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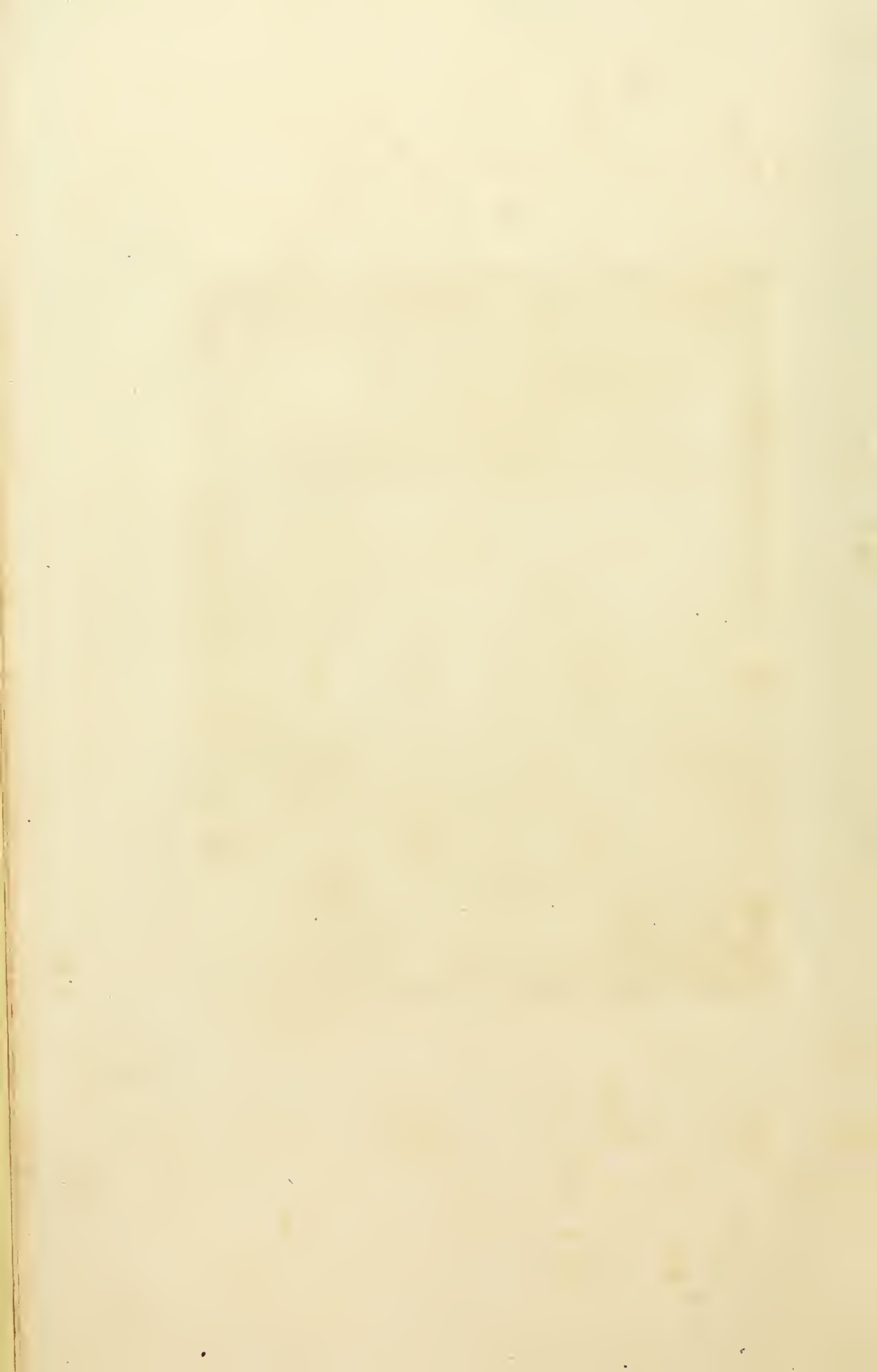
OLIVER CROMWELL.

