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L E T T E R S

CONCERNING THE

TRADE AND MANUFACTURES

OF

I R E L A N D,

Principally so far as the same relate to the making Iron in this Kingdom,

AND THE MANUFACTURE AND EXPORT OF

I R O N W A R E S,

In which certain FACTS and ARGUMENTS set out by

LORD SHEFFIELD,

IN HIS OBSERVATIONS ON THE TRADE AND PRESENT STATE OF IRELAND, ARE EXAMINED.

By SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN, BART.

WITH

A LETTER FROM MR. WILLIAM GIBBONS OF BRISTOL, TO SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN, BART. AND HIS ANSWER.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE RESOLUTIONS OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND RELATIVE TO A COMMERCIAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE TWO KINGDOMS.

L O N D O N :

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E X T R A C T S

FROM

LORD SHEFFIELD'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE COM-
MERCE OF THE AMERICAN STATES.

SIXTH EDITION.

Iron and Steel Manufactures, of every Kind.

P A G E 14 TO 21.

IF a drawback or bounty, equal to the duty on foreign iron, should be granted when exported, these articles probably never will go to America to any amount, but from Great Britain. The cast-iron manufactory has had great success in some parts of America; the other manufactures of iron there are very inconsiderable, except scythes and axes; the latter of which are preferred, chiefly on account of the shape being better calculated to answer the purpose for which they are wanted, than those made in England, and they bear a higher price*. Occasionally other articles are as well made in America by ingenious workmen, chiefly emigrants; but whatever they make is at an expence

* It is said the American scythes and axes are better than the British, because the Americans use the best foreign iron for the purpose, while the British manufacturers are, perhaps, too careless as to the materials they use, taking the readiest or the cheapest sorts of iron. Manufacturers in general are too inattentive to the goodness or fitness of the raw materials they use. However, the New-England axes having got a great character, large quantities before the revolt were made in Britain like them, were sent to America, and sold as New-England axes, and answered as well.

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of at least three times the amount of what the same article could be imported from Europe. *It is well known how much we surpass the world in the manufactures of iron and steel.* At Liege some articles may be cheaper; nails may be had cheaper there, but they are clumsy, and do not suit the American market. French and Dutch nails were found to be ill manufactured, and made of brittle iron.

Some English and American iron possesses the quality of toughness in a high degree, and undoubtedly tough soft Iron is the best for making wire and many other articles; but it is very bad for making a nail, a hoe, an axe, a scythe, and many other valuable articles; for these it is necessary to have iron of other qualities added to the quality of toughness; it must be of a sound, firm, durable, strong body or texture, and for edge tools particularly must in its nature have a readiness of joining with steel; that is, in making the tool, the iron must cohere and unite itself with the steel, so as to make one sound and solid body. It is known and admitted, that no good steel can be made, except from Swedish iron: it is more natural that that iron should be disposed to join best with steel; the fact too confirms it. Swedish iron makes the best axe, scythe, &c. Russia iron comes next in rank, in point of character and quality, to the Swedish, and is very fit for nails, &c. which require no junction with steel. Iron which is only tough will not join well with steel; cold-short English iron joins better; but as it is too apt to break when cold, it is not fit for many tools.

Previous to the war, there were very few forges for making anchors in America, and only one in Philadelphia.

No branch of commerce is more interesting to us than the manufactures of Iron; yet we suffer them to be clogged with a most improper duty for the sake of a revenue. There are scarce any articles on which it would not be more prudently laid; the duty on foreign iron being 2l. 16s. 1½d. per ton, imported in British-built shipping, &c. and 3l. 7s. 1¾d. in foreign ships, undoubtedly produces considerably. In 1781, above 50,000 tons were imported from Russia and Sweden; but the importation yearly from the former of those places does not exceed 26,000 tons, and from the latter 16,000 tons, on an average of the last twelve years. It is a duty, however, which we should spare entirely, or allow a drawback on exportation, notwithstanding this moment of difficulty to our finances. *There should be no duty on raw materials, especially in this case, Russia, Germany,*

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Germany, and other countries, which have iron without duty will undersell us in the manufacture of it, especially as slitting and rolling mills are now erected in Sweden and Russia. The cheaper the raw materials, the advantage is certainly greater to the manufacturer, and to the country; and for the sake of British iron mines, raw materials should not be burdened. Raw materials are better to us in return than gold: they are the parents of many manufactures. *As the duty now stands, the manufacturer of nails in Russia might afford to sell them 4l. a ton cheaper than we can; duty 56s. 4d. freight 20s. shipping and landing 3s. 8d. Russia makes great quantities for home consumption; and having now taken off the duty, may soon greatly undersell us*.* Ministers can have no sufficient objection against allowing, on exportation, a drawback of the duties on articles manufactured from foreign iron, unless they should think, that there will be room for frauds in exporting articles manufactured of British iron, under the name of foreign; it would be better to allow a drawback, or bounty, equal to the duty on foreign iron, on all iron articles when exported, whether manufactured from foreign or from British iron, (which will also encourage the making of iron in Britain) in like manner as is now allowed upon British refined sugar, and upon silk manufactures exported, in consideration of the duties actually paid for raw sugars and silk on importation. Allowing the bounty or drawback on exportation, above half the duties will be saved, as near 50,000 tons are imported, and only from 15 to 20,000 tons of all kinds are exported manufactured. As to giving up the duty on the part exported, it would be lost of course, if we lose the export trade, which must happen in a short time, if our iron manufactures continue to be burthened with duties. If once lost, it will not be easily recovered. From 50 to 60,000 tons in pig, and from 15 to 20,000 tons in bar iron, are made in England. The British iron maker will certainly wish to keep the duties as they now are; but our iron mines cannot be an object of so much consequence, and the legislature should

* *As the law now stands, the Russians may import into Great Britain, and afterwards export to the American States, such of their wares as are made of wrought iron or steel in their dominions, in defiance of the very high duties on importation here, such duties being all drawn back again upon exportation to a foreign country, except a moiety of the old subsidy; consequently, the American States would be on a better footing in this particular than our own colonies, if the law is not altered.*

not risque the most important trade for the sake of one class of men, especially as foreign iron is of a superior quality, and as the practice of making iron, by means of coak, instead of charcoal, increases, the quality of our iron will become worse. Iron made by coak has hitherto been found to be of a very mean quality, and much of it, of that kind called Red-short, the meanest of all; it loses near a third of its weight in manufacturing, and flies like pot metal under the stroke of the hammer. The quantity of iron made in Britain, by means of pit coal, increases very greatly, and will decrease importations. *

Before the war vast quantities of nails were made of foreign iron, and exported from Glasgow to the southern provinces of America; and although they cost 15 per cent. more than nails from British iron sent from Bristol, &c. yet they were always preferred in America, from their superior quality; and therefore, if the raw material is not exempted from duty, the many articles made of foreign iron must be lost to this country, as the British iron cannot be substituted, particularly in making the different sorts of steel, which was formerly an immense article of export to America. It was manufactured in Britain from Swedish iron; and although it continued in bars as formerly, yet no drawback could be allowed.

The cost of a ton of iron is from 10l. to 10l. 10s. Duty, freight, charges, and manufacturing, gain to the country from 11l. to 45l.

The total value of a ton of foreign iron, when manufactured in Great Britain, is according to the kind of manufacture, from 21l. to 56l.

Viz. a ton of iron, when manufactured into

Rods, is worth	-	21	Hoes, axes, &c.	-	42
Hoops,	-	22	Anvils,	-	42
Bolts,	-	24	Tin plates,	-	56
Anchors,	-	30	Steel from 24l. to	-	56
Nails,	-	35			

From

* If Mr. Cort's very ingenious and meritorious improvements in the art of making and working iron, and his invention of making bar iron from pig iron, either red-short or cold-short, and the great improvements on the steam engines by Messrs. Watt and Bolton of Birmingham, and Lord Dundonald's discovery of making

From 15 to 20,000 tons are annually manufactured for exportation; the average of which, estimated at 28l. per ton, the medium of 11l. and 45l. (the lowest and highest increase per ton) produces annually a profit to this country of 484,500l.

Iron imported into Ireland pays 10s. per ton only; iron imported into England pays, as before mentioned, 56s. 4d. There is no drawback in either country upon foreign iron manufactured; but Ireland laid a duty upon manufactured iron exported to the colonies, which, added to the duty of 10s. per ton paid upon rough iron imported, equalized the charge which British manufactured iron was computed to carry out with it. *It is true, the American States are no longer British colonies, and therefore Ireland may, without breach of compact, send her iron manufactured there, free of duty; this is an additional reason for taking off the duties on exportation. Coals, and the means of manufacturing, are however much in favour of England.*

STEEL in BARS.

PAGE 22.

STEEL is made in very few of the American States. Little was made in New York, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania, before the late contest; but, since the commencement of the late war, considerable quantities have been made there; and those are the provinces where the greatest iron works were. A great deal of English and German steel, is still imported. Lately, the steel denominated German steel, is brought to great perfection in Great Britain. It is made of Argon's iron; all of which is contracted for in Sweden by the English.

making coak for the furnace at half the present expence, should all succeed, as there is reason to think they will, the expence may be reduced so greatly, that British iron may be afforded as cheap as foreign, even if the latter should be allowed to enter duty free, perhaps cheaper, and of as improved a quality, and in quantity equal to the demand. It is not asserting too much to say, that event would be more advantageous to Britain than Thirteen Colonies. It would give the complete command of the iron trade to this country, with its vast advantages to navigation, and our knowledge of iron seems hitherto to have been in its infancy.

IRON.

I R O N.

PAGE 117 TO 118.

MOST parts of North America abound in iron mines; the ore, however, is so scarce in Virginia, that almost all that is used there comes from Maryland. The high price of labour in the American States would not have permitted the exportation of iron, without the advantage of entering free into Britain, in competition with foreign iron, which pays a very heavy duty. We sent from this country Russian, Swedish, and British bar iron to a great amount, particularly to the northern Colonies; and it was sold cheaper than iron made there, or brought from any other part of America. *Canada has plenty of iron mines.* The only argument that can be used in favour of suffering iron to be imported duty free from the American States, is, that it may come in the place of money in return for our manufactures; and some think that it might in some degree prevent the manufacture of iron in America. The quantity, however, exported from thence, has not been considerable, and the distinction may give umbrage to the North. Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, exported little iron. The States to the southward of Rhode Island imported little; most of them exported. But although the middle Colonies exported iron in pigs and in bars, (the heavy duty on the iron of other countries when imported into this, acting as an extraordinary bounty to America) they imported their hoes, axes, and all sorts even of the most heavy and common iron tools.

Exported annually from America, principally the middle provinces, on an average of three years, viz. 1768, 1769 and 1770:

Bar iron,	---	2592 tons.
Pig do.	---	4624
Cast do.	---	12

PAGE 225.

It may be here remarked, that none but the most unthinking can suppose Ireland will continue to give the monopoly of her market to our West-India islands, unless her share of the monopoly of the West-India markets is preserved to her. Except linens, Ireland has no trade of consequence but provisions.

O B S E R-

O B S E R V A T I O N S

ON THE

MANUFACTURES, TRADE,

AND

PRESENT STATE OF IRELAND.

PAGE 131.

THE salt is weaker than the English, because it is not so much boiled. This is among many articles in which Britain must always have an advantage through her greater abundance of coal.

IRON, AND MANUFACTURES OF IRON
AND STEEL.

PAGE 211 TO 239.

THE useful and necessary manufacture of iron being capable, perhaps, of higher improvement and greater extension than any other, and being of the utmost national importance in every point of view, undoubtedly deserves a volume; nor would it be an easy matter to point out all its advantages and all its importance. And yet that most essential business, the making of iron in Great Britain, has been, in a great degree, rescued within a few years almost from ruin, by the ingenuity and spirit of a few men, who deserve, at least, as well of their country as any of its most favourite patriots.

The scarcity and price of wood have rendered it impossible to make a quantity of iron, either to enter into a competition with foreign markets, or even sufficient for home consumption and manufactures; but the improvements in making good bar iron

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with

with pit coal*, the great aid given to labour, and the expences saved by the improved steam engines, afford a reasonable hope, that in time, if no extraordinary checks should intervene, enough will be made in Britain to supply these kingdoms with that necessary article, whereby between five and 600,000l. annually, now paid to foreign countries at their ports of exportation, exclusive of the freight and other great expences, would be saved to the nation. This might seem enough to recommend it to the attention and care of the public and of the legislature; but it would not be merely a saving of a certain sum. The employment given to so great a number of men should not be forgotten, and in a manufacture which, on enquiry will be found as beneficial as any, formed with materials dug out of the earth, not applicable to any other purpose, consequently not interfering with any manufacture, but assisting many, nor causing any change that may take off from other produce. When land is converted from tillage to pasture, or from wood to either tillage or pasture, there is a loss of certain articles; but in the case of iron, in the making of which, ore, limestone, and coal are used, there is none. It should be added, that no manufacturers pay more in excises than those employed in this branch; and supposing 50,000 tons to be imported, and that one man can make a ton in a year, that he pays in excises of all kinds, upwards of 6l. annually, (which are computed to be the case,) there would be an increase of excise at least to the amount of 300,000l. which would more than doubly pay the loss to the revenue that would arise from the non-importation of 50,000l. tons of foreign iron.

We are apt to consider iron and bar iron as a raw ma-

* Some kind of coals (and generally the worst) answer the purpose of making coak much better than others.—There are sorts of coal which, when coaked, are not sufficiently cleansed of their sulphur and impurities to make a kind or malleable pig iron fit for the forges. It has not yet appeared whether the Irish coal is proper for making coak.—This opportunity may be taken of observing how ruinous the coal tax would have been to the making of iron in Britain. The quantity consumed in that business is prodigious; one company alone in Shropshire uses 500 tons of coal daily. It was the intention to have thrown up many of those great works if the tax had been laid. In such a case the whole rents of the townships would not have supported the poor; and then it may be remarked, that the late tax upon bricks should not have extended to those used in mines or manufacture works.

terial* ;

terial* ; in the latter state it is a manufacture far advanced, and in a midway stage from the ore to perfection. We should observe that *the great consumption of iron is in the grojs articles,*

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* The author, in his Observations on the Commerce of the American States, fell 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 about 15 years ago, previous to the late improvements. He finds that the making of iron is a greater trade than his former information had led him to believe; and as it may be said to be in an infant state, and undoubtedly is increasing rapidly, it would be dangerous to give it any check at present: at least one third of the quantity of iron imported may be supposed to be for inferior purposes of manufacture, and for which British iron made with pit-coal may be substituted. The improvements made within a few years justify the hopes of *approaching the better sorts, if the spirited exertions now making, are not discouraged by the new systems.* It is believed, that if the duty on the import of foreign iron was removed, many great iron works would be immediately discontinued, which now employ such numbers of men in the manner the most advantageous to the country, and, at least, save 200,000l. which otherwise must be sent out of this country; but being spent and circulated among the industrious, a considerable part must by them be ultimately paid to the national support in the exercise on the various articles consumed by them. *Works would be neglected, which within a few years have cost immense sums, but would become useless and of no value, to the ruin of those men, who with great spirit have invested their fortunes in them, under the faith and expectation that the duties on foreign iron would continue.* These are weighty considerations; at the same time it should be repeated, there is a probability, that in a few years, by the exertions of several very ingenious men now engaged in the business, that *we may be able fully to stock the market at home,* which is necessary to put this country on a footing with foreign countries, and then we may gradually lower the duty, or rather the duty will cease of course, as it will not answer to bring in iron, when it can be made in sufficient quantities, and as cheap at home.

