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CURSORY REMARKS

ON

LORD SHEFFIELD'S PAMPHLET,

RELATIVE TO THE

TRADE AND MANUFACTURES

OF

I R E L A N D.

C O R K :

PRINTED BY WILLIAM FLYN, AT THE SHAKESPEARE:

M, DCC, LXXXV.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE SECOND

BY

JOHN BURNET

ADVERTISEMENT.

I Am conscious of the many discouraging circumstances under which I presume to publish the following Curfory Remarks on Lord Sheffield's Pamphlet :---A Work, distinguished by great sophistry, and marked by much plausible ingenuity. A retired Country Gentleman as I am, not practised in political writing, nor habituated to inquire deeply into commercial subjects, with few books to recur to, to what risques and what dangers do I expose myself! An ardent zeal

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for Ireland, that cannot abate but with my life, urged me to controvert the misrepresentations of her trade, and of the disposition of her inhabitants, so artfully and ungenerously introduced by his Lordship. Should I succeed in the attempt, I shall have the satisfaction of thinking that I have done some service; if I fail, I shall find consolation in reflecting, that I meant well. I trust a generous Public will excuse the inaccuracy of the stile, and the insufficiency of the performance in other respects, from one, who never will neglect an opportunity of serving his Country.

C U R S O R Y

C U R S O R Y R E M A R K S, &c.

MUCH mischief, perhaps, might have been spared to both Kingdoms, had his Lordship reserved his observations for another work, which he mentions in his Advertisement that he had in contemplation. It would have been still better, had they never been published.

Little reputation to the Author, much less advantage to the Public can be gained by erroneous statements of what he calls *facts*, or by false conclusions; and how unworthy of a man, who professes himself a Friend to both Countries, is any attempt to revive old prejudices, or inflame the passions of either People!

The real philanthropist must anxiously wish to have Great Britain and Ireland united in friendship never to be broken,—in interest never to be separated. This was the wish of the Volunteers, and the whole People of Ireland, at the

the moment when they were most strenuously asserting their Rights!—May bad policy, or ill-timed restraints never give them cause to retract!

A cursory view of his Lordship's pamphlet, will be sufficient to discover the fallacy of the arguments, and the evil tendency of the publication: With a boldness peculiar to a violent partizan, he hazards opinions and sentiments, which cannot stand the test of political justice, or commercial investigation. His great object seems to be the overthrow of the minister, careless whether both kingdoms be crushed in his fall! A partizan of desperate circumstances risks nothing in the contest; his fortunes may be advanced, but cannot be impaired by national calamities.

To expose deception, and prevent his Lordship's assertions and statement of the relative trade and manufactures of both kingdoms, from passing as really well founded, because hitherto unanswered, I am induced to publish some remarks on his pamphlet; at the same time declaring, that it is by no means my intention to become an advocate for the Propositions lately introduced into the Irish Parliament; for in the course of my remarks, it may appear, that were they to pass unaltered through the British legislature, that country could not suffer by the event,

event, and the entire opposition to them must have arisen from the spirit of faction, from self-interested views, or total ignorance of the true state of either kingdom.

Of all other subjects, the final adjustment of the commercial regulations between Great Britain and Ireland, requires the most dispassionate and deliberate investigation; and though *the Minister* did not allow it to this country, yet he dared not refuse it to the other. To the irresistible controul of Englishmen over the Minister, are we indebted for even the short period now left us to consider them! But what can deliberation avail to Ireland? Her parliament has bound her,—yet Britain is loose!

It may be necessary to premise, that these propositions were fabricated in the British cabinet; they were proposed by the Secretary to our parliament, which had *only* to reject or adopt them;—that Ireland did not demand them, nor at this moment does she much interest herself in their event:—They are the propositions of a minister whose partialities to his native country operate but too apparently in almost every instance; whose conduct towards Great Britain and Ireland is not measured by the same rule; who allowed ample time for deliberation to the former; who on *the same* important subject, and

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I may say at the same instant, *denied* it to the latter ; who professes himself a friend to parliamentary reform in the one country, whilst he opposes it most evidently in the other ; who raised himself to the great office he now enjoys, by promoting in Great Britain public meetings, and encouraging the petitions of the people ; but who construes similar proceedings in this kingdom, into an outrageous offence against the state, and reviving the star-chamber doctrine of attachments, unjustly denies the injured prisoner even a trial by his Peers ; a friend to œconomy in one country ; a very prodigal in the other ! Can it be supposed this is the *favoured* spot of the minister, or that he could be induced to destroy his aspiring fame, by sacrificing the trade and manufactures of his own country to his *unaccountable* predilection for another ? No,—the propositions themselves contradict it ; the whole tenor of his conduct disproves it. Whatever good Ireland may derive from these regulations, must be very distant indeed ! By agreeing to them, she anticipates the supposed wealth that shall arise from her future industry, by appropriating the possible increase of her revenues to the service of Great Britain ! Already impoverished, she augments her distresses by laying on heavy taxes, and involves herself in the enormous debt of England, to the contracting of which she hath not been in the smallest degree instrumental ; her feeble efforts too, though exhausting to her-

self

self, cannot at present, be efficacious in diminishing that debt. On the other hand, Great Britain will instantly feel their good effects ; our markets will be facilitated to her, there will be an end of all our non-importing agreements, the clamours of the Irish-trader and manufacturer will be lulled, by the *speculative* prospect of distant gain.