OB 1658.

FROM THE ORIGINAL OF WALKER, IN THE COLLECTION OF

THE RIGHT HON^{BLE} THE EARL SPENCER.







Engraved by J. H. Roberts, Esq.

THOMAS WENTWORTH, EARL OF STRAFFORD.

OB. 1641.

FROM THE ORIGINAL OF VAN DYKE, IN THE COLLECTION OF

THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE EARL OF EGREMONT.



Engraved by J. F. P. R. 1722

JOHN CHURCHILL, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

OR 1722

FROM THE COLLECTION OF

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH



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CHARLES PRATT, FIRST EARL CAMDEN.

OB. 1794

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN PAPER IN THE COLLECTION OF

THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS CAMDEN



Engraved by H. Robinson

GEORGE CAREW, EARL OF TOTNES.

OB. 1629

FROM THE ORIGINAL OF ZUCCERO IN THE COLLECTION OF

THE RIGHT HON^{ble}. THE EARL OF VERULAM

DA 910
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A.D. 1776.]

HISTORY OF IRELAND.

[NATIONAL DISTRESS

found voting at times in the ranks of the patriots. The latter, encouraged by these symptoms, redoubled their efforts, and opportunities were not wanting for their effectual exertions. By a strange indiscretion of their rulers, another money-bill was allowed to be made a ground of contention. The heads of a bill for granting additional duties on beer, ale, &c., having been transmitted to England, were returned with alterations; these were pointed out by the committee of comparison, and the house of commons, following the example they had set in lord Townshend's last session, rejected this bill, and another for granting stamp duties, which had been similarly altered, and framed new ones in their place. The only injury arising from this proceeding was, that as one law, for collecting the additional duties on tobacco and other articles, expired before the new one could receive the royal assent, a number of merchants enriched themselves by importing large quantities of those articles during the short interval, to the detriment of the revenue. Towards the end of the session the patriots determined to crown their efforts by an attempt to call the attention of government to the general distress of the nation. And accordingly, two days before its close they brought forward a motion in the following words:—"That an humble address be presented to his majesty, to express our inviolable attachment to his royal person and government, and humbly to assure his majesty, that we feel a conscientious happiness in the ample and liberal discharge of our duty to a sovereign so ready to express his gracious approbation of the loyal endeavours of his people. To return our unfeigned thanks for his majesty's paternal solicitude at the burdens sustained by his people; a solicitude repeatedly communicated to us from the throne by his majesty's representative, and suggesting to us an attention to the diminution of our expense, and the discharge of our national debt. That we meet the wishes of his majesty, and that we will not by an inexcusable silence, conceal from his majesty the real distresses of his people of Ireland. That at the close of the last war, the debt of this nation did not exceed £521,161 16s. 6d., and was then deemed so considerable, that his majesty's paternal care thought itself called upon to direct the attention of his faithful commons to the discharge of our national debt, and to signify his gracious wishes for a very considerable diminution of