This much may be fairly advanced, that from the improvements that have been made, particularly from the capital improvement of coak bar iron by Messrs. Wright and Jesson, which is the method now generally practised, that kind of iron has been much improved in its quality; and the quantity made is greatly increased, and likely to be more so; for as nearly the same number of furnaces are kept up as were during the war, and few cannon are now making, the immense quantity of cast iron which was annually absorbed by these instruments, will be now converted into bar iron, and many of the cannon themselves will be literally turned into plough shares, hoops, and nails.—Were the duty to be taken off foreign iron at this critical juncture, all this trade might fall to the ground.

The substitution of steam engines in place of water mills to work the furnaces and forges, has much increased the powers of manufacturing bar iron. By whom steam engines were first applied to raise

articles, and not in those which require the greatest degree of manufacture. Iron has this peculiar recommendation above almost all other manufactures, that in every stage of it, its value is simply the product of labour, which labour is not hazardous to the lives, or prejudicial to the health of those employed, but, on the contrary, has been remarkably wholesome.

From 50 to 60,000. tons of pig iron, and between 20 and 30,000 tons of bar iron are made in Britain, and the annual demand for the latter is from 70 to 80,000 tons, of which between 50 and 60,000 *are* imported, the value of which is so much money paid for foreign labour. It is computed that Great Britain makes, at least, 10,000 tons of iron more than she did *a few years ago*, which, at 16l. per ton, the present average price, amounts to 160,000l. and this quantity is likely to be much more than double in a *very short* period. If the demand is only 70,000 tons, the manufacturing of the whole within the country will employ 70,000 labourers, and valuing the iron only at 15l. per ton, will produce an annual profit of more than a million to the nation. But if the making of iron is not encouraged and extended, the sum that now goes from this country for that article will be increased. The price of Russia iron rises very rapidly; 5 per cent. in 1784, and as great a rise is expected in 1785. Russia has found a vent by the Black Sea; and some fabrics, particularly that of Toul, which formerly sent much to England, now send none.

The price must increase also from the immense destruction of the woods by the iron works, by the slowness of the growth of woods, and the neglect of them in Siberia, where are the principal iron works. It is surprising, indeed, that Russia can afford iron so cheap as she does. The

raise water for the wheels of furnaces is not known to the author; but Mr. Wilkinson was the first who applied them directly to blow the furnace without the intervention of a water wheel; and Messrs. Boulton and Watts were the first that applied steam engines to work forge mills directly without the intervention of water wheels: they have erected several for that purpose, and there are one or two on the common construction applied to the same use, which they perform in an inferior manner, and at a greater expence of fuel—Messrs. Boulton and Watts have also made several engines for turning mills of other sorts, and are now making many more. The advantages of their engines consist in their saving two-thirds of the fuel used to do the same work by common fire engines, in their being more manageable, and better constructed in every respect.

Abbé

Abbé D'Auteroche reports, that on the spot, in Siberia, iron is estimated at less than 30s. English per ton. It is all conveyed an astonishing distance by inland carriage, yet it is afforded at Petersburg at about 8s per cwt. The best fable iron comes from Neucanskoi in Siberia; it is carried by land to the Tchuschauwaia, which falls into the Kama, and that into the Wolga below the city of Kasan; it then ascends the Wolga, and is brought by the Ladoga canal to Petersburg. With the decrease of vassalage and increase of civilization, the price of labour also will rise in Russia. The present low price of iron in Russia is partly accounted for by this circumstance, that the Empress grants a district with the peasantry on it, and the person to whom it is granted not paying for the latter, as is usual in other countries where negroes are employed, the price of their labour is merely the expence of keeping them.

An inquiry into these circumstances is necessary, when not only the present but the probable future state of the iron trade should be examined. The object is of the utmost consequence, especially to Britain. *The expediency of endeavouring, on the part of Ireland, to make iron a principal manufacture of that kingdom, and of vieing with a favourite and established manufacture of Great Britain, may be doubted. It will be difficult to raise the manufacture in Ireland in competition with that of Britain.* The capital of Ireland may be otherwise employed to advantage, particularly in manufactures so advantageous and natural to her as leather, &c. but if such a competition should be thought an object for the mutual advantage of the two countries; on an arrangement, it will be deemed fair and reasonable that the manufactures of each should be exported to all parts charged with similar or equivalent duties, and that this only can be judged an equal settlement.

There is no article in which it will be more difficult to arrange with Ireland than on that of iron; and in consequence of the revolutions *which have taken place in America and Ireland*, those interested in the iron trade of this kingdom are alarmed; they think it is become matter of very serious consideration, how far that branch of manufacture may or is likely to be affected by its new rival sister, Ireland.

They assert that Ireland will not observe the spirit of her compact, if she does not put the same duty on the export of iron wares to the American states, to which she had agreed

agreed when they were dependent on England. It may be proper to state, that when Ireland, 1778, obtained a free trade to the British colonies, *she undertook*, by the *act of her own Parliament*, to equalize the duties, that the Irish manufacturers should not be able to supply the colonies on better terms than the English in their respective branches.

The representatives of the iron trade in England agreed, that Ireland should have a participation in their branch of trade, on payment of equal duties with themselves, the duty on bar iron being at that time very different in the two kingdoms.

It was first proposed to impose on all foreign bar iron imported into Ireland the same duties as were then paid in England on the same articles, but this proposal was declined. The only other method of equalizing was, by imposing a duty on iron wares and iron exported from Ireland, as should send them to market charged with duties equal to the English. The following calculations *for the average on which the par of duty was calculated*, were satisfactory to both parties at that time, and were deemed fair between the two countries. *The gentleman who negotiated for Ireland, declared himself perfectly satisfied therewith, and that he was honourably treated by the iron trade of England.* A clause was immediately added to the act of Parliament then in agitation, imposing a duty of 2l. 10s. on all bar iron; and 3l. 3s. 11d. on all iron wares exported from Ireland to the British colonies in the West Indies, and on the coast of Africa, grounded on these calculations:

Calculation made in 1778, for equalizing the duty on a ton of bar iron between England and Ireland.

	<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
A ton of bar iron pays duty on importation into England 2l. 8s. 6d. * and draws back nothing on re-export to America or the British West Indies †	2	8	6

* There is an addition to the duty on importation of bar iron into Britain since 1778, as will be more particularly mentioned hereafter.

† On Exportation to Ireland or settlements in Africa, the whole is drawn back except the old subsidy. The same is now allowed to America and the plantations, on bar iron, but not on wrought iron.

A ton

	<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
A ton of bar iron into Ireland pays 10s. Irish duty, † of which it draws back 7s. 6d. on re-exportation, duty remaining is 2s. 6d.			
Irish	0	2	4

Difference in favour of Ireland, English money	2	6	2
Add, to make this Irish money	0	3	10

Duty to be imposed on every ton of bar iron exported from Ireland	2	10	0
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Calculation for equalizing the duty on a ton of iron wares between England and Ireland, made in 1778.

	<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
30 cwt. of bar iron is, on an average, estimated to produce one ton of manufactured iron wares.			
30 cwt. of bar iron into Great Britain, at 2l. 8s. 6d. pays	3	12	9
30 cwt. ditto into Ireland, at 10s. per ton Irish, or 9s. 2d. English money, pays	0	13	9

Difference in favour of Ireland, in English money	2	19	0
Add, to make this Irish money	0	4	11

Duty to be imposed on a ton of iron wares when exported from Ireland	3	3	11
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An act in conformity to this calculation was soon after passed in the Irish House of Commons, and the duties above are now in force in Ireland.

A memorial from Ireland is now before *the ministry*, complaining of the duty imposed on a ton of iron wares, as

† The same duty is payable on importation of iron into Ireland from all parts.

being

being taken on an unfair average, and intimating that a ton of split iron, or iron hoops, do not require so great a quantity of bar to produce a ton of manufacture; it is true that those two articles, and those two only, do not require much more than 21 cwt. of bar to produce a ton; but it is argued, that there is an immense variety of bright iron and steel wares, of which a ton cannot be manufactured from 30 cwt. 40 cwt. or even 50 cwt. of bar iron; even in the article of small nails, 30 cwt. of bar produces only 21 cwt. 3 q. 11 lb. of manufacture. With the approbation of both parties, the average was made on one average only, to avoid a variety of calculations for different articles.

It seems proper here to observe, that the duty on a ton of bar iron into England is increased, since 1778, 7s. 7d. per ton; so that the true equalizing duty on Ireland should now be 3l. 16s. 3d. and not 3l. 3s. 11d. The latter duty, which is now in force in Ireland, is the difference of duty on 25 cwt. only of bar to a ton of iron wares; an average so much too low, that Britain thinks she has now a right to complain as the injured country in this particular.

It would have been better, and more equal to the different manufactures of iron in Ireland, if two averages had been taken, one on nails, hoops, and other heavy articles; and another on the lighter and brighter articles of iron and steel wares, in which the waste of the material is abundantly more considerable; and then 25 cwt. perhaps would have been an equitable calculation for the gross, and 40 or 45 cwt. for the smaller and bright wares, which might have prevented the objection on the part of Ireland against the inequality of the average.

Ireland farther says, that the duty of 3l. 3s. 11d. on her wares is too much, because England makes a large quantity of iron, and consequently a great proportion of her wares go out free of duty. England consumes more than double the quantity of iron for internal uses than she makes; it cannot therefore be justly said that any iron wares go out of England free of the duty paid on bar iron imported, and as Ireland can now import iron from Russia considerably cheaper than it can be imported into England, Ireland is therefore supplied for its internal uses on better terms.

The Iron masters of Great Britain strenuously assert there will be nothing like equality or reciprocity, unless both

both countries pay the same duty on the importation of foreign bar iron; and that that duty should not be lower than it now is in England, viz. 2l. 16s. 1d. per ton English, which is equal to 3l. os. 9d. Irish, as a reduction of that duty would tend to defeat its operation in favour of British iron works, which deserve and require at this juncture every support and encouragement from the country. Even such an equalization would leave a great advantage to Ireland; as her manufactures do not pay the number of excises which are paid in Britain. If iron ore should be wanting in Ireland, the best is to be had from Lancashire and Cumberland, and may go as ballast to oak bark, and be delivered in Ireland on cheaper terms than to the makers of iron in most parts of Britain, where this kind of ore is used. The transportation to the eastern coast of Ireland will not cost one half of what is now paid by the iron makers at Chepstow, and in the ports of the Severn, where great quantities of it are sent, and through Hull to Rotheram, and other inland works; and in Scotland it is used at a still greater expence; and if pit coal, and peat or turf should be wanting in Ireland, * that article may be had as cheap on her eastern coast from Britain as in several parts of the latter, and much cheaper than in London, where many branches of the iron manufacture are carried on to a great extent, viz. hoops, rods, anchors, ship-bolts, &c. It is well known that coals are above 30 per cent. dearer in the Thames than in the Liffey.

While Ireland had woods, she had also many iron works; but when the former were cut down and destroyed, there was of course nearly an end of the latter; the improvements in making iron have encouraged her to revive them; some steam engines are now erecting, and she is rapidly increasing her manufactures of iron; and as the true means of benefiting the country would be by encouraging the making of the iron, which she can use in her manufactures, the only method

* As to the article coals, there is plenty in some parts of Ireland, and probably in time they may be got at as low a price as in England. The iron ore, the lime stone (the ore is generally to be found where there is coal) and coal will be found in the same neighbourhood, and with the help of steam engines and navigations (no country is better fitted for the latter than Ireland) iron works may be established wherever those articles can be found. Peat has been used in England in iron works, altho' to no great extent; but furnaces are now erecting in Ireland on land abounding with iron ore and coal.

of establishing that work will be by laying *the heavy duty* * on foreign iron imported, *which will operate as a bounty in favour of her iron work.* Till that is done, it cannot be expected any quantity of iron will be made there; at present nothing can be expected, except an *emigration of English capitals* to be employed in Ireland to vend foreign labour in the form of rod iron, hoops, sheets, and heavy articles, to the prejudice of both kingdoms.

The labour of *converting a ton of iron, value 14l. in Ireland, into hoops, rods, &c. will not exceed 20s.* and is the whole of the profit on this capital †; *which iron, if made in the country, the whole would be a national profit, being simply the produce of so much labour.* In short, there can be no doubt that the national object should be to make the iron at home, and thereby save so much, and employ a great number of people; and it was thus that so much treasure, formerly unknown to Britain, has been drawn from the earth. The only other satisfactory mode of equalization and reciprocity, will be by laying duties on exportation of iron manufactures from Ireland to all parts, equal to the charges with which they go from Britain, and this, it is said, would be consonant to the spirit of the compact, and in return for the participation of the plantation trade.

Those concerned in the iron trade add, that if neither of these take place, Ireland only paying 10s. where Britain pays 56s. she must undersell the latter in her commerce with the American States, the great mart for British iron wares, ‡ and also on the continent of Europe, particularly

* Since the additional duties of two 5 per cents, and the discounts (have been taken off) which makes near 8s. per ton, the English iron works have increased rapidly, and several thousand tons of bar iron have been made more than were made when the duty was less.

† By rolling and slitting, iron is very little advanced from the bar; the labour is not so much as ten shillings per ton.

‡ The following calculation is also given, to prove the advantage Ireland would have:

Calculation for iron hoops.

	£.	s.	d.
A ton of Russia iron, fit for hoops, cost, in 1784, } into London, nearly	14	10	0
Waste of metal and charge of rolling,	3	10	0
Cost of a ton of hoops in London, — —	18	0	0
Difference			

cularly Portugal, *which takes most iron hoops,** and so materially in heavy iron wares, that she must very rapidly supplant Britain in that branch of trade, unless the export of the manufacture is protected by a bounty which must exceed the duty on the import of bar iron, as 30 cwt. of the latter will, on an average, make less than 22 cwt. of wrought iron, and consequently the bounty should be near a third more than the duty; and they farther add, that they hope, if their equitable desire is refused, and farther measures should be necessary, that the legislature will moreover protect them, by other regulations which may be suggested. They declare also, that unless they are protected by the legislature, they must desert the works which have cost millions, and migrate with their capitals to Ireland; the loss to the nation, they say, it is unnecessary for them to state.

It has been observed, that equality and reciprocity require that Ireland should lay the same duties on the importation of the materials of manufacture † as are paid in Britain, or that they shall be equalized on the export of the manufactures to all parts. The first will be objected

	£.	s.	d.
Difference of duty on a ton of bar iron in favour } of Ireland, — — — — }	2	7	0
Cost of a ton of hoops in Dublin, —	15	13	0
Difference in favour of Ireland, about 15l. per cent.			

Calculation of split iron.

A ton of Russia bar iron fit for rod iron, cost into } London, in 1784, about 14l. — — }	14	0	0
Waste of metal and charge of slitting, —	1	10	0
Cost of a ton of rod iron in London, —	15	10	0
Difference of duty in favour of Ireland, —	2	7	0
Cost of a ton of rod iron at Dublin —	13	3	0

Difference in favour of Ireland between 15 and 20l. per cent.