Can any thing more clearly prove our ridiculous levity and impolitic exultation at the several partial *restorations* of our commercial rights, than the noble Author's insinuation from them, that we are an inconstant and insatiable people ? We are *generous* to a fault, and therefore unsuspecting !

The needy tradesman is transported at receiving the smallest portion of his demand : His applications so repeatedly and scornfully rejected by his supercilious and reluctant debtor, render him at length almost forgetful of the relationship : He with gratitude accepts a very pittance of his right : His distresses are for the moment relieved, and with equal joy and surprise, regards this as a pledge of more ample restitution ! It cannot surely be denied, that we have too often been duped by the fallacious voice of British ministers, yet more so by our own countrymen, whose base policy it hath long been to excite us to expressions of the warmest

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gratitude, and satisfaction, at the removal of the smallest restraints. Were these expressions only to be considered, the idea might be justified, that Ireland could neither wish for, nor require more. In every concession to her, the merchants and manufacturers of England clamoured and were discontented; if Ireland shewed levity in her joy, in the successive attainments she acquired, England shewed levity in yielding those advantages, and dishonesty in wishing to withhold them.

If I thought it not superfluous to prove in how many instances we had been duped in the single article of woollens, by the British Legislature, I might refer the reader to the debates of the lower house of the British Parliament, in the year seventy-eight, when it was proposed by Lord North, (the then minister) to take off the prohibitions against the exportation of woollens from this kingdom to the British Plantations in America, or the West Indies, or any British settlement on the coast of Africa, his Lordship, tho' so great an advocate for the supremacy of England, bore ample testimony to the truth of my assertion: He then briefly recited and explained several statutes, for more than a century back, to shew how cruelly we had been treated by England, how often we had been duped, how frequently some advantages had been held out to us, which, by the operation of others, we were

were not permitted to enjoy; and in short, how delusive were these Acts of the British-legislature! Lest this may appear unaccountable to those better acquainted with the oppressive principles of his Lordship in commercial, as well as constitutional concerns, than with the parliamentary proceedings of the times, I must observe that he felt the necessity of rendering his bill palatable to the people of England, by making an appeal to justice and common honesty, lest astonished at the novelty of a concession, their natural jealousy being excited, a clamour like the present might be raised; and I would be glad to be informed, what injury Great Britain has since received from this partial dereliction of her monopolies?

But no longer will Ireland submit to be duped: Her public mind, within these few years, hath been much enlightened and extended, she looks back with horror and indignation at past oppressions—raised to a just sense of her own rights, she cannot rest in tranquillity, until every unjust restraint shall be removed: Surely, she cannot be blamed, if she foregoes "the advantage of the moment," to lay a firm foundation for her future liberty and industry.

The happy situation of Ireland for trade is well described by Lord Sheffield. How grievous then, any harsh restraint on those local advantages,

vantages, which nature hath so abundantly given? Let it not now be said, that the growing wealth of Ireland is not the growing wealth of Britain: Is not Ireland united with her under the same Crown? Attached to her by affections, relatives, similarity of language, laws, customs, and interests? Do not British councils, almost entirely direct our legislative deliberations? Do we not maintain an army for her—support an enormous pension-list?—Are not our best places of honor and profit filled by Englishmen?—Does not the whole property of our absentees center in England?—And is it possible to prevent that drain, so long as the seat of empire rests there?—Have we not in every capacity declared our determination to rise or fall with Great Britain? What various proofs of our attachment have we not given? In the late war did we not suffer our kingdom to be abandoned by the military?—Did we not vote her twenty thousand sailors?—Did we not at that time, patiently bear a partial, an unjust, an unconstitutional embargo, which almost stopped the current of wealth, that used to flow to three of our provinces: yet what was more destructive, diverted the provision-trade from its usual channel, to which it has never since perfectly returned.—In short have we not, at all times, sacrificed our own to British Interest?—And is it for these services, that Great Britain is to be in an uproar, at the distant idea of our encreasing the sources of

of our industry? enabling us thereby to participate in the burdens of the state.

But if “for want of stock and capital Ireland cannot avail herself of half her present advantages” what has Great Britain to fear from doing her complete justice? Would not such conduct cement still closer the connection, and bind us by stronger ties of gratitude and justice?—the most operative on great and generous minds!