our national expense. That after a peace of ten years, the debt of the nation appeared to be so increased, that it was voted by his faithful commons in the last session of parliament, to be a sum not exceeding £991,890 10s. 10½d., a circumstance so alarming and insupportable to his people, that we determined with one voice to put an end to the pernicious practice of accumulating debt, and we thought it our duty to raise the revenue of this kingdom to an equality with the establishments. That we adopted every proposition of his majesty's ministers, and we accepted their promises of economy with unbounded confidence; vainly expecting that it would be hereafter unnecessary to afflict our gracious sovereign by enumerating either the complaints or the distresses of his people. That as we wished to second the promised economy of his majesty's ministry by every effort on our part, we considerably diminished the sum usually granted by this house for the purposes of national improvement. That in order that there might be no remnant of any arrear upon any of his majesty's establishments, we departed from the usual custom of discharging the arrears to the 25th of March only, and we raised the sum of two hundred and sixty-five thousand pounds to pay them up to the 29th of September, 1773; and to prevent the necessity of any arrear for the future, we consented to a stamp duty, and several other taxes, which our predecessors in the times of the most expensive wars had never thought proper to impose. That the calculations of his majesty's ministry were admitted, their promises were relied upon, the taxes they proposed were voted, and their projects were uninterrupted by any opposition from his faithful commons; but that we are now reduced to the melancholy necessity of informing our gracious sovereign, that these unquestionable proofs of our zeal have been proofs of our inability. That the new taxes have fallen short of the estimates made by his majesty's ministers, and unequal as they are to the effects which we hoped for, they have served only to show that we are arrived at that point of taxation, where the imposition of new duties lowers the old ones. That the debts and incumbrances of his faithful subjects have increased with such an alarming rapidity, that we have in this session been reduced to the unfortunate necessity of raising one hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds, to defray the arrears incurred

in one year and six months only. That the perseverance of his faithful commons was not yet exhausted, and we have again endeavoured in the present session, to support his majesty's establishment, by new burdens upon ourselves. But that the experience of his majesty's ministers, assisted by the best efforts of his faithful commons, has been able to devise one new tax only—a tax upon spirits—a tax, the last which we propose for his majesty's service, because it was of the most doubtful nature; a tax which proves our despondency as well as our zeal, and concerning which we know nothing certainly, except that it cannot produce enough. That we see before us the necessity of borrowing, session after session, continued. We see the funds on which we used to borrow, nearly exhausted. We see the new duty which we raised with the hopes of providing a sufficient revenue within the year, mortgaged in part for the payment of our incumbrances, and we see his majesty's ministers relapsing into their former despondency of supplying the exigencies of the state in any other manner, after every effort made on their part, and seconded by us, and with an increase of debt incurred during the experiment. That if an indulgence to his majesty's ministers could induce us to suppress these truths, we should be guilty of a criminal deceit towards the best of sovereigns. That could we neglect the most essential interests of ourselves, our constituents, and our posterity, still our duty to his majesty would prevent us from suffering the resources of his majesty's power and dignity to dwindle and decay, and that we are the more necessitated to make this earnest application, because the evils we suffer are not temporary or occasional; because we cannot attribute them to any physical evil, or proud national exertion, but to a silent, wasting, and invisible cause, which has injured the people without adding strength to the crown. That we therefore perform the indispensable duty of laying our distresses at the foot of the throne, that history may not report us as a nation, who, in the midst of peace, and under a gracious king equally ready to warn and to relieve, proceeded deliberately to their own ruin, without one appeal to the wisdom which would have redressed them. And that we do appeal from the temporary expedients of his majesty's ministers, to his own wisdom and virtue, and to that permanent interest which his majesty has, and ever will have, in the

welfare of his people; and if supplication can add force to the pleadings of our common interest, and of our persevering loyalty, we supplicate, that his majesty will graciously turn his royal attention to the reduction of our establishments, which we are unable to support, and which we would support if we could. That we do not presume to point out more particularly what his royal wisdom will more properly and effectually distinguish. That after all our efforts, and all our disappointment, we have one sure resource in his majesty's royal justice and wisdom; and we do rest assured, that our gracious sovereign will not suffer the strength of his crown to be impaired, or the glories of his reign to be sullied by the unaccountable and entire ruin of a loyal people."