N. B. These calculations are made, on an average, for English ports; and the comparison is made on a supposition that coals are at the same price in the Irish ports. But the difference in the Thames and in the Liffey has been already mentioned.

* America and Portugal took two thirds of the whole export of iron wares.

† It will still remain, in the opinion of many, to be examined, what compensation should also be made for excise, window lights, &c. &c.

to, on the part of Ireland, as charging her consumption heavily and unnecessarily, and it is objectionable on the part of this country, unless the duties are drawn back on exportation to Britain, and laid on importation into Britain from Ireland: otherwise Ireland will receive the duties or revenue arising on the consumption of Britain, which the latter now enjoys. The second method of equalizing, viz. by laying the same duties on the export of the manufacture to all parts, will, also, probably be objected to by Ireland, because she is already in possession of the advantage of sending out many articles to all countries, except the British plantations, charged with less duties than the same articles going from Britain; and Britain will object to this mode of equalizing, because it will be easily evaded. *It has not been, and it will not be, the policy of Ireland to enforce a very exact observance of such cautions as may be adopted: Britain would submit her manufactures, her trade and commercial laws, to the fidelity of the Custom-house officers of Ireland in many respects.—In short, it is impossible for her to be secured permanently in the regulations that may be made, but when her trade is once gone in consequence of her arrangements, and she finds herself disappointed, the recovery of that trade, is not probable.* It has been already observed, that equalization in general would benefit Ireland and prejudice Britain less than is imagined: this must be always understood under an arrangement in every respect reciprocal; and if Ireland really means such, the more the subject is examined, the less favourable she will find such an arrangement; * and that the whole system is likely to be productive of much more embarrassment and ill temper than advantage to both countries.

Unless iron manufactures go to the American States from Ireland, charged with the same duties and burdens as from Britain, it is obvious, that Ireland must in time have the whole of this trade: and unless Britain obtains this equalization, she submits not to present but to certain future competition, without the least return.

It has been generally supposed that Ireland has great disadvantages in working iron mines, when compared with

* In an equal arrangement of manufactures, Ireland must expect to give a bounty on the export of British linens, in the same manner as it is given in Britain on the export of Irish linens from thence.

Great Britain; but the reason does not appear, * unless it should arise from want of capital; in general it may be observed, that the private capitals of English manufacturers at present combat the *purse of Ireland*, in the hands of a bountiful and liberal Parliament. But if Englishmen will employ their capitals in Russia, why should they not employ them in Ireland? † Some Englishmen, with English capitals, are erecting large works in Russia for rolling, slitting, tinning plates, &c.

If the great improvements in making iron should not enable Britain and Ireland, in time, principally to supply themselves with that article, *it is evident they must be surpassed in the manufactures of it.* At present Britain alone

* It has been already observed that the price of British coal on the east coast of Ireland, is lower than it is in many parts, where manufactures of iron are carried on in Britain. It is remarkable, that as the latter affects to encourage the spreading of manufactures, so partial and impolitic a tax as that on coals carried coastways, should be adopted. It is about five times as much as the duty on coals exported to Ireland. The duty on coals carried coastways from one port of Great Britain to another is 5s. 4 $\frac{7}{10}$ d. per Winchester chaldron. The duty on coals exported from Great Britain to Ireland, is 1s. 1 $\frac{4}{10}$ d. per chaldron. The duty on coals imported into the port of London, 8s. 7d. per chaldron. The duty on coals exported to foreign countries in British bottoms, 8s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per chaldron. The duty on coals exported in foreign bottoms, 14s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per chaldron.

† The extravagancies, the uncommon proceedings of Ireland, and her unsettled state, may reasonably prevent it at this time; and her frequent threats of an absentee tax do not seem very judicious or well calculated to promote migration to Ireland. Men will not trust their property in a country where such an arbitrary and impatient disposition is shewn, or lay it out where it can be liable to such disadvantage and restraints. The author being himself in the predicament of an absentee, should not have made this observation, if he supposed the tax likely to take place, or that the change of property from one country to the other would be very disadvantageous, at a time when estates in England fell at 23 years purchase, and under; but indeed if such a tax could effectually be established in Ireland, the price of land would probably fall to ten years purchase. No absentee, however, would keep land there longer than he could possibly avoid it. Ireland would feel a scarcity of money, much greater than she has ever experienced. As she may sometimes want money, it is not quite prudent to talk of such measures. Englishmen are not very fond of lending money to Ireland; and they will be much less so when they recollect the same reason exists for taxing the money of an absentee on mortgage, as the land of an absentee; there is this difference, indeed, that the mortgagee draws more money in proportion, and a clearer and larger income, from the country than the proprietor of an estate.

pays above six hundred thousand pounds yearly for that article to foreign countries. The following account of expences on a ton of iron from Ruffia, shews the difference in carrying on the manufacture in the two countries. No less than 5l. 5s. 1d. the ton.

	£.	s.	d.
Commission, lighterage, Ruffia custom, and all other Ruffia charges, - - - - -	0	13	10
Ruffian duty on export, - - - - -	0	9	0
* The Sound duties, - - - - -	0	2	8
Two-third port charges, - - - - -	0	1	6
Freight and Insurance, about - - - - -	0	19	0
Landing, Custom-house charges, duty to the Ruffia Company, in London, &c. &c. } - - - - -	0	3	0
Duty in Britain, - - - - -	2	16	1
	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>

The duties on importation into Ireland from Britain are,
 On unwrought iron, 10s. per ton.
 On hoops, 4s. 1d. per cwt.
 On iron, ore, and cinders, 5½⁴/₈ per ton.

Ireland makes little bar iron; her importation of iron increased near a third in ten years, which proves the increase of her manufactures and of her consumption, as her importations of wrought iron have in general increased, and not inconsiderably; *but still the latter are not great when compared with her consumption.*

On an average of three years, ending 25th March, 1773, iron imported into Ireland,

	Cwt.	qrs.	lbs.
From the East Country - - - - -	74,683	3	25½
From Britain - - - - -	44,352	1	4½
Total	<u>119,036</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

* This Sound duty sometimes amount from 50l. to 100l. and more, on a single ship's cargo. It is an extraordinary instance to what nations will submit through habit; but, considering the rising power of Ruffia, it may not long last.

Ditto

Ditto of iron, on an average of three years, ending 25th March, 1783:

	Cwt.	qrs.	lbs.
From the East Country* - - - - -	98,488	1	9½
From Britain - - - - -	74,730	0	4½
Total	<u>173,218</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>14</u>

Export from Ireland of iron and iron ware for the same years.

	Ironmongers ware. Value			Iron, Tons Cwt.	
1771	—	29	4	9	0
1772	—	10	5	4	2
1773	—	22	13	2	4

	Hardware Value		Ironmongers ware Value		Wrought iron Cwt q lb		Iron Tons Cwt.				
1781	16	3	0	253	6	3	25	0	0	0	0
1782	22	11	4	2	19	0	75	3	7	0	0
1783	213	9	6	85	3	9	359	2	0	8	1

Imports into Ireland for the year ending 25th March, 1783, of iron and iron ware.

Hardware, value - - - - -	21,773	2	10½
Iron, cwt. q. lb. - - - - -	164,187	1	0
Knives, No. - - - - -	579,833	0	0
Merimits, No. - - - - -	9,797	0	0
Pots, No. - - - - -	748	0	0
Razors, No. - - - - -	14,865	0	0
Sciffars, grose, dozens - - - - -	757	9	0
Scythes, dozens - - - - -	4,089	0	0
Small parcels, value - - - - -	24,473	17	5½
Iron ore, tons - - - - -	323	0	0

Almost the whole of the above articles were imported from Britain, except iron, which came from several countries in the following quantities:

From England - - - - -	61,943	2	0
Scotland - - - - -	3,144	1	0

* The import into Ireland from St. Petersburg alone, in 1784, was 2514 tons, or 50,280 cwt.

Guernsey

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Guernsey - - - - -	40	3	7
Jersey - - - - -	136	2	14
Sweden - - - - -	83,489	3	14
Russia - - - - -	12,873	1	21
Denmark and Norway - -	1,152	0	14
East Country - - - - -	63	0	0
Germany - - - - -	525	0	0
Flanders - - - - -	728	2	14
New York - - - - -	90	0	0

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Ireland, in truth, had infinitely more cause for complaint, and had been infinitely more oppressed, than America; the latter had never submitted to half the hurtful restrictions in which the other had for many years quietly acquiesced.

LETTER

L E T T E R

FROM

Mr. WILLIAM GIBBONS, Merchant,

TO

SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN, BART.

Bristol, June 11th, 1785.

SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN,

I HAVE no doubt but it remains on your memory what passed 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 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 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

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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, "se 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.

Dublin,

Dublin, June 29th, 1785.

SIR,

I AM favoured with your letter from Bristol of the 11th instant, which I can the more readily answer, as not only the substance, but the particular expressions thereof, were communicated some months ago to the public in a pamphlet of Lord Sheffield's on the trade of Ireland.*

And as from this circumstance, as well as others, his Lordship appears to have acted in some degree, in concert with those gentlemen who have presented the petitions to Parliament, to which your letter refers ; you will allow me occasionally to advert to that publication.

I must, however, first express the pleasure I feel in again acknowledging, that so far as I was connected with the negotiations of 1778, I thought myself honourably treated by the gentlemen concerned for the iron trade of England ; not that I was ignorant at that time, that of the iron consumed in Britain, and exported from thence, one third-part was made from the ore at home, and which ought therefore to have been taken into consideration, if the object of that day had been to establish a rule of perfect equality between these two kingdoms.

Neither was I uninformed the heavy articles of iron ware, such as rod-iron, hoops, and nails, &c. were the only ones which Ireland could have any hope of exporting under the regulations of that day, and that in these a ton of rod-iron, or of hoops, required little more than 21 cwt. of bar-iron, nor a ton of nails more than 24 or 25 cwt. and consequently that 30 cwt. the average then struck for every such ton of manufactured iron, was by no means a just equivalent.

I did then conceive, as I confess I do now, that there was no law * which prevented Britain from drawing back

* Observations on the manufactures, trade, and present state of Ireland, by John, Lord Sheffield, Dublin Edition, page 225, &c.

* I have since sought for such law without success ; if I am mistaken, however, I am very ready to acknowledge my error, not that it is at this day in any degree material, for Britain now allows the free exportation of bar iron to America, and to all her own plantations.

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all the import duty on bar-iron, (except the old subsidy) when she should export the same to her settlements in Africa, and therefore I saw no reason (founded in equality) why Ireland should be bound to pay 2l. 10s on the export of every ton of the same sort of iron to the same market.

I knew too, how much less the distance was from the Baltic to London and the eastern coasts of England, than to Dublin and the greater part of Ireland, and that the English bringing their iron from Petersburg as ballast for their naval stores, the expence of carriage by these means was so greatly reduced, that the Irish merchants found it their interest to import their Russia iron circuitously through London, rather than directly, though the former way was loaded with double freight, commission, and insurance.

Neither was I inattentive to the clause inserted by the iron agents in the English act of Parliament, (as a conditional precedent) whereby Ireland is bound for ever to the specific payment of the larger duties therein mentioned, so long as she shall be permitted to enjoy this branch of the colony trade, while England was left at liberty to alter her rates as best might suit her own convenience; and accordingly she has since allowed all duty (except about 3s. 6d. per ton) to be drawn back on bar-iron exported, not only to her own Colonies, but to the free States of America, without taking any notice, as I recollect, of her agreement with Ireland; and from that period she has been at liberty to send out her own iron, wrought or unwrought, to any part of the world, free from all duty whatsoever, and all foreign bar iron subject only to this trifle; while Ireland, under the act of the last Session of her Parliament, was prohibited from sending to the British Colonies even her own bar iron at less than 2l. 10s. or that iron manufactured at less than 3l. 3s. 11d. per ton. And with respect to foreign bar iron, (whenever Ireland might send it) the direct trade of Britain, thus disincumbered, could have little reason to fear any competition from a country, thus taking the commodity immediately from herself, and exporting it circuitously with so many additional charges.

When therefore I expressed myself *satisfied*, it will hardly be imagined I referred much to those estimates*, which our author styles the average or par or duties, and which he is pleased to say were then deemed fair between the two coun-

* Observations on Ireland, p. 221, 222, 223.

tries, and were made out to avoid a variety of calculations on different articles. Perhaps whoever considers them in that light *only*, may not be inclined to think that they are quite so just or equal.

But the general consideration of that time was, whether the trade of the British Colonies should be opened to Ireland. I was then convinced as I now am, that with respect to the exportation of manufactures made of foreign iron, Ireland never can, by possibility, become a successful rival to Great Britain in that trade; and, therefore, so far as I was consulted in that negotiation, I felt no difficulty in conceding to the terms proposed on behalf of the British iron manufactures, by those respectable gentlemen who promised in return, to assist in removing some part, at least, "of those hurtful restrictions upon trade, of which Lord Sheffield says Ireland had in truth infinitely more cause for complaint, and by which she had been infinitely more oppressed than America, and under which she had nevertheless for many years quietly acquiesced."* And this enlargement was become, in my apprehension indispensably necessary to the security of every part of the empire at that critical moment, when America was all in arms, when General Burgoyne and his whole army had, but a little before, been obliged to surrender themselves prisoners, when France had just then compelled our Sovereign to declare war against her, and when domestic distress had rendered the situation of Ireland no longer tolerable.

At that time, as at present, unreasonable jealousies had arisen against Ireland; as many petitions against *any* enlargement in the trade of Ireland had been presented to Parliament, and had matters been permitted to go on as they have since done, we should then too have had a chamber of manufacturers, who might possibly have held the refusal of every thing to Ireland as the common bond of their association, and their friends might have composed a party embarrassing at least, if not too strong for the minister. The clause, therefore, relative to the iron trade, which was supposed necessary to give Britain security in her dependencies, and sufficient to quiet all uneasiness in the mind of the iron manufacturers, was agreed to. The cause of Ireland, in return, received liberal support from Lord Bagget, Mr. Burke, then member for Bristol, Mr. Combe, and

* Observations on Ireland, page 369.

many other respectable gentlemen ; and I think all engaged in that negotiation had a right to say they had been honourably treated.

Lord North (if he may not think it necessary to affect forgetfulness of *every thing* that happened at that period), will perhaps acknowledge, that to this concession he was indebted for his success upon that occasion.

Ireland too had reason to say, upon the whole, she had been honourably treated, since the first breach in the monopolizing system of the colonies, and the first liberal enlargement of the trade and manufactures of Ireland that had been made since the year 1660, was then made ; and though some gentlemen may arrogate to themselves much merit for having affected to force forward a part of this business, when they knew it was impracticable, and for having offered their assistance, when they knew it was unnecessary, yet I must be permitted to say, that the principal, and all the material parts of the commercial liberty now enjoyed by Ireland, were in substance conceded to her in 1778.

On the 11th of April, 1778, the British House of Commons came to resolutions, That it was proper and just, 1st. That the several articles, the growth or produce of the British plantations in the West Indies, Africa, or America, should be imported directly into Ireland.

2dly. That all goods, wares, and merchandizes, the produce or manufacture of Ireland, or of Great-Britain, legally imported into Ireland, or foreign certificate goods, legally imported, might be exported from Ireland to the British plantations.