A final adjustment and reciprocal advantage cannot, I hope, be deemed “a speculative and theoretical claim,” however Ireland may be inclined to follow the example of her sister kingdom; it is to be wished, that she may never foolishly indulge herself in such *speculative claims*, as have been so lately the object of that country, and which, in the vain pursuit, had almost shaken her to her center! From such recent and fatal experience, one would think, Great Britain may be inclined to give up her monopolies, so generally reprobated in this enlightened age! and though inclination should not, that interest would direct her to cherish the remaining parts of her empire, by permitting them to participate in those advantages, to which, natural right and constitutional justice entitle them. His Lordship's overweening zeal for his countrymen seems to

to have protruded him beyond the intended scope of his reasoning, and those he has endeavoured to defend, he has in reality *calumniated*.

But says Lord Sheffield, "these unsteady and extravagant attempts have a tendency to provoke retaliation." Can it be conceived that Britain could be so perfidious, or so dead to her own interest as to offer new injury to Ireland? even if she were, what great mischief could she do? Is not the importation of every article of manufactures from Ireland to England prohibited, except the Linen? and that, in many of its branches is restricted, viz. in Sail-cloth, Stamp-goods, Cambricks, Lawns, &c. &c. together with every species of the Cotton-manufacture of which Linen-yarn is one of the principal materials. It is also to be remarked, that a large quantity of our Linens, now sent to England, are for foreign markets, which if she refused to take from us, our profit on the direct trade, instead of being factors to her merchants, would greatly compensate for the decrease in her demands for that article. One of those attempts that his Lordship calls extravagant, is diffusing the weak capital of the country into many and new branches. In this point England has not room to retaliate, for she has already branched her trade into almost as many channels as wealth can be introduced by; when her capital was weak, she multiplied the objects of industry to make

make it stronger. Trade is uniform, by no means, inconsistent, therefore the staple of England was not prejudiced; or if Great Britain is to retaliate, it must be by being still more extravagant, by amplifying the means of wealth.

"That manufactures forced and supported by bounties, cannot long thrive, &c."—yet hath not the invariable practice and policy of Great Britain proved the contrary? "By aiming at too much, Ireland will succeed in none." If that position be true, why attempt to restrain her? An attempt that probably cannot injure, but certainly will irritate: on the contrary, if it is not true, where's the policy or justice in fettering the infant struggles of Ireland, whilst the matured genius of England is left at large, unbounded as the sea which furrounds it?

I rejoice, perhaps, more sincerely than his Lordship, that the religious differences in this country have, in a great measure, subsided; I fear, however, we are to attribute their long continuance to the policy of Great Britain, fatally directed to cause divisions amongst us, and thereby prevent our demanding, or enjoying those privileges, commercial and constitutional, to which we had an equal title with herself. *Divide et impera* was the tyrannical motto of the Irish government: May it for ever cease to receive the sanction of either country! And however the people

people of Ireland may differ in their forms of worship, I trust they may for ever agree in this one great principle of christianity, *love your neighbour as yourself.*

“ Jealousies in trade between Great Britain and Ireland will ever occur.” If the markets be open to each, no jealousy can long subsist; partial restraints can alone produce them; take them off, and you put the axe to the root of jealousy and discontents. Jealousy between sister kingdoms should ever be discouraged; an honorable emulation, an equal competition must produce mutual advantage: Human nature spurns at restraint; if maxims of politicks were to be guided by maxims of morality, how little danger to be apprehended! Deal with mankind as you would be dealt by, cannot be too often repeated to nations.

That “ Protecting Duties are not the general wish of Ireland,” his Lordship endeavours to prove, from our parliament having rejected them. Can he be so ignorant of Ireland, as not to know the influence of the English minister in that parliament? Does he not conceive that it oftener speaks his sense, than that of the people? If it were not so, why the universal cry for parliamentary reform? which, notwithstanding every exertion that could be made by the aristocracy of this country, aided by all the mercenaries of the Court

Court to oppose it, was reiterated, and will for ever be repeated, (until obtained) by the great majority of the people!

If Ireland wishes for protecting duties, the people of England cannot blame her; they have long encouraged her to it by their example; they urge her to it by their invariable practice. “ A war of protecting duties would answer to “ neither country;” and why does his Lordship stand forth an avowed advocate for England’s continuing her prohibitions? It cannot be denied that she, at this moment, protects all her great manufactures, by duties amounting to prohibitions; nor hath Ireland, her only sister, any preference (except with regard to linens) to the most unfavoured country!—But, I suppose his Lordship wishes that Great Britain, with her usual violence, should wage this war of protecting duties, and ill-fated Ireland should not even act on the defensive. However, if Britain unfortunately be still inclined to continue these commercial hostilities, could Ireland adopt a more beneficial measure,—a measure which England, by her great progression in trade and manufactures, hath clearly proved to be so highly beneficial.

His Lordship farther says, “ were we to adopt “ protecting duties, that retaliation might ensue, “ and the ruin of our linen trade would be the “ consequence.”—It remains to be proved, and may

may it for ever remain so, that England could supply herself on better, or even equal terms, with foreign linens: I will be bold to assert she could not obtain the fine kind so cheap or so good as from this country; and she is known too well to suppose that she would, in matters of commerce, forego her interest to gratify her malice. But supposing that, regardless of her own interests, she were to prohibit her linen market to us, and open it to all foreign states, (perhaps to her natural enemies) would she not be weakening herself, whilst she vainly endeavoured to depress us?

