seeing it taken from us by a foreign opponent.

We have seen our critical situation, in respect to a competition with foreigners, ever since the independence of America was recognized by the treaty of peace; and it being more eligible as well as easy to prevent, than remedy an inconvenience, we should soon have applied to Parliament for relief, if the propositions had never passed under the consideration of that honourable house: The discussion of them no doubt accelerated our application, because

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cause by their investigation we discovered that Ireland enjoyed an advantage over us in the American trade, which has been before mentioned; but the main spring of our motions was to obviate the advantages, which some European manufactories have over us, and the consequences we feared might flow from their superiority. Take an impartial view of our situation, and I think, you Sir, as a well wisher to the general empire, will commend the measures we are pursuing, for maintaining at least an equality with the countries we may have for competitors.

I am not sanguine enough to imagine, that our exchange of sentiments will carry conviction to the minds of men, under the influence of national prejudices, or that *you* may perfectly coincide with the whole of my arguments; still I entertain hopes you will give the iron trade of England credit, for an open and equal conduct towards Ireland; and continue to declare we have acted honourably by her: the sanction of Sir Lucius O'Brien will bear down a host of objections, and an
happy

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happy effect may be produced by our correspondence. In this one point, I am *sure* we shall agree---in our hearty good wishes for the welfare and most friendly intercourse of the two kingdoms: the more that is cherished, the more will Ireland taste of the manifold good effects and benefits, which will result to her and continually increase, from a still more intimate union with us. Some *well digested plan*, we may flatter ourselves will arise out of the laborious discussions which have been lately had on the subject, that may tend to promote these desirable purposes, and fix our mutual interests as one and the same for ever.

Happily united! we may still be confident in our strength---may still maintain our place among the nations, and still defy the world in arms. That such may be the ultimate effects of our present contentions, is the ardent prayer of

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant,

WILLIAM GIBBONS.

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*Copy of a letter from John Wilkinson, Esq;
to W. Gibbons, received at Bristol,
Sept. 1st, 1785.*

Castle-Head, near Lancaster, Aug. 22, 1785.

Dear Sir,

YOUR favor of the 11th has but just reached me at this place.

I have not yet seen Sir Lucius O'Brien's pamphlet, but am very sorry to hear that in his letter to you, he makes statements so very wide of the truth respecting my works.

I do not know what others may do in the iron trade. But I can aver for myself that I have not an expectation *in my day*, of making iron to be delivered at Stourport so low as 14l. per ton. What improvements may take place in time to render it lower than what it sells for now I cannot pretend to determine. Much depends upon the operations of government, which, I am sorry to observe, have not of late been favorable to that manufactory.

The tax upon bricks in particular greatly checks my intentions, and so far am I from being likely to make 10,000 tons a year, that I do not expect ever to produce above one fourth of that quantity in bar iron; at present I do not make 1000 tons annually.

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What ever others may imagine concerning Lord Dondonald's process for making of coak, it does not influence my opinion. I fear that the fact will turn out—that the iron trade will receive no benefit from it. However, from the trials I have made with fewel, prepared in that method, I shall not repeat the experiment.

The impression that this patent with that of Mr. Cort's, has made in the kingdom upon men not well informed on the subject of making iron, has done the trade a real injury, by publications and puffs that have for some time past and continue daily to make their appearance in different shapes, which tend to mislead even those in the trade.—What then must be the opinion of administration?

You say Sir Lucius states the price of some coals to be only 2s. 6d. per ton. Those that are used for making iron in Shropshire, so far as has come to my knowledge, do not upon an average cost less than double that sum.

It is true some coals for the use of the country have been, and are now sold at certain works for 2s. 6d. per ton, at the Pit Bank—but this arises from a local opposition in the *land* sale; and while it lasts must be supported with a considerable loss to the contending parties. These are particular circumstances from which a man may advance a fact, but by withholding the *whole* truth may greatly mislead the

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the public. I doubt not but that Sir Lucius has been imposed on, by such partial and ill-founded representations.

I am one of those that are of opinion, that the true interests of the manufacturers of iron in England, will be the best promoted by every circumstance that tends to enlarge and encourage the works of those that are to make it in this kingdom, and that whatever government or individuals may do, that will check the present attempts of the English maker of iron, must be considered as the act of men not in their senses.

I second most heartily your patriotic wish—It will be a proud day for this nation when she can say, we have one man that can produce 10,000 tons of bar iron annually.—If our ministers act wisely this *may* be the case, but I do not expect to live long enough to see it.

I remain with perfect esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN WILKINSON.

F I N I S.