3dly. That all restraints by British acts on the glass trade, so far as related to Ireland, should be taken off.

4thly. That all restraints by British acts on the importation into Britain of Irish spun cotton, should be taken off.

5thly. That all restrictions by British acts on the importation of Irish sail-cloth, should be done away.

The 2d. 3d. and 4th of these then passed into laws, the 5th, being grounded on a mistake, was dropped by consent. And some difficulty arising in the detail of the first, which it was found necessary to regulate by concomitant acts of the two Parliaments, and to accompany with tedious Custom-house

house calculations ;---on account of this detail only, this was by common consent deferred ; the British House of Commons, however, having previously, in some degree, pledged itself to the measure ; not only by agreeing unanimously to the principle in the resolution, and by ordering in the bill, but afterwards, on the 6th of May, on debate, in which almost every member of leading abilities in the House, delivered his opinion in favour of opening this branch of Irish trade ; and by a division, on which the numbers stood thus :

For the bill 126
Against it 77

Majority 49

And the Minister having promised for himself and his friends to bring it forward, and so far as they were able, to carry it through as soon as ever the Parliaments of the two kingdoms should be sitting at the same time. The Irish Parliament not meeting the next year, nothing could be done ; and yet those who were not ignorant of this cause abused the Minister as if in fault. But the year after, as soon as the Houses met, Lord North brought forward the remainder of this subject which had been postponed, and agreeable to his regulation in 1778, completed the system of the Colony trade.

And as evidence that the whole of this business was really adjusted in 1778---it may be sufficient to add, that tho' sixty petitions were at that time presented to the English House of Commons against these enlargements of the Irish trade ; yet every set of these petitioners, their agents or friends, having been separately negotiated with, and satisfied of the propriety and expediency of what was desired, the House on the 22d of May, 1778, was informed, that the petitioners declined being further heard, and in consequence thereof no new petition was presented, nor further objection made to the remainder of these measures in 1780, when they were concluded, and when Ireland had the support of the friends of the iron trade---and therefore I must say that Ireland was honourably treated.

The event has fully justified my opinion ; years have since elapsed, and we may refer to experience. The whole export of Ireland in iron and iron manufactures, under their various denominations, has been (and probably ever will continue to be) an object too minute for national observation,

servation, if the present alarm had not swelled it into some degree of significance.

Lord Sheffield has given an account of it for the years 1781, 1782, and 1783. The medium value thereof, including as well those affected as those not affected by the regulations of 1778, has amounted only to 506l. 14s. 3d. And the imports of Ireland in iron and iron manufactures from Great Britain alone exceed 110,000l. every year. The last of these three years of exportation appearing the most considerable, I sent for the particulars thereof to our Custom-house, resolving to subject every part thereof to the strict examen of his lordship's observations; I found him stating from those concerned in the iron trade, that "Ireland paying 10s. only where Britain pays 56s. she *must* undersell the latter, not only in America but in Portugal, which takes most iron hoops, and so materially in heavy iron wares, that she *must* very rapidly supplant Britain in that branch of trade, unless the export of the manufacture be protected by a bounty exceeding the import duty on bar iron, as 30 cwt. thereof will make less than 22 cwt. wrought iron."

I therefore looked what this mighty exportation might be, because here Ireland was in possession of every benefit of this export trade she could possibly enjoy, and *this* was not a new acquirement under the acts of 1778, but was an advantage she might avail herself of from time immemorial. I found that not a single pound had been exported to that kingdom:—I enquired what had been done in the subsequent year, and I received the same answer. I could not find that Ireland had ever sent thither any manufactures of iron, though the export of our native commodities to Portugal (with which heavy iron wares might have been cheaply sent as ballast) had heretofore been one of the most considerable branches of the Irish trade, till a perhaps too zealous attachment to the Navigation laws of England, and to the interests of her West India colonies, in favour of whose monopoly we lately (but for the first time, by an Irish act of Parliament) prohibited the importation of the sugars of Brazil; I say, till this attachment afforded a pretext to the Court of Portugal (in violation of a vast number of treaties repeatedly sworn to by her monarchs, and in which Ireland is expressly named) to seize and sell our accustomed merchandize in her ports, and to declare that Ireland had no right to send any articles

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into her dominions. And in this degraded and insulted situation Great Britain has thought fit to leave her sister.

In the mean time Portugal has opened for herself a new market for her wines in Russia, from whence in return she may import iron cheaper than any part of these islands can send it to her; if she imports it in bars, * the labour of converting it into hoops, it is said, will not exceed 20s. a ton; but Russia will save her even that trouble, since, as we are informed, Englishmen with English capitals are there erecting large works for rolling and slitting iron, &c. † To some men, however, one consolation will remain, that Ireland certainly will be excluded from this trade.

As the manufacture of hoops seems pointed out as one of the principal objects for jealousy, allow me from the same accounts to observe, that the entire exportation from Ireland to all the world, of Ironmonger's ware, (under which title, in our Custom-house returns, hoops are included) amounted but to 64l. I think his Lordship's account states it at 85l. 3s. 9d.

It appears further, that the whole export from Ireland of iron manufactured and unmanufactured for that year, to the British settlements in the West Indies, and to Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Newfoundland, did not exceed 44l. It is not necessary for me to state how readily our West Indies can be supplied with such articles by the Dutch from St. Eustatius, or by the Swedes from the new settlement they have acquired from the French. Heavy iron wares will make excellent ballast for Gottenburgh herrings, and will form an assortment materially interfering with the export of these articles from every part of the Britanic isles. The liberal spirit of the first Irish propositions, by allowing every part of these three kingdoms to export the produce of the other duty free, wished to send out British manufactures in all her assorted cargoes, intermixed in many instances, no doubt, with her own; the narrow policy of manufacturing monopoly would totally exclude the produce of one, perhaps, in the end, to the ruin of both.

What remains of this general export of 500l. after the deductions I have stated, may be supposed for the greater

* Observations, page 228.

† Observations on Ireland, page 235.

part to have gone to the independent states in America. And here I find myself forced to take notice of two paragraphs in the publication I have already quoted: * "One satisfactory mode, says the author, of equalization and reciprocity will be, by laying duties on exportation of iron manufactures from Ireland to all parts, equal to the charges with which they go from Britain; and this, it is said, would be consonant to the spirit of compact, and in return for the participation of the colony trade."

And again, "unless iron manufactures go to the American States from Ireland, charged with the same duties and burdens as from Britain, it is obvious, that Ireland must, in time, have the whole of this trade; and unless Britain obtains this equalization, she submits, not to present, but to future competition, without the least return."

To these very extraordinary and unwarranted doctrines, the first answer of Ireland must be direct contradiction; and therefore, however insignificant the object may be in point of value, yet, for the sake of the principle, she must assert that what is here called a satisfactory mode of equalization, must so far, by every friend of Ireland, be deemed most unsatisfactory, and by every friend of justice, most unequal. That when the free kingdom of Ireland exports her own manufactures to foreign states, who are inclined to receive them, no power on earth (her own legislature excepted) has a right to interfere in the duties on such exportation. That such an interference is incompatible with all general ideas of liberty, and not consonant to any compact entered into by Ireland; and I must say, not without some warmth of feeling, is inconsistent with the spirit and the letter of that negotiation I am supposed to have taken some part in. And that with respect to this very iron trade to America, our author was pleased to agree with me in sentiment, while he contended against the trade of the American States only, without involving Ireland within the sphere of his hostilities. In his tract of the commerce of the American states * may be found the following very explicit words. "Ireland laid a charge upon manufactured iron exported to the Colonies,

* Observations on Ireland, page 229.

* Observations on the Commerce of the American States, by John, Lord Sheffield. Sixth Edition, London, page 21.

" which

" which equalized the charge the British manufactured iron was computed to carry out with it. It is true, the American States are no longer British Colonies, and therefore Ireland may, without breach of compact, send her iron manufactured there free of duty, and this is an additional reason for taking off the duties on exportation; coals, and the means of manufacturing, however, are much in favour of England." And this sentiment has been continued through six editions, enlarged and corrected. I have too high an opinion of his Lordship, to think it possible he could allude to, and he, I am sure, has too just an opinion of Ireland to think she could countenance, that sort of casuistry which should say, an act might be done because it was not within the letter, though it was clearly within the spirit of a solemn agreement. Let then the spirit and the words of this compact speak for themselves: It is contained in a proviso of the act of the year 1778, § removing certain restrictions, which England in violation of the Navigation Act and of all antecedent usage, and, I might say, of right, had imposed on the Irish trade; it runs thus, " § Provided, that nothing herein before contained shall extend to bar iron, or to iron slit, rolled, plated, or tinned, nor to any sort of manufactured iron wares, until a duty of 2l. 10s. per ton on such bar iron, and also a duty of 3l. 3s. 1rd. Irish, per ton, on such slit, rolled, plated, or tinned iron, and manufactured iron wares, exported from Ireland to the British Colonies or Plantations in America, or to any of the Settlements belonging to Great Britain on the coast of Africa, shall be imposed by some act or acts of Parliament, to be made in the kingdom of Ireland; and that then, and in such case, it shall and may be lawful, from and after the commencement of, and during the continuance of such respective duties, but no longer, to export any such iron or iron wares from the said kingdom of Ireland, directly, to any British Colony in America or on the coast of Africa, in any ship or vessel that may lawfully trade thither, subject to the regulations therein before mentioned, any thing in this act or any other act to the contrary notwithstanding.

§ 18 and 19 Geo. 3. c. 55.

|| 12 Car. 2. c. 18.

E 2

" Provided

“ Provided, nevertheless, that if any bounty or premium shall be granted or allowed in Ireland on the exportation of such iron or iron wares from thence to the said British Colonies or Settlements in Africa, then the liberty herein beforementioned to export such iron and iron wares directly from Ireland, shall, during the continuance of such bounty or premium cease, and such iron and iron wares shall, in all respects, be subject to the like restrictions and regulations, penalties and forfeitures, as such goods were and would be liable to if this act had not been made.”

Now, is not the whole of the meaning of the business reducible to this:—While England had the dominion of the American trade, she had a right to make terms with all those she admitted to a participation of it; but when she declared America independent, she had nothing left to make a grant to which conditions could be annexed—the consideration for such conditions all ceased: And what are the words, “ That nothing in this act shall extend to iron, &c. unless such duties are imposed, otherwise the trade to be subject to such restrictions as if that act had never passed.” Now, suppose this act had never passed, or that the Irish had not granted the duties so as to intitle themselves to the benefit thereof, how would the trade of Ireland be now affected by the restrictive laws of Charles II. ? Ireland has declared they shall not bind her—America has declared they shall not bind her, and Britain, to all intents, has relinquished them with respect to both countries. If I dwell upon this position more than perhaps it may seem to deserve, I do it upon this principle, that it involves consequences much more extensive than at first appear; for if it be founded in justice, and purchased by a valuable consideration, it goes equally to every commodity we may ever import from or export to America, which were restricted before 1778.

But to return to these very exceptionable paragraphs in the observations, where it is said, that Ireland should tax the export of her manufactures to all parts, in return for the participation of the Colony trade:—To this I answer, that Ireland has always paid more than an adequate compensation for the participation of that trade, in which she exports little more than what she always sent, that which the necessities of the West Indies cannot dispense with, and that which she perhaps had much better retain at home for

for her own starving people, her provisions. There was a time when our noble author thought we did make a return, and did not scruple to speak out his sentiments on that subject. “ None*, says he, but the most unthinking can suppose Ireland will continue to give the monopoly of her market to the West India Islands, unless her share of the monopoly of the West India market is preserved to her;—except linens, Ireland has no trade of consequence but provisions.”

And this monopoly the West India planters, or rather West India proprietors, residing in Britain, and the merchants, like other monopolists, so far abuse, as to oblige us (as the Dean of Gloucester has well observed) to pay 25s. per hundred on the spot, for such sugars as we might purchase, in the other settlements, for 16s. or even 12s. per hundred, and where we might also purchase them with our manufactures and provisions.—This participation too has led us to impose near 100,000l. a year new taxes on this necessary of life, in aukward imitation of our elder sister, whose superior wealth enables her to bear such burdens.—And this participation, in the year 1780, led us, for the first time, to lay prohibitory duties on the sugars of Brazil, and has thereby contributed to lose us the whole trade of Portugal; though I must say, none of these made a part of the negociation of 1778, nor is a trace of any of them to be found in the proceedings of the British Parliament of that year.

What then shall we say to that other part of this paragraph, in which, endeavouring to call in aid the spirit of a free and generous people, it would represent Britain (without this fancy-formed equality in all parts) as reduced to that state of humiliation, that she must submit to present, or to future competition, without the least return? that is, if Ireland shall trade with any other country upon earth, she must make a return to England for that trade; if she has any natural advantage, she must make a return, she must not presume to eat even her own potatoes without making a return. On the other hand, Ireland says to these iron legislators, we do not pretend to interfere in your business; take off all duties on the importation of raw iron, if you think it best, and as the noble Lord in one place has advised you; or continue them all on, as he advises you in another; or grant bounties in their place, as he seems to recommend in

* Observations on America, page 225.

a third:

a third:—We have no claim to interfere in your concerns; we only demand to be left in the enjoyment of those natural rights which the God of nature, and the vigour of our renewed constitution have intitled us to.

And, besides, Ireland thinks, that when her absentees carry 1,500,000l. at least, every year to Britain, she does make a return, even if, in pursuit of those rents, she should be found entering into competition.

But say the considerations, without this equalization (or, as I think, I shall demonstrate it ought to be called, without this exclusion) Ireland must, in time, have the whole of this American trade. And this reminds me of a circumstance in our history, so exceedingly apposite, that I hope you will indulge me while I relate it.—Towards the latter end of the reign of King William III. the good people of England became exceedingly jealous of some little industry that appeared in Ireland, and that we should presume to enter into competition, as they said, without making any return; it is true, said they, we have drawn away from thence a great part of the nobility and gentry, and all the money of the country; we have utterly disabled them from contributing in the same proportion that we do to the public revenue; we have annihilated their foreign trade; the productions of their country are consequently cheap, and this cheapness, and this limitation of taxes resulting from their impoverished state, may enable them to undersell us in every foreign market. Their lands being depopulated by emigration, they have turned themselves to the breeding sheep, and have ventured to enter into competition with us in the woollen manufacture, the staple trade, the golden mine, the undoubted inheritance of England, handed down to us from our ancestors for 100 generations; but we alone are intitled to a monopoly of this trade, and we are able to supply the wants of the world; “* The expediency of endeavouring, on the part of Ireland, to make this a principal manufacture of that kingdom, and of vying with a favourite established manufacture of

* Though the very words here marked are taken, I confess, from the Observations, page 219 and 231, yet whoever will take the trouble of looking into the Journals of Parliament of this time, into Mr. Smith's Memoirs of Wool, and the Political Writers of that period, though they must so far detract from the praise of originality, yet they must allow our Author the merit of being an excellent copyist.