Is it not to be supposed, that our linens would find a market elsewhere?—Should we not obtain, as before mentioned, the direct trade by such procedure?—Would not America receive them? And above all, what would become of the great British cotton manufacture, if we denied our linen-yarn, of which these goods are in a great measure composed? And, strange to tell, the cotton-manufacturers in England are the most violent opponents to these propositions; hurried on so much by passion and prejudice, that they entirely forget the probable downfall of that manufacture, should Ireland be so far irritated as to withhold her linen-yarn.

It is curious, though shocking, to attend to the examination before the English House, of some of these manufacturers. By proving too much, they

they prove nothing; one man says, that should these propositions pass, the cotton-manufacture will suffer, in the same proportion as one to a thousand! But I suppose, at the time of his examination, he forgot to take into his view our linen-yarn. Others swore, that they would migrate to Ireland, should these propositions pass unqualified! It is true, by their doing so, we might feel a great increase in capitals, and skill in manufactures, but I fear (from the evidence of these gentlemen) that our improvement in virtue would not bear an equal proportion. However, good-nature is ever prone to extenuate an offence, which the heat of passion, or ignorance of prejudice, insensibly lead men into. At the same time we are astonished, that the wisdom of the British parliament should be directed for information, to partial evidence: That, in the final adjustment of trade between Great Britain and Ireland, council should be heard, and witnesses examined on one side only; such conduct appears solely designed to quiet the minds of the English manufacturers, and not with any real intention of deducing truth.

I scarcely think the noble Author is serious, when he mentions the probable migration of English traders and manufacturers into Ireland, together with their large capitals, stock, &c. For emigration is not the natural wish of Englishmen, nor at any period have they been induced to abandon

abandon their own country, through motives of local advantage; their spirit of commerce, and their great skill in navigation, have always excited them to explore distant regions in pursuit of traffic and of riches; but it is the great object of an English trader, to concenter his wealth in his own country, there to sit down and enjoy the fruits of his labour and toil; he is like the eagle, who never loses sight of the nest, where she fosters her young. The character of the English trader and manufacturer, is that of being honest, punctual, reserved, phlegmatic, and unsocial; he is attached to a *particular* place, to *particular* customs: With a narrow circle of friends, and not wishing to increase them, (except in commercial correspondence;) he imagines that all other countries are inferior to his own, and values at a high rate, the old established situation and *good will of his house*: Surely a character of this disposition, with those prejudices and predilections, will not be likely to emigrate to Ireland. The fervour of emigration hath been raised in England by the violence of party and political disputes. The love of liberty, the abhorrence of despotism and of absolute monarchy, forced Englishmen from their country, to seek freedom and security beyond the Atlantic Ocean. The weak and dangerous policy of the unfortunate and despised House of Stewart, chiefly assisted in promoting this emigration. It is worth observing, that few, even of those who emigrated, carried with them large capitals, and extensive stock in trade,

trade, without which an increase of people would be but little beneficial to Ireland.

It is said that "our laying on protecting duties, would cause British manufactures to be smuggled into this country."—I do not think it could be so easily effected; because it would be bad policy to impose an heavier duty, than would barely compensate for the want of large capitals, long experience, and superior skill; added to that, Ireland would be bound in honor and linked in association, to consume *only* their own manufactures, should the unkind treatment of England force her to that measure: Besides, smuggling can never be successfully or extensively carried on in this country, when it would be the immediate interest of the landholder and manufacturer to suppress it: Also the woollens and cottons, which probably would be the chief objects of smuggling, are of so cumbrous a nature, that it would be scarcely possible to convey them without detection.

"Ireland would be soon tired of the impositions of her own manufacturers, if protecting duties were to take place." It would be a more probable and fairer conclusion, that manufacturers kept constantly employed, would be less inclined, or less tempted to dishonesty and imposition, than when the pressing calls of want or of hunger, urge them even to acts of desperation.

tion. And is it not to be supposed, that a people having extraordinary incitements, and permanent security for industry, would value properly such new and great acquisitions, and not be seduced by momentary gain, to sacrifice their own, and their posterity's future welfare. The example of England, in almost every case, particularly in *this*, is in my favour: Are her manufacturers excited to imposition, by the monopoly they have so long enjoyed? Perhaps his Lordship thinks they also enjoy a monopoly of honesty and generosity! It may be so!—The habits of industry are ever productive of private, as well as national virtues.