The ministers got rid of this motion, by carrying an adjournment of the debate to that day six months, and then they drew the house into a resolution that a humble address of thanks be presented to his excellency, the lord lieutenant, for his prudent, just, and wise administration. When this address was before the house, the patriots made another effort, and proposed to add to it a long paragraph, in which they complained of the want of economy shown by the government, of the attacks which had been made upon their liberties, and of the injustice of the American war. The latter, especially, was a subject which now agitated Ireland in a remarkable degree. The Irish sympathized with the Americans, because they thought that the latter were resisting the same sort of attacks upon their liberties which they themselves suffered. They applauded this resistance the more, because it was new to them, and they began to feel a sort of envy of their brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, because they had shown more spirit than themselves. These feelings were spread widely through Ireland, were discussed in societies and clubs, and gave a more decided tone to the hostility which was felt in many quarters to the English government. They were exhibited in several instances in a manner to excite alarm. Lord Effingham had resigned his command in the army, rather than serve in America, upon which the city of Dublin voted him public thanks "for having, consistently with a true Englishman, refused to draw his sword against the lives and liberties of his fellow-subjects." Thanks were at another time voted to the English peers who protested against the American policy.

Lord Harcourt closed the session of parliament in the spring of 1776; and the latter had shown so much independence on several questions, that although it had only lasted four years out of the eight to which the law now limited it, it was thought ad-

visable to dissolve it. It was convened as a matter of form, in the June of 1776, and Mr. Pery was re-elected speaker, but it was then prorogued, and did not meet till the October of 1777.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUED STRUGGLE FOR FREE TRADE; ADMINISTRATION OF LORD BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.



THE English government had resolved again upon trying the experiment of changing the lord lieutenant; and to strengthen the court interest in the Irish house of lords, the king had recourse to the unprecedented creation of no less than eighteen new peers in one day. The British ministers seem to have been dissatisfied with the easy disposition of lord Harcourt, who had not supported with sufficient vigour the system of ruling which he found established, and they resolved on giving him a successor who should be entirely devoted to their will. On the 25th of January, 1777, the lord lieutenancy was entrusted to John, earl of Buckinghamshire. This nobleman opened the Irish parliament on the 14th of October of the same year, with a speech in which he expressly told the two houses that he would make no promises or professions with regard to his future conduct. He found the country reduced to the utmost distress, in consequence of the embargo and the general stoppage of trade. In most of the great cities the manufacturing population was reduced to such a degree that a great part of it was supported by public charity. Petitions from these and from the manufacturers told the parliament of their sufferings and complaints, and they began to associate together and talk of seeking their own remedy. At the same time, and in consequence of this depressed state of trade, the revenue failed alarmingly, and parliament was obliged to borrow money at a high rate of interest. Yet the court seemed to be more lavish, as the nation became poorer,

and the house of commons was obliged to make grants which it was well known they had not the means to pay. Parliament itself could not remain blind to this state of things, and, in presenting the first four money-bills of the session, the sense of the house of commons was expressed to the lord lieutenant through the speaker. "The same principle of duty," he said, "which directed the proceedings of the last parliament, has eminently distinguished the present, in this their first session of business, a certain proof that it is not confined to any class of men, but actuates the whole mass of the people in this kingdom. The commons, however disappointed in their hopes that the large sums which had been raised to discharge debts successively incurred, and the great addition of taxes which had been imposed to prevent any future deficiency, would have proved effectual for those purposes, have now made a provision for a new arrear of a hundred and sixty-six thousand pounds, which they could not accomplish without a new loan; to pay the interest of which, they have been obliged to engage the scanty remnant of the former loan duties, the only fund now left; in this they have consulted more the honour of his majesty's government than the ability of the nation. But, however discouraging the present state of affairs may be to them, it will afford your excellency a favourable occasion, which they doubt not you will improve, of doing a signal service to this country, by laying before his majesty the difficulty under which it labours, and by explaining the necessity either of limiting the expense, or of extending the trade of this kingdom. They place unbounded confidence in his majesty's wisdom, justice, and

paternal care of all his subjects, and they rely on your excellency's candour and humanity to make a faithful representation to his majesty of their unshaken loyalty, duty, and affection."