“ Great Britain, may be doubted. It will be difficult to raise the manufacture in Ireland in competition with that of Britain, the capital of Ireland may be otherwise employed to advantage, particularly in manufacturing leather or linen;” and then followed menaces to Ireland, in all the language of affected humility; “but those concerned in this great manufacture hope, that if their equitable desire is refused, and further measures should be necessary, that the Legislature will moreover protect them by further regulations which may be suggested.” And to this was added, this vapour equally idle and insincere. “And they declare also, that unless they are protected by the Legislature, they must desert the works which have cost millions, and migrate with their capitals to Ireland; the loss to the nation, they say, it is unnecessary for them to state.”

Such arguments, supported by some ideas of self interest, were irresistible; the iron hand of power dashed down in a moment that pretty edifice which the feeble industry of Ireland had taken centuries in erecting.—But mark now the consequence, the history of a part of which has been transmitted to us by a great statesman:—One Courteen, an Irishman (says Lord Hallifax,) carried over with him a colony of these ruined Irish manufacturers to Portugal, where he was kindly received by the Conde D'Ereceire, the then prime Minister, and they there established that woollen manufacture, which, in spite of all the efforts of Mr. Methuen, has been continued down to the present time, a perpetual cause for contention with England, and which, if I do not greatly err, will ere long put an end to that antient intercourse and affection which so long has subsisted between Portugal and England. In the mean time the miserable Irish worsted manufacturers, thus deprived of bread, spread themselves over France, Flanders, and Germany, and this Protestant persecution, from a bigotry in trade, like that Popish one, from bigotry in religion, on the revocation of the edict of Nantz, was an instrument in the hand of Providence for scattering industry through nations who might not otherwise have so easily attained it.—The Irish nation did not recover this blow for near fourscore years; the empire in general was weakened by it, and yet, if we can credit Mr. Smith, the most intelligent

intelligent writer on this subject, * even Britain did not thereby receive any proportional advantage.

Is there then any particular occasion, at this time, to encourage the spirit of emigration from Ireland; or is it necessary, from time to time, that she should be depopulated? Is it adviseable, that to gratify ill-founded apprehensions, every man who can wield the sledge, or toil over the furnace, should be discontented, and driven away with his little property to work the iron mines of America. It is to no purpose that men say, as yet you can do us no harm, as yet you are unacquainted with the mysteries of this trade; but oppression and distress, which have made Heroes and Philosophers, have also made mechanics and manufacturers, and it is the discontented and the distressed who, at all times, have spread arts and manufactures through the world; and let it not, I pray you, be too soon forgot, that were it not for those Irishmen, whom domestic oppression had so lately obliged to fly from their native country, and whom subsequent distress had compelled to take up arms against their Prince, the Thirteen States of America would have now been the Thirteen British Colonies, and our Gracious King would have ruled in peace over the noblest empire on the earth.

Every time I touch upon this string, it brings feelingly to my mind that sublime apostrophe of the Father of the Grecian stage:

* Oppression, where it springs,
Puts forth the blade of vengeance, and its fruit
Yields the full harvest of repentant woe;
Behold this vengeance, and remember Greece,
Remember Athens! Henceforth let not pride,
Her present rights disdain, strive to grasp
Others, and her treasur'd happiness
Dash to the ground; such insolent attempts
Awake the vengeance of the All-ruling Power.

I have wandered from my subject, allow me to return to our author, who says, thus authoritatively, that Ireland, unless restrained, must in time have the whole of the American iron trade.—Let us gratify our opponents with the converse, and suppose the Irish henceforth to be excluded; and let us further allow him to suppose, with the Indian,

* Memoirs of Wool.
* Æschylus in Persas.

that

that they are to inherit all the mental, and all the corporeal abilities of those they have so successfully destroyed. Can England expect to enjoy this trade without a rival? by no means; the noble Author, and even you, Sir, have pointed out a sufficient number of competitors; "Russia, Germany, and other countries, † which have iron without duty, will underfell us in the manufacture of it, especially as flitting and rolling mills are now erected in Sweden and Russia. And in Russia, Englishmen, with English capitals *, are erecting large works for these purposes. As the duty now stands, the manufacturer of nails, says our Author ‡, in Russia, might afford to sell them 4l. a ton cheaper than we can; Russia makes great quantities for home consumption, and having now taken off the duty, may greatly underfell us." And again, "As the law now stands, the Russians, may import into Great Britain, and afterwards export to the American States, such of their wares as are made of iron and steel, cheaper than we can make them; so, Sir, you, and the other gentlemen examined with you before the Council §, state, that formerly you had a very considerable export of nails to Lisbon, but that you were totally deprived thereof by the manufacturers of Liege, and other places, which can furnish them cheaper, and yet the English nails were from English iron; that paid no duty ||, and were exported from the port of Bristol, the nearest to the place of their manufacture."

Holland and Flanders sell iron wire, I believe, cheaper than any other country; when Ireland lately attempted a manufacture of that sort, she was obliged to lay on a protecting duty last session of Parliament in favour of this infant trade. It was laid on generally, and so continued for a few months; but in the beginning of the present session that duty was taken off the English wire, and continued on the Dutch, and this without any solicitation; and this I mention as one instance how tenderly Ireland is inclined to treat the manufactures of England, and how ready to rectify her own inadvertencies.

† Observations on America, page 17.
* Observations on Ireland, page 235.
‡ Observations on America, page 17.
§ Report of the Committee of the Council, printed for JOHN STOCKDALE, page 50.
|| Observations on America, page 19.

F

Add

Add to what has been said, “ * that most parts of North America abound in iron mines, and that she has more timber for charcoal than all the rest of the world, and probably too she may have veins of coal ; that her manufacture of iron † was so great, that in the years 1768, 1769, and 1770, she exported to Great Britain annually,

On a Medium,

“ Bar iron	- - -	2,592 tons,
“ Pig do.	- - -	4,624
“ Cast do.	- - -	12

“ That the last iron manufacture ‡ has had great success in some parts of America ; that the American scythes and axes § are better than the British ; that some of their iron possesses the quality of toughness in a great degree ; that only previous to the war there were very few forges ¶ for making anchors in America ; that since the commencement of the war, considerable quantities of steel ¶ have been made in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.” And must we be compelled to send our hardy sons to perfect these foreign manufactures, with all their feelings actuated by the sense of unnatural and impolitic restraint in their own country ?

It is time to turn our thoughts to a more agreeable part of this subject ; I mean the actual prosperity of the iron trade in England, and the invigorating prospect of future extension, and in this there are few men rejoice more than I do ; for though by birth, by name, by the situation of my property, and by principle, I am an Irishman, yet I am proud to say I have much honest Old English blood in my veins, and where-ever the real interests of that country are concerned, I feel myself in no inconsiderable degree an Englishman.

In 1778, it was stated, that between 300,000 and 400,000 persons were maintained throughout Britain by the various branches of the iron trade, and I hear it has lately been given in evidence before your House of Lords, that no less a capital was engaged therein than 14,000,000l. sterling, 10,000,000l. of which was supposed to be the

* Observations on America, page 117.
† Ditto, 118. ‡ Page 14.
§ Page 15. ¶ Page 16. ¶ Page 22.

value

value of the stock in hand, and 4,000,000l. the value of the various apparatus by which that stock is worked up or rendered marketable.

A number of very ingenious men have for some years applied their abilities and industry to the various branches of this business, and it has so thriven by their exertions, “ that there is a probability, says the noble writer, * that “ in a few years England may be able fully to stock the “ market at home, or as he more strongly expresses it in “ another, † there is a reasonable hope that enough will “ be made in Britain to supply these kingdoms with that “ necessary article, then the duty on foreign iron [which “ by the by is the only matter now attempted to be set “ up as a bone of contention between these two kingdoms] “ will cease of course, as it will not answer to bring in “ foreign iron when it can be made at home in sufficient “ quantities and at as cheap a rate.” And to this pleasing hope the quantity of proper coal diffused throughout Britain and daily discovering itself in new works gives additional assurance, the quantity of which consumed is so prodigious, that his Lordship tells us, one company alone in Shropshire uses 500 tons of coals daily ; and this advantage ; at least, [when he does enter directly into the spirit of this controversy] he has no difficulty in stating very explicitly to be altogether against Ireland. Thus, in talking of our sending iron to America, he says, “ coals “ and the means of manufacturing are however much in “ favour of England.” ‡ And again, in talking of Irish salt, § he says, the Irish salt is weaker than the English, because it is not so much boiled ; ¶ “ and this is among “ many articles in which Britain must always have an advantage through her greater abundance of coal.”

However, as England has ever had her mines of iron and of coal, as they have been long known, while her manufacturers and merchants have been distinguished by their intelligence and enterprize, it may be worthy of inquiry what are those master-springs which of late have

* Observations on Ireland, page 215.
† Ditto Page 212.
‡ Observations on America, page 21.
§ Observations.
¶ But note, salt on the contrary is weakened by much boiling, and the bay salt is the strongest in the world, because it is not boiled at all, but evaporated by the moderate heat of the atmosphere.

F 2

given

given such accelerated motion to this vast machine; and among the first of these I shall not scruple to mention the Inland Navigations. This system of navigation [heretofore ill understood] was new formed about the time of his present Majesty's accession by Mr. Brindley and Mr. Smeaton, and has not many years been brought to perfection, though at this day the English Navigation excel any thing of that sort that can be found in Europe, and these it is that open an easy communication and unexpensive intercourse between almost all the considerable iron works in England; it is these which bring together iron ores of different kinds, and countries whose commixture renders the whole of so much easier fusion; they carry up lime-stone [another powerful flux] into the higher countries in which iron ore and seams of coal abound, but which are generally of a gritty or cold stone nature; or the ore thus collected they carry to the coals, not indiscriminately to every coal mine, but to those only which are particularly adapted to these kinds of work, by their more readily parting in the operation of coaking with their sulphur and their arsenic, those substances rendering iron brittle; or they carry the coak to the collected oars; they also supply in the same manner Strowbridge clay † and other refractory earths necessary for the furnaces; from the melting pots the metal is carried to the forges often situated at a great distance, and heretofore generally placed where there were considerable falls of water to work the great hammer, [though steam engines, I hear, do now in a great measure remove that necessity;] from the forges the iron must be conveyed to the slitting and rolling mills, or to those seats of the still further improved manufactures of Wolverhampton, Rotherham, Wallfall, Birmingham and Sheffield; from whence they are carried by the same easy conveyance to every domestic market, and to the ports of exportation, Bristol, Hull, and Liverpool, and from thence coastways to the great emporium of London, where they are sure of advantages which no part of Ireland can ever

* An Irishman might here complain of some severity, every difficulty being thrown in the way of his importing these clays for his furnaces under colour of some old act, which prohibits the exportation of Fullers Earth fit for the woollen manufacture, but to which these bear no resemblance; while on the other hand the Irish freely admit the exportation of these earths which Mr. Wedgwood and other gentlemen use in their Staffordshire manufactures.

possibly

possibly attain to, the extensive trade of that metropolis affording constant opportunities of conveying to every market in the world every article that any merchant may wish to send on his own account, or that his correspondent may have ordered, exactly in whatever proportion he desires, at reasonable freights, and oftentimes in exchange for other commodities.

The next advantage arises from the general increase of the wealth and elegance of England, which makes her own home market not only the greatest in the world, but greater than all foreign markets she can ever find put together; and the security she has given herself of that market by protecting duties, especially by those two modern ones, of 5 per cent. each, which have been laid on the produce of the former revenues; and to these let me add, the advantages she ever enjoys in Ireland, which is her best foreign customer; advantages secured to her by the twenty propositions, if they shall be agreed to as they passed the British House of Commons; the 16th of these providing an effectual preference to these commodities in the Irish market over similar articles coming from every other part, and the 17th taking care that similar Irish manufactures shall not be poured into her market for home consumption at a duty less than 10½ per cent. while such English manufactures are to be exportable from our harbours on exactly the same conditions with our own.

The next advantage arises from the great private capital embarked in this business, which hath not only grown up, within a few years §, almost from a state of ruin to its present gigantic size, but has been able, in that time, to lay out millions in works preparative only to the manufacture †; a few years ago, then, the stock must have been comparatively of little value, and the prospect have been uninviting—the competition of Ireland, with all its terrors staring them in the face. It is not probable, that much hereditary fortune was introduced, nor have vast funds been drawn from other manufactures, or we should have heard some complaints of this revulsion. It is most likely, that the sums laid out in these vast works have gradually accompanied the success of the manufacture; if so, I rejoice exceedingly at it, and that ingenious men shall have so

§ Observations on Ireland, page 211.

† Observations on Ireland, page 231, &c.

much

much benefited themselves by those labours, which have also benefited their country; may virtuous industry for ever be so rewarded! At all events, this progress, in a short time, from ruin to more than princely affluence, has been so rapid, as to exceed every thing that is to be found in the whole history of trade and manufactures, and indicates a prosperity which, in a few years more, must complete whatever of this great work remains still to be accomplished,—in a much shorter time than will probably bring forward even the smallest of all that multitude of events, which have been pointed out as necessary before Ireland can, in any degree, become your rival even in her own markets. With materials inexhaustible, with the capital and the experience that are now acquired, with the works that have been erected, and the skilful workmen that have been formed, it will be much easier to add 40 or 50,000 ton to the iron you make every year, than it was to advance it to its present state.

O fortunate nimium sua si bona norint.

Thrice happy men! so likely long to enjoy those benefits with which Providence has vouchsafed to bless your labours; if you but be guarded against those ill-founded, but tormenting apprehensions, those unbrotherly jealousies, the parents of ill offices, which have been so indefatigably prepared for your minds.—What have you to do with the dirty game of politics, or who shall be for one day, perhaps for one whole week, the Minister of England?—The propositions for arranging the trade between Great Britain and Ireland but little extend to your particular business; if they stand, how can you be injured by them? if they are rejected, how can you be benefited? The system between the two kingdoms, so far as relates to you, is not the work of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, to all whose works your newly acquired advocate has declared himself so decided an opponent.—It was the work of his own familiar friend Lord North, assisted by some of your own faithful and intelligent patrons and brethren, and, in some degree, negotiated by a man who may be allowed to say he has good wishes for you. If it was injurious, your advocate, when he was in Parliament, would have altered it, or at least he would have hinted it to you. When he became openly a political writer, on this very subject,

subject, in his American Observations, he would have apprised you of your situation.—Although I differ in almost every thing that relates to the present question, yet I know and respect too much the noble writer's knowledge and zeal for the interest of England, to think he would neglect his duty if there was real danger.—As there was none, this subject was then suffered to rest, because it was not then known, that the present Minister would bring forward his propositions; or even by that species of wit, which delights in bringing together heterogeneous things, it would be possible to unite this subject with them.

They have been, however, unfortunately united, and the consequence it seems is, that England must either become a tyrant over Ireland, imposing new taxes upon her trade with foreign nations, or Old England *must* be undone.—It no longer remains doubtful, in our Author's opinion, it is brought to a physical certainty and demonstration, “That unless a tax, an additional tax, shall be laid on this necessary of life (and which the Irish Parliament never will impose), Ireland *must* very rapidly supplant Britain in her trade, the works which have cost millions must be deserted and go to ruin, the manufacturers must be undone, and then they must go emigrate with their capitals to Ireland.” If the writer of this latter paragraph had not taken so much pains, throughout the whole of his work, to prove he was no Irishman, I should have been inclined to consider this as the manufacture of my own country; but I must now presume this to be my own misconception, and that it is only the four millions that must be lost outright, and the ten millions that must migrate to Ireland.