His Lordship farther endeavours to shew, that the balance of trade is in favour of Ireland, and that in proportion as she increased her exports in manufactures, her imports of them from England were also augmented. If the latter position be true, as to the increased demands for British goods, I believe it proves rather more than his Lordship was aware of; and it is neither my business nor inclination to controvert it. But as to the ballance of trade being against Ireland, I beg leave to remark, that there are but two criterions, which I am acquainted with, whereon we can ground any information on that subject, viz. the Custom-house books of both countries, and the rate of Exchange,—both, I presume to say, very uncertain and weak authority. To corroborate

corroborate my assertion as to the former, attend to the report of the Committee of the Privy Council, and it will be recollected, that they acknowledged it was impossible to say, even from revenue books, at which side the balance lay. It is true, that by the English custom-house books, the exact quantity of Irish linens imported into England, can be accurately ascertained; as that article (the only one almost admitted from this country into England) is duty free, there being no temptation for smuggling, it regularly passes through the Custom-house; whereas on all the articles we receive from that country, there is a duty, and, on some, a heavy one; therefore, an inducement to smuggling, which certainly is taken advantage of; vast quantities of wrought plate, jewellery, watches, silks, stockings of every kind, teas, and all other India goods, are usually smuggled into Ireland: There being no smuggling of Irish goods into England, but much English into Ireland; and inasmuch as smuggled goods cannot appear in the Custom-house books as imports, and those which are duty-free always do, how false, partial, and incorrect is any statement of the balance of trade relative to the imports of Ireland, from such imperfect documents, or conclusion, drawn from thence. The evidence of the Custom-house records cannot therefore, with any degree of equity, be admitted as a proof of the balance being against England. As to Exchange, it is guided by the disposition

disposition of countries, whether friendly or hostile; by the relative price of bullion; but, it must be particularly fluctuating between kingdoms so contiguous to each, as England, and Ireland where the opportunities of transporting specie are so easy and frequent, and the profits thereon often so great: It is well known, that individuals take advantage of the contiguity, and are constantly employed in this kind of traffick, and I am sorry his Lordship forgets (tho' as I am told he is personally concerned) the vast quantity of specie taken out of this kingdom by the *Absentees*, which never returns; also the money remitted to pay *Pensioners* and *Placemen*, of which the Custom-house books take no notice! Should his Lordship's friends, Lord North and Mr. Fox, come into administration, it is more than probable, that he will make one of that illustrious band of Irish pensioners: From the increased quantity of money that thereby he will drain from this country, he will be better able for the future, to form a more accurate judgment of the balance of *trade*, and the rate of Exchange! His Lordship will pardon my suspicions, if I figure to myself, that something more substantial than literary fame, urged him to the laudable task of setting at variance sister kingdoms, or being the champion of desponding ambition, and of reprobated monopoly.

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No accurate judgment can be formed, as to our foreign trade; the same objections lie as to that to England: It may be said, that as the duties on Irish goods into that country, are so high as to amount to prohibitions, we have a superiority in the *illicit* trade, but Ireland cannot avail herself of that possible benefit, because she has no manufactures to send thither: Such is her inferiority from the various pressures she labours under,—want of capital, skill, &c. that the English manufacturer is able to undersell the Irish, even in his own markets, under the disadvantage of duty, freight, and long credit.

His Lordship advances, that “Ireland has not sufficient wool to supply her own consumption of woollens.” It certainly remains to be proved, that she has not, having never had the happy opportunity of trying the experiment. Much of our wool used to be sent to France; vast quantities of it, manufactured into worsted and woollen yarns, are sent to England: If a tenth part of these yarns were kept at home, I am informed they would be more than sufficient to make a larger quantity of the coarse and narrow goods, than we import; and as to the superfine cloth, it is almost solely made of the wool of Spain, whose ports are as open to us as to Great Britain. It is true, that the English breed of sheep, for these some years past, hath been injurious, particularly

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ticularly to the combing wool ; but the gentlemen and farmers of this country, being now convinced that the length of its staple, will not compensate for the inferiority of its quality, are rapidly getting out of that breed : The true Irish sheep bearing wool next perhaps in fineness to the Spanish : I do not deny that our improvement in tillage may seem to afford a specious argument for the decrease in number of cattle of every denomination ; but let it be considered that whilst we are converting our low pasture grounds into arable, we are also reclaiming vast tracts of mountain, hitherto useless, and uncultivated, which, when improved, can be converted to no better purpose than feeding sheep, as mountain and high grounds ever afford the finest wool : So that whilst our horned cattle decrease, our sheep increase in an equal proportion, both in number and in quality.

Should these Propositions, which are said to be for reciprocal advantage, impartially be examined, it will appear that they profess more than they are intended to perform : If Great Britain still intends to prohibit her wool, (supposing it necessary to Ireland) her fuller's-earth, &c. and that she is to get from us our linen-yarn, duty free, together with our worsteds and woolen-yarn, where will be the reciprocity ? It is also meant that, in whatever country the duty is higher on the same article, it shall lower so as
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to make the duty equal in both countries : Now let us try the equality, which this *specious* agreement will produce as to malt. The duty on importation is two shillings and six pence per barrel, the excise here is the same ; it is evident that three barrels of English malt, are as productive as four of Irish ; this is said to be caused by the superior skill in manufacturing, and the more excellent quality of the grain : then where will be the real equality of duty on that article ?