**Venit summa Dies et ineluctabile Tempus
Dardaniæ, fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium et ingens*

Gloria

* Till I met these lines, I must own, I was at a loss to understand our Author's Motto to his Irish Observations; if they had been intended for the benefit of Ireland only, “Spes vestrae uritis” was easily enough applicable to our conduct; while you are said to have veins of coal at home, and while men, on that supposition, desire to restrain your iron and other manufactures, you foolishly import 200,000 ton of foreign coal, and thus burn and destroy every hope of supplying yourselves with this necessary of life; but when I found this Pamphlet was calculated for the meridian of England only,

*Gloria Teucrorum, sævus Jupiter omnia Argos†
Transtulit.*

It must be so, Sheffield thou reasonest well.

And yet, without presumption, may I be permitted to examine this reasoning in its parts, and these premises one by one, which are to support this conclusion; objects seen through a mist are magnified in proportion to their indistinctness; and I confess, when I observe in every thing I have read upon this subject an affected obscurity, a complication of ideas, and a reiteration of the same arguments, or rather assertions, as it were to make up in apparent number for what they may be deficient in weight, I am desirous, if possible, to dispel this gloom, and to shew things in their natural proportions by the light of unbiassed truth, and to prove that there may be competition without injury, and then to hear the liberal voice of England crying out, as we have heard her cry out heretofore, "Let Ireland thrive if she can by her own industry; if she should even be my rival, is she not also my sister. The moment I can find this disposition of mind, I am satisfied I will fully convince her understanding, that no injury can be done her in the business now under our consideration."

As I have mentioned, however, an obscurity on this subject in an author distinguished by his perspicuity on all others, I think it necessary for me here to take notice of the manner in which he has been pleased to treat it. Sometimes speaking in his own character, at others in that of the iron manufacturers, and finally assuming the character of Britain herself, "thinking she has now a right to complain as an injured country*;" so that in the greater part of what he has set forth, I am utterly at a loss to distinguish, whether we are to consider it as the allegation of an interested party, or as the decision of a disinterested and competent judge; whether as the voice of an individual, or of a great nation, delivering their verdict by this their foreman.

I must also take notice of the artful use which is made

only, I was at a loss to find out who were those hostes, and what these *Castra Inimica*, till this second quotation from Virgil shewed me that the Irish were these enemies, that Argos was Ireland, and here lay those inimical camps, which our Ascanius would persuade his friends had not been yet sufficiently burned and destroyed.

† Ireland.

* Observations on Ireland, page 224.

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of

of the ambiguous term of iron manufacturers, words, which in one sense are confined to those who prepare the raw iron from the mine, in another, those who work it up after it has undergone this previous preparation:—Classes of men altogether distinct, and whose views in many instances, we must suppose contradictory; it being the interest of the one set, that all duties on raw iron heretofore imposed in England should be continued in full force, and that new duties should be imposed in Ireland to the same amount, without which, says our author†, it cannot be expected that † any quantity of iron will be made there, while it is equally that

† Observations on Ireland, page 228.

‡ I cannot say I am quite certain whether our author may not be in jest, when he recommends to Ireland to lay on these larger duties for the purpose of encreasing the makers of iron at home; but I am sure it is a matter of serious consideration for every maker and manufacturer of iron in Britain how far it is his interest that Ireland should return to this trade. For some years she has shewn less inclination to this than almost to any other adventure. Whether in fact that iron cannot be made here as cheap as it can be imported, or that capital is wanting for so extensive an undertaking, or that the facility with which that article is obtained from abroad makes men insensible to the want of it at home. But if a duty of 3l. is once laid on for the avowed purpose of encouraging the home production, that duty, to answer its end, must be laid on English as well as foreign iron, and must be encreased upon the manufactured iron of all countries in the same proportion the manufacture now bears to the material. No Irish member would be base enough to propose it otherwise to an Irish Parliament, and the noble Author must have meant this; for he never could have recommended to any country a measure which must be ineffectual, and whose only consequence would be to impose an additional burden; and if this measure should have the proposed effect, Englishmen will reflect how consistent it is with their interest, in order to secure this export of 500l. (or suppose, if you please, that export encreased twenty-fold) to force the Irish into this branch of trade for which they shew now so little inclination. The same argument will hold with regard to bounties in England on the export of their manufactures. If those bounties are to affect Ireland she will grant similar bounties on her exportation, in which case each country will be impoverished to supply the other with what she has herself at home. Or if Ireland by the system shall be prevented from sending to England, she will then counteract the new bounty by a proportionate duty at home; besides, in general it is the principle of your propositions, as expressed in the 15th, to take away all warfare of bounties between the two kingdoms.

If it shall now be made manifestly the interest of Ireland to work her iron mines, and they shall be found practicable, and Irish gentlemen by certain feelings (to which I avow myself not insensible) shall be induced to come forward in this or any other manufacture, capitals

G

that of the other, as he has clearly shewn in another work, that all duty whatsoever should be taken off this raw material.

Any one who reads the Observations on the Trade of Ireland will easily see how judicious a use is made of the duplicity of this term, to create apprehensions and dangers, which would not otherwise have even the appearance of existence.

And now to the particulars of our author's arguments apart.

And the first I shall take notice of is indeed only by way of insinuation, the writer fearing, I suppose, that the direct assertion thereof, might not stand that test which Lord Shaftsbury has endeavoured to establish as the criterion of truth.—Our author had stated that Ireland now makes little bar iron*, and he might safely have gone further, and said she does not make a single pound. He had stated also, that till she lays on the heavy duty, that is, as he explains it, the duty of 3l. os. 9d. on every ton of foreign iron imported †, it cannot be expected any quantity of iron will be made there, and he had very truly said that Ireland will object to this, as charging her consumption heavily and unnecessarily ‡.—After which he proposes his succedaneum, which is, “ for Ireland to import iron ore from Lanca-

capitals may not always be wanting. The very English gentlemen who would now gladly persuade you that Ireland was created only that she might give employment to the manufacturers of Britain, and that she had no natural rights of a free country, would then condescend to come over themselves and carry on those trades for us. Mr. Bolton, who appears at the head of all the iron petitions to parliament, was in Ireland last year, and would have engaged in such works here if he could have got gentlemen of probity and fortune among the proprietors to embark with him; and I have now before me a letter from that Mr. Thomas Smith of Manchester, who, in his evidence before the Lords, has so strangely misrepresented the prices even of those articles of Irish produce in which he deals himself, and who so grossly has vilified the character of every man of whom he has spoken; in which letter he solicits encouragement from the Linen Board of Ireland, and offers to come over here and bring a considerable number of artists with him, and to perfect the cotton manufacture, and also establish an extensive branch in the small ware line.

* Observations on Ireland, page 237.

† Ditto, p. 228.

‡ Ditto, p. 226.

§ Ditto, p. 231.

shire

“ shire and Cumberland, as ballast for § oak bark; and
“ if pit coal and and peat, or turf, should be wanting in
“ Ireland, she might also import her coals from England,
“ from whence she can have them much cheaper than they
“ can be sold in London, where many branches of the iron
“ manufacture are carried on; and to this he subjoins, that
“ peat has been used in England in iron works, although
“ to no great extent.”

Now is not the necessary inference from all this, that if peat or turf can be had in Ireland, we shall thereby be enabled to carry on this manufacture to sufficient extent, and with sufficient profit, even with foreign ore, and with this great advantage, which in the same page, and upon all occasions, he is so good as to bring back to the recollection of both kingdoms, that as yet her manufactures do not pay all the excises that are paid in Britain;—and then the question resolves itself into this, have the Irish Bog-trotters any turf for if they have, here is an infallible nostrum for making all their fortunes.

Through Ireland I have found it a general opinion, with which my own experience coincides, that wherever coals can be laid in under 20s. a ton, it cannot be prudence in any man to use any other fuel in large quantities for domestic uses: but I wave, for a moment, that argument arising from the expence, to consider what in other respects would be the situation of an Irish company manufacturing bar iron, and obliged to use the same quantity of fire that is used by the Shropshire company he mentions, and I may venture to assert, if their fuel should be turf, in a climate such as Ireland generally is, not all the inhabitants of your populous city of Bristol would be able to cut and save and draw home that quantity; nor would all the houses in that great city furnish stores sufficient for its preservation. I have found it in general a matter of some difficulty, and in some seasons impracticable, to provide a sufficiency of good turf, even for one family; but when the quantity must be increased, the ground to be covered with it for drying must be enlarged, and the distance and difficulty of draw-

§ It is to be hoped our author has given directions for planting in Lancashire and Cumberland, contiguous to the iron mines and the shore, those vast forests of oak which are for ever henceforth to supply oak bark sufficient to freight such a number of vessels to Ireland as may require at least 10,000 ton annually for their ballast only.

ing it must be augmented, especially if the present scheme be to carry it all to the harbours on the eastern coasts of Ireland, to meet this ore which is to be imported from Lancashire, &c.

The Shropshire company's consumption of coal is stated, by our Author, at 500 tons daily; we compute a ton of coal equal to 100 * keshes of turf, each containing 16 cubical feet, consequently, the day's equivalent would amount to 800,000 cubic feet, and the year's equivalent to about 292,000,000 of cubic feet of turf, which would therefore require for each such company three good turf stacks, each of them somewhat larger than the greater pyramid of Egypt, which, as I recollect, stands upon eleven acres of ground, and is about 400 feet high.

In Ireland, I remember this whim of making iron with turf was once tried, I believe it was in the year 1755, or 1757, but it was then proved to be a bubble, and the very idea has been ever since laughed at.—Our Author's very respectable friends, whose very words he seems, in this instance, to have adopted, though he has not thought it necessary to communicate the whole to the public, yet must have given him very different information. Mr. Richard Crawkay, Mr. Joseph Stanley, and Mr. Samuel Walker, when examined before the Committee of the Council †, declared very expressly, that it was not possible to carry on any iron manufactory with peat fire only to any extent. What! is it not even within the limits of possibility? How weighty then the argument to overturn the right and interests of Ireland.

And now having pretty well got rid of our turf, let us examine the other part of the paragraph, which recommends “smelting Lancashire ore in Ireland with English coal, because such coal may be had there cheaper than in London, where branches of the iron manufacture are carried on in hoops, rods, anchors, bolts, &c.” And here let me exhibit a notable instance of that equivoque in the word iron manufacture, which I formerly stated; for as London, from foreign iron, manufactures hoops and rods, &c. in which the expence of firing is comparatively

$$* 100 \times 16 = 1600 \times 500 = 800,000 \times 365 = 292,000,000.$$

† Report of the Lords of the Council, page 47.

trifling,

trifling, it must therefore follow as a necessary consequence, that Ireland, with the same firing imported, can smelt foreign ore, and forge the iron, and have it as cheap as the country in which all these materials are on the spot and grow together.—I would ask the noble Author this direct question, does he believe iron is smelted and forged from these materials only, within the city of London? Does he believe there ever will, or does he think it possible, such can be made there as cheap as foreign iron with all its subsidies is now imported into London; and yet this is to be the foundation of the present equalization.

Our Author, in comparing the advantages which Ireland might have over Britain in the exportation of rod iron*, and which he is pleased to state as amounting to between 15l. and 20l. per cent. considers the cost of the Russia bar iron the same in London and in Dublin, and the charge of manufacturing in both places to be the same, and the difference to arise from the difference of duty only, and then by his calculation states the cost of a ton of rod iron in Dublin, after having paid the import duty on the material, to amount only to 13l. 3s. from which, if you deduct what he charges for the waste and expence of flitting, being 1l. 10s. the cost of the iron must have been but 11l. 13s. English. And now let me call upon his Lordship to declare (and I think he owes the explanation to both countries), does he think it possible, with Lancashire or Cumberland ore and English coals, to make such a ton of iron in Ireland for that price—and if not, why are we misled with such calculations?—I would go further, and call upon him to declare, did he ever hear that one ton of such Russia iron was ever sold in Dublin for what he mentions to be the London price, deducting the difference of duty?—Or that ever one ton of Irish made rod iron ever was, or without great loss could be, sold in Dublin for 13l. 3s. English? And if he proves any one of these facts, I will give up the whole controversy.—And if he does not, I must repeat it, it was not well done by such unfounded statements to excite animosities between these kingdoms.

The next argument runs thus, “† It has been generally supposed that Ireland has great disadvantages in working iron mines when compared with Great Britain, but the

* Observations on Ireland, page 230.

† Observations on Ireland, page 233, 234.

“ reason

“ reason does not appear, unless it should arise from want
 “ of capital. In general it may be observed, that the
 “ private capital of English manufacturers at present com-
 “ bats the purse of Ireland in the hands of a bountiful and
 “ liberal Parliament. But if Englishmen will employ
 “ their capitals in Russia, why should they not employ them
 “ in Ireland? and some English capitals are now engaged
 “ in erecting large iron works in Russia.”—And to this
 is added, in a note referred to as the explanation, “ It has
 “ been already observed, that the price of British coals on
 “ the East coast of Ireland is lower than in many places
 “ where manufactures of iron are carried on; it is remark-
 “ able as the latter *affects* to encourage the spreading of
 “ manufactures; such a tax as that on coals coastways
 “ should be adopted.” You will observe here, as in other
 places, the same contradiction of our Author of his own
 opinions and assertions, which I should not dwell upon if it
 ever occurred in any instance where it was not for the
 purpose of doing some injury or another to Ireland, or
 where the latter taken up opinion was not the most un-
 founded. You will observe the same equivocal use of the
 word manufacture as if it was of any consequence to the
 present question what the price of coals might be in the
 Forest of Dean, where the principal fuel is charcoal
 made from wood; though I must say in the neighbourhood
 of the Severn, I remember when I was at Bristol Wells,
 I bought my coals at 6s. 8d. per ton, and I was informed
 that to the manufactories in that neighbourhood they were
 afforded at 5s. per ton; what is it to the present question
 what coals are at Woodstock, where a pair of shoe buckles
 shall be sold for 50 guineas? state to me great smelting
 works and forges where the fuel is all coal, where the
 business is carrying on to profit, where the price of coals
 is as dear as that of British coals is on the East coast of
 Ireland, and where the bar iron * can be sold for 15 or
 16l. a ton, which our Author states as the present average
 price; or else we but deceive ourselves and the public. And
 admitting all these facts, the argument might still be falla-
 cious, as our Author seems purposely to omit making any
 allowance for carrying those coals to the mountainous parts
 of the country in which mines are generally found, or for
 bringing down the ore from mines to our harbours; for

* Observations on Ireland, page 217.

his

his argument here refers to working Irish mines, and not to
 his extraordinary expedient of importing foreign ore. I
 must observe too on the not uncommon attempt to raise
 jealousies in the minds of Englishmen by for ever repeating
 to them the little occasional bounties of the Irish Parlia-
 ment to infant manufactures;—but does he mean to
 suggest that such bounties will give capital to carry on ex-
 pensive iron works, or to contravert the fourteen millions
 we have heard of.

I confess from the fact he has mentioned, of Englishmen
 carrying their capitals to Russia, I should have been inclined
 to have reasoned with myself in a different manner; my
 first wish probably would have been that my countrymen
 should keep their money at home for the improvement of
 their own country—but if that cannot be, if the capital be
 too large for that purpose, or the desire of gain or
 of change must carry it abroad, then let my second wish be,
 that it should be carried to my sister country for her im-
 provement, since her strength is my strength, and since I
 know from experience it will in some shape or another
 return from thence, together with its profits—this, in my
 mind, would be better than going to Russia or America,
 and I should not terrify men so disposed from the attempt,
 by collecting every ill thing that could be said of Ireland.
 I omit to make any particular observation on the polite and
 affectionate manner of stating our humble endeavour to
 supply ourselves with some of the mere necessaries of life
 by the appellation of “ this affectation of Ireland to ex-
 tend manufactures.”

The next argument is this:—“ As to the article coals *,
 “ there is plenty in some parts of Ireland, and *probably in*
 “ *time* they may be got at as low a price as in England.
 “ The iron ore, lime stone, and coals, will be found in
 “ the same neighbourhood, and with the help of steam
 “ engines and navigations, (no country is better fitted for
 “ the latter than Ireland) iron works *may* be established
 “ wherever these articles can be found. And again he
 “ says, some kind of coals, † and generally the worst, an-
 “ swer the purpose of making coak much better than
 “ others; there are sorts of coals, which, when coaked, are
 “ not sufficiently cleansed of their sulphur and impurities
 “ to make a kind and malleable pig iron fit for the forges;

* Observations on Ireland, page 226, 227.

† Page 212.

2

“ it

“ it has not yet appeared whether the Irish coal is proper for making coak. And again, the capital improvement of coak bar iron by Messrs. Wright and Jesson is now generally practised, and it is this has much improved the quality and increased the quantity of English iron.”

What a mass of conjecture and of assertion, of knowledge and of ignorance, of probability and of impossibility, and of contradiction, is here brought together, to shew that Ireland must shortly destroy the iron trade of England!—May her greatest dangers never stand supported by better foundations.

For first, it does not follow, because coals have been found in some parts of Ireland, that therefore even there they are in plenty. It is well known both in Britain and in Ireland, that there are many collieries that are not worth working, at least to any considerable extent; either the vein is too thin, as was the case of that one Mr. Bolton examined in the County of Leitrim, or too stoney, or too much embarrassed with culm, or too deep—too much affected with water, or the rocks too hard. I am well acquainted with collieries of this sort on both sides of the river Shannon towards its mouth, where the vein of coal is not above eight or nine inches thick, and yet these have been slowly worked for years, for the benefit of the culm only, and this may be said to be in some degree the case of all the collieries ever opened in Ireland, that excepted, in the Kilkenny mines, (of which hereafter) that the coal produced is in small quantity, and I am confident no other colliery in Ireland ever produced one-twentieth part of what has been stated to be used by the one company in Shropshire. Though the Drumglass colliery has been open for many years in the most populous and spirited part of Ireland, yet so little and indifferent has been its produce, that English coals are burned within a very few miles of it, and those brought by a long inland carriage.

Again, some collieries are found in mountainous places, difficult of access, and others on inhospitable shores, for the greater part of the year inaccessible; such is the situation of the Ballycastle collieries, where, after the public had laid out large sums in endeavouring to make a harbour, the sea has finally triumphed, the work has been abandoned, and no coals are brought from thence but in the summer months, and those in small quantities. And exactly similar must be the case with respect to any other veins

veins of coal that may be found in that mountainous part of the County of Antrim. A convincing proof of these assertions may be drawn, I think, from the conduct of the Irish Parliament, and the consequences thereof; coals being a necessary of life, and the bogs in many places nearly cut out, our legislature has been anxious to open collieries, and as encouragement, has given a bounty of 2s. per ton for all Irish coals brought coastways to the capital; but though this bounty has subsisted many years, and is perpetual, yet such has been the poverty of all our Irish works,* that the annual amount of this bounty has been only 145l. 6s. 11d. and the greater part of this for malting coals from Kilkenny.

And this deficiency in the quantity of the mineral throughout this kingdom is not confined to coals only, but has been observed in all our mines, of lead, of silver, of copper, &c. none of which contain the same quantities, nor those vast masses which are to be found in the mines of England; such as the Paris Mountain of copper in Wales, the Duke of Devonshire's lead mine in Derbyshire, the tin mines of Cornwall, worked since the time of the Phœnicians, and the collieries of Newcastle, which have supplied London constantly since about the time of Henry VIII. if I recollect right.

Perhaps it might not be a difficult matter to account physically for this inferiority in the Irish mines, if this was a proper place for philosophical inquiry. With respect to the Kilkenny collieries, which are more extensive, I believe even Mr. Bolton, who examined them, will assure the English iron makers that they may rest in the most perfect security; they are an excellent coal for making malt, because they do not smoke, and for that purpose they are carried throughout Ireland; but they neither blaze nor can be coaked, and therefore are unfit for the iron furnace. They only grow red like a mass of heated iron, and are so full of sulphur, that if used in a bed-chamber, the door of which should happen to be shut, the probable consequence would be death to the person sleeping there, of which there have been too many instances, and yet so difficult is it to divest this coal of that sulphur, that the same effect would be produced after the fire had been burning seven or eight hours. In short, I defy our Author to produce an instance

* See Young's Tour through Ireland.

of one place in Ireland, where such iron founderies have been or are carrying on with Irish pit coal to any material extent.

But, says our author, navigations may do much, and there is no country better fitted for these than Ireland, and sorry I am, I am obliged to contradict him in this assertion, not that it would be material to the present argument, unless he could shew those navigations led to collieries and iron mines; but the fact I fear will be found that there is no country more unfit for these than Ireland; first, because the whole island lies high above the sea, rising suddenly for the most part from the coast, as may be best illustrated by the Dublin canal, whose lowest termination is 60 feet above the level of the sea, and which canal rises from thence 193 feet more in the distance of 17 miles, and this creating a multitude of locks, makes our navigations more tedious in passing, more expensive in keeping up, and more easily put out of repair than any others I believe in Europe. Another circumstance against them arises from the stratum through which they pass, which Mr. Young has well described in his Tour through Ireland, where he says, "the circumstance which strikes me as the greatest singularity of Ireland, is the rockyness of the soil; stone is so general, that I have great reason to believe the whole island is one vast rock of different strata and kinds of stone rising out of the sea; in general this appears in every part of the kingdom. And this rockyness of the soil is so universal, that it predominates in every sort; one cannot use with propriety the term, clay loam, sand, &c. it must be a stony clay, a stony loam, a gravelling sand, &c."—The consequence of which is, that wherever we have sunk our navigations to any considerable depth, we have been obliged to work our way with gunpowder. Another particularity is in the stratum generally over this rock, which is a gravelly loam almost as difficult as the stone to cut, and so tenacious, that I well remember Mr. Smeaton's declaring, that if any engineer had told him with how little slope we could venture to make our banks, he could not believe him till he saw it;—the consequence of all this has been, that the Dublin navigation, or as it is generally called, the Grand Canal, and which is the only work we have of that kind of any considerable extent, or which is in any very great forwardness, though it has the metropolis for its termination, and has been

been the favourite object of the Parliament and of the people for a long time, though it has been near thirty years continually going on, and has cost upwards of 300,000l. yet it is not finished so as to be navigable more than thirty miles; nor is any part of it dug more than twenty miles; and when it shall be finished so far as Munster-Even, which I hope it will be in this summer, there will be on this short space about thirty locks from eight to ten feet fall;—from hence you may judge what time it will take to its final accomplishment; as yet I believe its further course is not even determined on; but if it goes directly to Lough Allen, where the report of Mr. Evans, the engineer, (mentioned or alluded to so often in the evidence before the Council and Parliament of Britain, and by our Author) states, that there are iron and coal, I will venture to assert they have not yet worked one third part of the distance between Dublin and that lake, and therefore I shall submit to every impartial person, whether the system which in a few years may probably bring the English foundery to perfection, or this plan of navigation will be first accomplished.

I would gladly hasten to our Author's particular calculations, if I did not find it necessary to say something again on what is mentioned introductory to those calculations.—It is said in the name of those concerned in the iron trade*, that Ireland must undersell Britain in her commerce with the American States, and also on the continent of Europe, so materially in heavy iron wares, that she must rapidly supplant Britain in that branch, unless her export is protected by a bounty, which should be *near a third part* more than the duty, as 30 cwt. of the bar will, on an average, make less than 22 cwt. of wrought iron; and that Ireland will not observe the spirit of her compact, to which she had agreed when the American States were dependent on Britain; and that the compact was, that both countries should pay similar or equal duties †. And our author has certainly acted fairly in stating this on heavy iron wares only, and in making his calculations on these articles only, because these are the only ones which Ireland, in her infant state, can be supposed able to make, or which America, in her infant state, and the West Indies, in their infant and dependent state, can be supposed

* Observations on Ireland, page 229, 230, 231.

† Observations on Ireland, page 219.

able to purchase. Rod iron, rolled iron, bolts, nails, anchors, and hoops, are necessities of life, or for the package of their manufactures, or for their shipping.— Besides, of the finer sorts, much is rated under different denominations, and subject to higher duties, or are rated, *ad valorem*, as hardware and steel, and therefore do not fall within the compact.—In the still higher manufactures, the price of the material, comparatively speaking, is lost in the value of the workmanship, so that whether the first duty is 10s. or 3l. is totally immaterial; thus, merely to shew by an example how far this can be carried, let us suppose, for a moment, a ton of the pendulum springs of watches could be collected, and that there could be found a market for them, these would be worth half the iron imported into England within the compass of the year.— But the weight of all fine goods is trifling, and therefore whoever would make any just and true average on this subject, must have before him the quantities, as well as the quality and prices of the different articles;—without this, he may amuse himself, or delude the public with computations; he may fill his works with Custom-House extracts, and appear to the ignorant a man of deep researches, but by those who understand the matter he will be still thought ignorant.—And if this be the just and only ground of computation (as I am convinced it is), I desire to see how our Author can make out his assertion, that 30 cwt. of bar iron will make less than 22 cwt. of wrought iron, and that the equivalent should be nearly one third more than the import duty; or even, as he elsewhere expresses it *, that in the gross iron wares 25 cwt. of the bar would be an equivalent for 20 cwt. of the wrought, and in the finer kinds 40 or 45 cwt.

And yet even this would be sufficient to prove, that the computation of 1778, was by no means made on an equal principle for Ireland, where not 22 cwt. but barely 20 cwt. is supposed the produce of 30 cwt. of the material, and the equivalent is stated not *nearly* but precisely one third more than the duty.—And now to come to these particular calculations, which I must beg leave to set out in the Author's own words †.

* Observations on Ireland, page 225.
 † Observations on Ireland, page 229, 230.

“ Calculations

“ Calculations for Iron Hoops.

	£. s. d.
“ A ton of Russia iron fit for hoops, cost in 1784, in London, nearly	14 10 0
“ Waste of metal and charge of smelting,	3 10 0
	<hr/>
“ Cost of a ton of hoops in London,	18 0 0
“ Difference of duty on a ton of bar iron in favour of Ireland,	2 7 0
	<hr/>
“ Cost of a ton of hoops in Dublin,	15 13 0
“ Difference in favour of Ireland, about 15l. per cent.	

“ Calculation of split iron.

	£. s. d.
“ A ton of Russia bar iron, fit for rod iron, cost in London in 1784 about	14 0 0
“ Waste of metal and charge of slitting,	1 10 0
	<hr/>
“ Cost of a ton of rod iron in London,	15 10 0
“ Difference of duty in favour of Ireland,	2 7 0
	<hr/>
“ Cost of a ton of rod iron in Dublin,	13 3 0
“ Difference in favour of Ireland, between 15l. and 20l. per cent.	

I believe it will be obvious to every body, that these calculations have been made principally to establish the observations stated at the end of each of them, that Ireland has in one instance 15l. per cent. in the other between 15 and 20l. per cent. advantage over England, and that such conclusion could not follow, unless the general value was kept low. A moment, however, for argument sake, I will allow our Author all his improbable, and all his impossible premises; such as that a ton of Russia bar iron, fit for rods, was ever bought in Dublin for 11l. 13s. (or 14l. less by 2l. 7s. the difference in duty); that such ton could be carried to Lucan, or Leixlip, the nearest slitting mills, and there worked with coals, costing above a guinea a ton, and then brought back in rods to Dublin, and that the waste of iron, and all the expences,

expences, should not stand in more than 11 10s.—I admit the whole of his calculation, that the ton of English rods in London stands in 15l. 10s. and in Dublin 13l. 3s. English, and now they are ready in both places for exportation, suppose to the West Indies; the English go out free; the Irish by the compact must pay export duty 2l. 16s. 3d. English, add this to 13l. 3s. and the amount will stand thus on ship board:

The Irish,	-	-	-	-	-	£.15	19	3
The English,	-	-	-	-	-	15	10	0
						<hr/>		

Balance in favour of the English, - - - 0 9 3

which is near three per cent. and which, considering that freight from London is *always* cheaper to the West Indies than from Dublin, with the advantages arising from superior capital and the rate of interest, is enough to destroy any wholesale trade on earth; to which, if these wares are made of English iron, must be added 2l. 16s. per ton more, which in this computation is supposed paid as import duty; and this proves demonstrably, of our Author's own shewing, how unequal was the compact of 1778. The same advantage of 9s. 3d. will be found in his other computations, though the per centage will not be quite so large. It is surprising, after this, that Ireland has never sent any of these heavy wares to the West Indies, and that she as strongly asserts she never can, and yet this is the prohibitory duty which some men have the modesty to insist upon that Ireland should now impose on her own trade with free states, or that she must be charged with breach of good faith and agreement.

I feel I must have convinced every impartial mind, and yet these observations compel me to go one step further, and shew, that all the mistakes herein are not altogether unintentional.

The main intent of these calculations was to shew, that Ireland would have 15l. per cent, in one article, and from 15l. to 20l. per cent. in another, and to prove this, it was necessary to state these articles far below their real value.

If a ton of rod iron in London cost but 15l. 10s. and there is a loss upon that of 2l. 7s. that is certainly at the

the rate of 15l. 5s. 6d. on every hundred pounds value, but if that rod iron be worth 20l. though the loss should be still 2l. 7s. per ton, yet this loss falls but upon a fifth part of every 100l. and consequently is but 11l. 15s. instead of 15l. per cent. Raise the price still higher, the loss will be proportionably less.

And now allow me to shew how our Author himself has stated these prices in the same year 1784, where there was no occasion to state things too strongly against Ireland. In his American Observations he says*,

" A ton of iron when manufactured in Britain into rods	
" is worth	£. 21
" Hoops	22
" Bolts	24
" Anchors	30
" Nails	35
" Hoes and axes	42
" Anvils	42
" Tin Plates	56
" Steel	56

Oh! ancient honour of the British name! can you suffer such arguments any longer to avail, to break the bonds of brotherly affections, and to alienate, if possible, from your markets your best customers?