The duty on woolen-cloths from Ireland to England amounts to a prohibition ; on the same articles to Ireland it is six pence per yard, consequently the latter will be the duty struck for both kingdoms. What we chiefly import, are superfine cloths ;—what we most probably would export to England, would be coarse goods, of about six shillings per yard. Will not the equality instantly vanish, when we consider, that goods of about six shillings shall pay the same duty as those worth seventeen shillings per yard ?

Much stress hath been laid on the great advantage we shall derive, from our linen trade being for ever free and unrestricted :—If we are to credit his Lordship's insinuations, should we be obliged to lay on protecting duties, what little security have we for the performance of any national covenant ? But I trust he only speaks his

own sentiments. The more the security for our sole possession of the linen business is considered, the less seriously are we to rely on it: For supposing, as I do, that the people of England will rigidly perform their compact with us, is it possible to expect, that their demands for Irish linens ever will be as extensive as at present? Scotland is as well situated as Ireland, for carrying on that manufacture, and is making rapid and extensive improvements in it: Different parts of England and Wales are also well calculated for that business. It is to be expected that the sagacity of the Scotch, the inventive and active disposition of the English manufacturer, will yet be more directed to that trade: Whenever that shall happen, the British market being open to us will be of little avail! And without any breach of national faith, England will cease to purchase our linens.

That part of the pamphlet relative to the construction of the Navigation Act, so as to admit colonial commodities from Ireland to Great Britain, appears to be particularly calculated to sound the trumpet of alarm, affecting, with more than prophetic spirit, to foretel the inevitable destruction of British commerce, manufactures, revenue, &c. and above all, of British monopoly. If it were possible seriously to conceive, that such would be the consequence of these measures, where is the man of character or station in either country,

country, that would be mad enough to press them? Can it be supposed that a minister, bound to Great Britain by every tie of gratitude, nativity, and affection—Unknown to this country, save by the reputation of his bright talents, or by the fame of his *great* father,—a minister, whose youthful genius anticipates the wisdom of maturer age—Called upon by the unanimous voice of the nation to direct the helm, and save the sinking vessel from the storm; can it, I say, be supposed, that thus circumstanced, and having his *all* embarked on board,—his *honor* and his *fame*, he could be desperate enough to dash her against the rocks, where inevitable destruction must be her fate?

On the other hand, were Ireland to judge of these propositions, by the manner they were carried through her parliament, I believe she would have too good cause to suspect the friendly professions of administration. If the more they were investigated and considered, the more favourable they would appear; if they were founded on the immutable principles of justice, or proceeded from the liberal motives of reciprocal advantage, why with unprecedented dispatch hurry them through our houses of parliament? Why by hoodwinking and goading on the members of the legislature, prevent them from consulting with the merchants or manufacturers of this country, (the people most immediately

ately interested in their event) or preclude them from bestowing, on that important business, a portion of time equal to what is given to the most insignificant bill?—Yet, with all these inauspicious omens relative to Ireland, the noisy roar of selfish and misguided manufacturers, is endeavouring, in England, to drown the gentle voice of reason; and disappointed ambition, taking advantage of the ferment, is incessantly employed in inflaming the passions of the multitude: The strong fastnesses of the empire are assailed by an attempt to impose on the credulity of Englishmen, and persuade them, that the prosperity of all its parts, is not the strength of the whole.

Were it necessary, it would not be difficult to shew, that this much-boasted colonial trade hath not been as profitable to Great Britain, as the clamours of the day so loudly sound. It would not be difficult to prove, that her stock and capital hath been too much absorbed by it, for in proportion as the trade to the colonies increased, in the same ratio that to Europe decreased, which, perhaps would have been more beneficial, inasmuch as its returns are more certain and expeditious.

Then granting, that the returns from the colonies are slow and uncertain, would it be good policy for Ireland to enter deeply into that trade? She, who possesses but a small capital, little credit,

and hitherto little skill! She, who scarcely hath a ship, and no timber to build one; is it to be imagined, that she could much farther avail herself of that trade, than merely for her own consumption? And she hath now a right to that, without any farther repeals of the navigation laws: But, if she ventured to extend herself in that branch of commerce, her natural situation would be the chief superiority over Great Britain: And would that be sufficient to counterbalance the old established superiority of manufactures, large capitals, knowledge in affording cargoes, skill in navigation, colonial property, long credit, &c.? Supposing Ireland were glutted with West Indian produce, her markets low, and those of England high, (which circumstances must all concur before she can avail herself of situation) should she, under the inconvenience and pressure of commission, port-duties, additional freight, insurance, re-shipping, &c. send those West Indian goods to England, where would be the mighty disadvantage to her, to get what she should want at a cheaper rate than her home market would allow?

To buy cheap, and sell dear, is one of the great principles of commerce, but that can never be effected, without an open market, and encouragement to others to come to it. The less stock that is expended in procuring any one article, the more will be left to be employed in other branches of commerce.