I have done with this part of the argument, because I am sure I must have convinced every man, that Irish exportation never has, in a single instance to any part of the world, interfered with the English iron exportation; that Ireland never did, nor ever can, import Baltic iron on the same terms with the English, and therefore that she finds it her interest to import it from London, in which case she pays not 10s. but 14s. per ton duty, as the fact is stated by the Lords of the Committee of the Council †; and that

* Observations on America, page 20.
 † It seems almost unnecessary to multiply arguments on this subject; whoever but looks at a map of Europe, and sees how Edinburgh or Hull stands with respect to the mouth of the Baltic, will be satisfied: whoever recollects the ingenious arguments of the Scotch when they wished to induce the Irish gentlemen to subscribe to their navigation from Edinburgh to Glasgow, will remember the principal one to be that, by that means we could import our Iron and naval stores cheaper across Scotland than we can do by long sea.

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that in a very short time England will make bar iron enough at home fully to supply these three kingdoms, at which time foreigners will be totally excluded, and England will have the monopoly of our market, upon the only terms any monopoly should be ever established, that of supplying us cheaper than can be done by any other part of the world.

I pass over the exaggeration of the Shropshire company's consuming 500 ton of coals every day, in which event, allowing even two tons of coal to make one of iron, that company alone might make between 70,000 and

sea. The ordinary freight of iron as ballast from Petersburg to London is but 5s. per ton, the freight to Hull is 10s. besides insurance; Ireland on a medium imports but about 750 ton of hemp, and consequently can little lessen by that means the freight of iron, which comes to her as a principal part of every cargo. The medium freight from Petersburg to Dublin is 33s. English, besides insurance; in the time of war this was more striking. In the last war the demand for hemp, &c. was so great, that the freight of iron to London was never raised; at the same time that to Dublin from Petersburg was three guineas per ton. You, Sir, in the examination before the Lords of the committee of council in February last, in concert with Mr. Bolton, Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. White ||, have been pleased to ascertain this fact and to assign the true causes of these considerable advantages that Britain has over Ireland—your answers are stated to me thus:—

“ Though the Irish pay something of higher duty upon foreign iron imported from this country, together with two freights, yet these disadvantages are supposed to be counterbalanced by the credit they get here, and which they could not get in Russia or Sweden. By our importing iron frequently as ballast, together with hemp and other commodities, which enable us to sell it *much* cheaper, and by the convenience the Irish have of purchasing it in small quantities as they want it, and thereby carrying on their trade with a less capital.” And to this might be added, the different rate of interest on the two countries. There are but one or two little circumstances in which I can differ from this account; but with respect to credit, or the postponement on the term of payment for goods beyond what is usually allowed in the course of business, it is generally considered as the advantage the rich merchant has over the poorer one, and for which the former is sure some how or another to be paid, not only the common interest, but whatsoever extraordinary he might make by his money in a course of more frequent circulation, and for his risque also.

And the same might be said with respect to him who buys up goods in large quantities and sells out again in smaller shares. And these therefore are obstructions arising from the poverty of Ireland, not causes that can set up a rivalry against England.

|| Page 54. Examination before the Council concerning iron and iron manufactures. STOCKDALE'S Edition.

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80,000 ton a year, which is equal to the whole consumption of England. The real fact, as I understand it, stands thus with the house of Mr. Wilkinson, &c. which being the most extensive, as I hear, in that part of England, I must presume to be the one to which our Author alludes. That house, I hear, makes 100 ton of bar iron every week, and expects during the course of this year to make 200 ton a week, and when one house can do this the business is accomplished. These gentlemen, I hear, have their coal from 2s. 6d. to 4s. per ton, and can now finish their iron for 11l. per ton; and when Lord Dundonald's scheme of extracting pitch and tar, and volatile alkali, and essential oil, from pit coal, during its operation of coaking, is accomplished, their fuel probably will come considerably at a lower rate, and the iron will be made the cheaper. And these works being situated on the Severn, or the river ———, which runs into the Severn, they will have the supply of Ireland by the most easy conveyance; and accordingly I hear from one of the principal houses in that line here, that they are now in actual treaty for being supplied from thence with that iron—but it is not in iron only, but with this superiority in firing, with the benefit of water carriage, and with the advantage of this river ———, which I hear is all full of mills and machinery already, they will undersell the world in all the heavy iron manufactures also.

I come now, though reluctantly, to those parts of the observations* in which while Ireland is represented as † affecting to encourage the spreading of manufactures, “ and while doubts are said to be entertained of the expediency of endeavouring on her part to make iron a principal part of the manufacture of her kingdom, and of vieing with a favourite and established manufacture of Great Britain;” she is held out to the jealousy of England || under the invidious and alarming appellation of its *new rival sister* of Ireland, and that (for the purpose of giving that rivalry effect, we must presume) steam engines are now erecting there.

Now, would not any man imagine that this was altogether an encroachment and a novelty, and could he be per-

* Observations on Ireland, page 235.

† Ditto, p. 219.

|| Ditto, p. 220.

suaded that the only crime of devoted Ireland was, her continuing to make for her own use plowshares and reaping hooks, nails and hoops, and such articles, as in all probability she was in the habit of making before the name of Englishman was ever heard of in her island;—that the furnaces of Ireland *never* were in so forsaken and deplorable a way as they are at present; and that no steam engine ever has been applied to the making or manufacturing iron in Ireland;—that the great iron works which were at Mountrath, at Swadlingbar, at Lough Allen, at Woodford and Feakell, those in the county of Cork, of Galway, of Mayo, and many other parts of Ireland, are all abandoned, and even the last lingering one at Enniscorthy has declined; and that in return all we have gained (the object of this mighty envy) is a very few little rolling, plating and flitting mills for working with foreign iron and with foreign coals for domestic uses only; four I think near Dublin—one at Newry—and one I think near Waterford; and that in spite of what they do, the importation of iron wares from England is daily increasing? I asked the proprietors of what I believe to be the most considerable of these to give me some comparative view of the work he did, and his answer was, that his consumption of coals in the year was not more than what Lord Sheffield states as the consumption of one English company in one day.

The Observer himself has properly enough stated the case, where he says, “that in England the scarcity and price of wood had rendered it impossible to enter into competition with foreigners, or to make iron enough for home consumption and manufactures, and * but within a few years the trade has been rescued from ruin by the expedient of using coaked pit coal.

“So, while Ireland had woods, she had also many iron works, † but when the former were cut down and destroyed, there was of course nearly an end of the latter; the improvements in making iron have now encouraged her to revive them; and where, my good Lord, is the established exclusive manufacture in the one, or the new and culpable rivalry in the other?”

And where was the necessity, under these heads of iron and steel, to heap together every thing that might be thought to imply a threat, or induce an embarrassment on

* Observations on Ireland, page 212.

† Ditto, p. 227.

unoffending

unoffending Ireland, every thing that might discourage or disgrace that country, every thing that might excite in England a diffidence of, or an animosity against her people? “I do not see, in an examination of iron and steel || that it was altogether necessary to set out, that if Ireland *really* means an arrangement in every respect reciprocal, she *must expect* to give a bounty on the export of British linens from thence.” But Ireland is not, I believe, terrified at this formidable argument; as an Irishman, I will express my own opinion on the subject freely: If Britain desires it she is intitled to each bounty—when it was first given by Britain, it was not merely to enable the Northern Irish absentees to spend a larger property in her country—It was that the Irish linens might make a part in those assorted cargoes in which one article contributes to the sale of another, and in which the being able to supply his customer with every thing, in some degree secures to the merchant his monopoly.

Some few years ago, when Ireland being restored to her commercial right, too fondly persuaded herself that the exercise of a free trade must be as extensive as the name, she thought it prudent to grant a similar bounty that her linens might make a part of her foreign cargoes also. If Britain now wishes that we should add her linens to our assortments, I do not see how Ireland can refuse it, and therefore, if called upon, I will move it myself in Parliament.

But what shall we say to that general assertion of our Author's, which declares a perpetual warfare between the two countries;—“† That it is impossible for Britain to be permanently secured in *any* regulations that may be made, but that when our trade shall be once gone, in consequence of our arrangements, and she finds herself disappointed, the recovery of her trade will not be then probable.” And what *indignation* may an Irishman not express at the reason assigned which thus stigmatizes his country. “It has not been, says our Author, and it *will not be* the policy of Ireland to enforce a very exact observance of such cautions as may be adopted. Britain must submit her manufactures, her trade and commercial laws to the fidelity of the Custom-house officers

|| Observations on Ireland, page 233.

† Observations on Ireland, page 232.

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“ of Ireland in many respects, and in consequence thereof her trade will be gone.”

And must not the trade of Ireland, in like manner, be committed to the care of English and Scotch revenue officers; and is not the trade and intercourse of both countries, at this moment, committed to them without receiving any material injury? I do not pretend to say some counterband trade will not be carried on between two countries so contiguous to each other; but I could never find any evidence that shewed, that this illicit trade is carried on to greater extent in Ireland than in Britain, or that our revenues here are less attended to. I have heard it asserted, and I believe truly, that there was smuggling to as great value in the port of London as in all Ireland; and I am certain, that neither Scotland, nor the West of England, nor the contiguous coasts of Sussex, would yield to Ireland in this species of dexterity.—The late examination relative to smuggling, in the British House of Commons, shews how much we are surpassed in this business by our neighbours.—But it is hoped, when a wise and equitable arrangement of trade shall be made; when the two kingdoms shall be considered, *in these respects*, as two counties only, of the same dominion, by removing all obstructions of additional import duty from the one to the other, and the consequent temptation to smuggling shall be thus removed, it will be in the power of the ministers of each country exceedingly to simplify the mode of collecting their revenue, and to transfer much of the duty from import to inland excise. And when the proper cautions for carrying such a system into execution shall be adopted by Ireland upon the footing of fair faith, for her own benefit, with her own consent, and by the laws of her own Parliament, I say, it is too much for any man to assert, that she *will not* enforce an honourable observance of them, or that any former policy of that country can justify a contrary conclusion.

Among the different trades which it is thus supposed that Britain may lose and Ireland gain, that to America is probably considered as one of the most extensive; but let me inform the noble Author, 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 shall have just cause to be disgusted, America will be lost for ever; and that on the other hand, if these islands shall ever have any chance of recovering any part of their antient influence in that vast, but yet
unsettled

unsettled empire, it must be through the medium of Ireland; but this, I fear, is a flight of policy of too bold a wing for modern ministers, and, *therefore*, I shall be silent on the subject; however, I desire here to enter my caveat against the 16th Proposition of the English House of Commons, so far as it relates to the article of American iron.—England, to protect her own manufacture, lays a duty of 2l. 16s. on foreign iron.—To favour her Colonies, she permits the iron of Canada and Nova Scotia to be imported duty free.—Ireland lets in iron of Russia and America equally at 10s. 6d.—shall she be obliged under this 16th proposition, to lay 1l. 16s. English additional on the iron of the American States*, more than she does on the Russian? and must she not expect the moment that unjust inequality is established, to be excluded from the Ports of America for ever? England you see will not be drawn to shew such partiality to strangers against the Americans.

But to return to our articles of iron and steel, I confess I do not see clearly why our Author, under these heads, should think it necessary to state “*the extravagancies and uncommon proceedings and unsettled state of Ireland †*,” or why he should thus make a charge upon a whole nation for the enormities of the riotous, but starving manufacturers of the capital only, when he had before said, that a considerable proportion of the country differed from them, and that the Parliament of Ireland, by a great majority, had rejected their plan. I do not see the occasion why, under this head, merely to injure the credit of Ireland ‡, he should bring back the old story of the Absentee Tax, which the Irish Parliament rejected (in my opinion unwisely) so long ago I think as November, 1772, and of which there has since been but little mention;—why he should here [for the same purpose] impute to a whole nation § arbitrary and impatient dispositions.

It may no doubt, to some people, seem not very disadvantageous to sell their estates in one country for 10 years purchase ||, when they could lay out the money in another at 23 years purchase; but they will allow our weaker understandings to think this is some disadvantage.—But while

* Q. If Colony iron may not be imported into Ireland duty free.

† Observations on Ireland, page 238.

‡ Observations on Ireland, page 234.

§ Ditto, page 233.

|| Ditto, p. 234.

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this rod is hung over us, and while we are thus assured, that Englishmen are not *very* fond of sending their money to Ireland, and that when they recollect, they will be much less so; may we hope that we shall not be upbraided with this poverty, nor lectured with this sort of insulting unolicited advice, "That as Ireland may *sometimes* want *money, it is not quite so prudent to take such measures,*" as taxing our advisers †.

It may naturally now be asked me, if this case be exactly as I have stated it; if there is no probability that Ireland will ever become the successful rival of England in the iron trade,—whence all this anxiety upon the subject, and wherefore this pamphlet of so many pages? I will answer directly: I saw an alarming jealousy rising between these two kingdoms; I thought there were some men in Britain who considered Ireland on all occasions, as a capable and willing opponent, who, unless strongly coerced, must in the end carry away the greater part of her manufactures; and that in this country, also, there were many who thought they could well perceive, that though the legislature of Britain had lately emancipated our constitution, and our trade, yet the manufacturing part of the people still seemed to claim the right of restraining, of taxing, of legislating for us, just as might suit their private convenience. That in the town of Manchester, which according to Doctor Percival's last account of its population, as I recollect, contains about 35,000 persons, men, women, and children, wise and foolish: there was found, according to the statement of a noble Lord, no less than 120,000 literate, adult, decided statesmen, who had taken upon them to determine at once for us, and to instruct their own Parliament, upon a question in politics so difficult, so complicated, so abstract, that it might have engaged the wisdom of a Solon or a Plato to decide on; perhaps, the most abstruse that has ever been agitated; the constitutional union of two separated, free and independent kingdoms.

Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding sheet of Edward's race.

I felt the powerful, though I am persuaded unintended effect of Lord Sheffield's publications, (at least through this country) in exciting and confirming this jealousy, and

† Observations on Ireland, page 234.

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I confess, I trembled when I looked back on scenes just passed away on the other side of the Atlantic.

Fraternas Acies, Alternaque Bella profanis decertata Odiis.

And I wished, while yet it was not too late, that my poor endeavours might be employed in counteracting these greatest of calamities. You, Sir, (from motives of reciprocity and affection, I admit) have thought fit to appeal to me on a part of this subject, and have thereby afforded me an opportunity of delivering so far my opinions, which I have with the greater freedom, as they have not been taken up upon the spur of the present occasion, but which appear to have been conceived, and uniformly acted up to for more than seven years, and as such, I may hope they will be considered impartial.

The closer England and Ireland become connected, the more easy, no doubt, will be the intercourse, more of our nobility and gentry, more of our ingenious and refined artists will probably go to your country. In the coarser branches, which depend on cheapness of living, where less capital and less ingenuity are required, (if from local advantages such works can be better carried on in Ireland) many of them probably will be established here. But in a short time, if there be an increase of inhabitants and of trade, these will raise the price of labour and of provisions. And taxes will, I fear, not be wanting in any part of the British dominions, so soon as there shall be found a capability of paying them—and thus things still will preserve their natural level.

In the mean time, I cannot see how the success of one country, on one side of the narrow channel between these islands, can injure another on the other side, more than how the property of Yorkshire is to be affected by that of Lancashire, or your trade annihilated by the continuance of the Carron Company.

Our empire, I fear, has already powerful enemies on the Continent; let us not weaken ourselves by internal division, let every part rather be strengthened, and all united in affection; let us be true to one another, and Britain, I trust, may yet be confident against the world in arms; and Sir, is the warmest wish of

Your very obedient,

Humble servant,

LUCIUS O'BRIEN.

0430

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