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It must also be allowed that the trade of Great Britain to the West-India Islands, is every day declining. America supplies them with flour, fish, and many other articles. The French from their own being so contiguous, frequently smuggle into our islands large quantities of European manufactures, in which they are much facilitated by the islanders, who, I am concerned to hear, are not as well affected to the British government as they formerly were, and whose individual interest is to buy as cheap as they can. The planters now rear a vast deal of stock for their own consumption—the only opportunity then, which Ireland could have of encreasing her quantity of West-India produce, would be in return for provisions, or manufactures; now it is evident, from the above reasons that, the demands are decreasing; which if admitted, what little chance must Ireland have of extending herself in that business? but supposing it is not so, can we profit by it, until our manufactures shall meet those of Great Britain in price and quality? Notwithstanding the noble Author's great apprehension for the West-India merchants and planters, that intelligent and respectable body have met, and after all the consideration which could be given by men so materially interested in the event, they have declared their satisfaction at these resolutions, provided due regard be paid to prevent smuggling.

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With respect to the Navigation-laws, Ireland was not in contemplation when they were framed, and they were not strictly executed until many years after being enacted; the cause of them was to hinder the Dutch from being the carriers of our colonial-produce, and to prevent their gaining from our fisheries on the coasts of America and Great Britain too great advantages, which their superior skill and industry have ever given them: besides, at that period, violent animosity subsisted between England and Holland; which soon after broke out into open hostilities: in short, the great object of England in making these laws, was to weaken the navy of Holland—a measure for which she cannot be censured.

It is said that, “the *monopoly* of the colonial produce is the only advantage now left to Great Britain, and in few other points, can the Navigation-Act serve her relative to Ireland.” Can we be told, in this enlightened period, that she has reason and justice to support a continuance of her oppressive monopolies? Surely such over-grown monopoly, cannot constitute the strength of the empire? The freedom and happiness of every part of its dominions, can best effect this desirable object: Under the benign influence of liberty, let every subject exercise his talents for industry, uncontrouled and unrestrained: the result must be the welfare of the whole.

If Englishmen *now* are ignorant of the rights of mankind, or the destructive tendency of oppression,

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pression, let them consult their own *immortal Locke*, the *great Montesquieu*, and that liberal citizen of the world, *the enlightened Reynal*. But I trust the spirit of Britons is not so extinguished, as to require such re-animation! If unfortunately their ardour for liberty hath yielded to the sordid passion of self-interest, let them behold the bloody plains of America, and *there* see the extravagant pursuit,—the fatal and irrevocable effects of tyrannical domination,—of oppressive monopoly.

Can it be heard with patience, that Britain has a separate interest from Ireland? Are we this day to be told, that the British empire is to be divided, as England was under the Saxon Hierarchy? Is it after the solemn declaration of Ireland, *attested* and repeated by Great Britain, that she was an Imperial and Independent Kingdom; is it after the firm compact and unqualified acknowledgment of England, that we are to be told, “Ireland hath no right to trade to the Colonies, except through *her* indulgence?” Let these desperate partizans beware how they even insinuate such doctrines! The people of Ireland are strong in their affections,—strong in their resentments: They are ever ready to lay down their lives in defence of the true interest and happiness of Great Britain; they would be unworthy of calling her sister, were they not equally ready to support their own freedom and independence, against the attacks of wanton tyranny, or unprovoked oppression.

All

All Lord Sheffield's arguments are calculated to insinuate, that Ireland is not to be considered as part of the empire; that she has not contributed towards supporting these Colonies, or upholding the empire, and consequently not entitled to equal privileges. It cannot be denied, that we have powerfully assisted, by the most baneful of all national contributions, the emigration of our people, to colonize these settlements: Have we not constantly sent our provisions to these colonies, though until within these last few years, debarred by the cruel and impolitic exercise of unjust power, from getting *directly* in return whatever of their produce was necessary to us?

We have taken a heavy part in the afflictions, and misfortunes of Great Britain: We have been aiding to her triumphs and her victories: Yet how little hitherto has she shared with us of her prosperity! at this moment what is expected?—Reciprocal advantage between the two countries:—That we might be enabled to assist her in her adversity:—For surely, a people unfettered by monopolies, will be better able to contribute to the support of the state, than a people, poor—inactive—broken-spirited—without hope, without incitements, or permanent security for industry:—Yet we ask nothing but what we shall dearly pay for.—If Great Britain, should open her market to us, is it doing more than we have done to her for centuries? Are we

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not to pay for it in constitution and in revenue; the appropriating for ever the surplus of our hereditary-revenue for the support of the British navy, is a *tribute*.

Where is the just occasion for alarm as to the decrease of British revenue, if the growing revenues of Ireland obtained by the opening of the British ports, are to be for ever given to the service of the empire? Ireland is a nursery for the British navy and army? What minister would dare keep up in this country, at the time of profound peace, so large an army, had he not the plea, that it was a proportion we should bear of the general burthens of the state? An army, however respectable the individuals; who compose it, must ever be looked on, in a free-country, with a jealous eye, and it has been the opinion of many great statesmen, and particularly of that celebrated politician Swift, that “standing armies
“ in time of peace, were only servants, hired by
“ the master of the family, for keeping his
“ children in slavery, and that a prince, who
“ could not think himself secure without mercenary troops, must needs have a separate interest from that of his people.”

It is said by Lord Sheffield, that “Ireland did not contribute towards the last war:” It is for her glory and her honor, that she did not take an active part at the commencement of it, because the war had for its object, *speculative, theoretical,*
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and unjust claims; because it was directed to universal subjugation.—To exterminate freedom, by preventing her from finding an asylum even in the great western world;—because it was a war, that nature pleaded against, that reason opposed, that justice forbid: But when it extended its baneful influence, when the despairing shrieks of liberty from the great Atlantic, reached the shores of Monarchs, *who never before heard her voice*, and when they combined and confederated to crush Great Britain, did not Ireland then, in that moment of difficulty and danger, take a warm, a decided, an affectionate part? At that time, when the empire was every where convulsed; when the life-blood almost ceased to circulate at the heart, the generosity and affection of Irishmen pre-eminently displayed themselves: A great proportion of their military establishment was given to England,—The mechanick, the manufacturer, the merchant, the farmer, the country gentleman, the members of both houses of parliament, disciplined and arrayed themselves, to guard against the depredations and calamities of a war, to which they were only exposed by being connected with Britain: Yet how are their services repaid? By distrust, by neglect, by jealousy! But the base insinuations of distrust, the false suspicions of jealousy, cannot defame these virtuous men. To contrast the dark and unsuccessful schemes of this epocha, the faithful historian will record the bright deeds of *those* who, by guarding their own coasts, assisted their sister kingdom, and by supporting

supporting the cause of freedom, under the banners of justice, established their rights, without offering any violence to humanity.

It is also said, should these propositions take place, that the naval strength of England will be injured: It may as well be said, that the Irish army doth not contribute to the force of the empire, as that the Irish sailors do not make part of the naval strength of Britain. Did they not fight, bleed, and conquer for her? Should Ireland increase in sailors, by the extension of her fisheries and of her commerce, will not they serve Britain whenever she shall require them?

It is also alledged, that smuggling the commodities of other countries, as well as those of the colonies, into Great Britain, will be amongst the evil consequences of opening her ports to Ireland; but experience confutes the assertion: Great Britain hath long had that opportunity with regard to Ireland, and if it were practicable, or profitable, a nation so sagacious in traffick, and so expert in illicit trade, before now would have seized the opportunity. But surely it will not be insisted on, that smuggling will be promoted by taking off high or prohibitory duties; the late conduct of the British administration, with regard to lessening the duties on tea, evinces the contrary. It is tyranny that must give birth to contraband trade; transgression is the first effect produced by unjust and unreasonable laws.

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I find with indignant concern, the disgraceful and unmerited epithet of male-contents, applied to my countrymen by the noble writer; and all the arguments advanced by his Lordship, are calculated to persuade the public, that it would be more the interest of Great Britain to be separated from, than connected with Ireland. How dreadful may be the consequence of inculcating such sentiments, at a time when the minds of people are already too much heated! But I have more confidence in the liberality and good sense of the British nation, than to suppose, that such mode of arguing will have much weight, even coming from such noble authority. It may indeed for a while, cause national prejudice and animosity, prompted by the private interest of particular traders and manufacturers, to draw selfish and dangerous conclusions; but at length prejudice must yield to reason, and animosity give way to general good, and sisterly affection.

He who endeavours to excite public apprehension, should recollect, that the people of England were almost driven to desperation, by their pretended and uninformed patriots, when the union with Scotland was in agitation. The trade and manufactures of the former were to be annihilated, by allowing a participation of commercial freedom with the latter: The famished hive was to swarm over their fertile plains, and to rob them of their sweets!—By taking deformity and poverty to our arms, what profit or what

what bliss was to be derived from the embrace? Where was the reciprocity, where the return, save that of humble thanks? On the other hand, Scotland was all in a flame; her ancient freedom was extinguished;—her ancient nobility degraded;—Deprived of a distinct legislature, how could she expect justice from that of England, where she was scarcely represented? How for a moment could she vie in commerce and manufactures with her wealthy neighbour? Such, his Lordship may remember, was the language of the day; yet we find from experience, that the chain by which they were united, hath not proved galling to either, and that they have since continued bound by the strongest of all ties, mutual interest, and mutual affection.

Let not Britons and Irishmen, suffer the evil machinations of party, of faction, and of sordid self-interest, to misguide their passions, or pervert their judgments, rather let the experience of past times, and the enlarged knowledge of the present, teach them that their interests are mutual, inseparable—that the great fabric of their Liberty rests upon the same basis—that should the ravages of time, or the violence of ambition have injured the edifice, it is their mutual duty to repair it; and when the glorious work shall be accomplished, let them enter the Temple of Concord together, and *there* make eternal vows of Amity, Union and Assistance.

F I N I S.