The first object of attack with the patriots was the expenditure, and they again brought forward the question of the pension list. At the beginning of February, 1788, they moved for an address to his majesty, complaining of the impossibility of supporting the expenses of government as then carried on, which had so increased in the last twenty years, that the charge of the civil list alone had nearly doubled, and they said one of the causes of this increase was "the rapid and astonishing growth of the pension list," "a list which does now greatly exceed the expenses of all other charges of the civil list, even in its present state, and does considerably exceed the whole civil list at Lady-day, 1757, and is nearly double the charge of the pension list at that period, when it was so extravagant that the commons, sensible of its weight, entered unanimously into the following resolution, which, with many others against it, were laid before his late majesty: 'Resolved, that the granting of so much of the public revenue in pensions, is an improvident disposition of the revenue, an injury to the crown, and detrimental to the public.'" The proposed address went on at considerable length to point out the various causes of the increase of the national expenditure, and to detail the various grievances connected with it. Their motion was lost by a majority of a hundred and forty-three against sixty-six.

The open assistance now given to the Americans by France called for new exertions and increased expenditure on the part of Great Britain. On the 30th of March, 1778, in consequence of the lord lieutenant's message announcing the rupture with France it was ordered that three hundred thousand pounds should be raised by a tontine at six per cent. The patriots vainly urged that the country could not raise such a sum, and demanded that it should be reduced to a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. So true were the prognostications of the patriots on this occasion, that little more than two months after, on the third of June, the lord lieutenant was obliged to send a new message to the house, in which he said, "In pursuance of a resolution of the house of commons, entered into on the thirty-first day of March last, for raising upon a scheme

of life annuities, in the manner therein mentioned, a sum not exceeding the sum of three hundred thousand pounds, to be paid into his majesty's treasury, to be applied towards the necessary expenses of government, in putting and maintaining this kingdom in a state of defence, I have given such directions as appear to me most proper to carry the same into execution; and I am sorry to inform you, that it is found, and the most diligent endeavours exerted for the purpose, that the sum intended to be raised by that resolution cannot be obtained upon an interest of six per cent., with benefit of survivorship. I therefore thought it incumbent on me, that this house should be made acquainted therewith, not doubting that the commons of Ireland, attentive to the honour of his majesty's government, and to the safety of this kingdom, will take such measures as shall be most prudent to carry the intention of that salutary resolution into immediate effect." So much was public credit in Ireland at this time reduced.

The struggle for liberty of trade seems to have been this session carried to the other side of the channel, where it was warmly debated in the English house of commons. The state of Ireland had grown so calamitous and alarming, that it called for immediate attention and relief. There began to appear in England a strong feeling of sympathy for the sister island, and the subject was alluded to on several occasions in the English house of commons, until at length, on the second of April, lord Nugent moved that a committee of the whole house should be appointed to consider of the trade of Ireland. He observed, that the conduct of Great Britain towards its sister kingdom had been no less impolitic than unjust, and that the present situation of public affairs called particularly on this country to enter into a revision of the Irish trade laws. The only opposition which showed itself against this measure at first originated with a few gentlemen, who from their situation as representatives of manufacturing towns or counties, entered into the prejudices of their constituents.

It was said, Ireland was now the chief dependency of the British crown, and that it particularly behoved this country, at this season, and in this situation, to admit the Irish nation to the privilege of British citizens, a measure which true policy and right wisdom would have long since adopted. It was added, that the restrictions of the

Irish trade had defeated the purpose for which they were intended, and instead of promoting the staple manufacture of this country in its woollen fabrics, had produced a directly contrary effect. For the Irish, in order to pay their rents, were under a necessity of disposing of the produce of their lands, and as they were not allowed to manufacture their wool, to find a market for it wherever they could. All partial laws and unnatural restraints must ever fail in their design, when opposed to the operation of such a necessity. France feeling an irremediable want of the raw material, in herself afforded a ready market and an exorbitant price for the Irish wool. The cheapness of living, and other circumstances, were, however, more than a counterbalance for the excessive price which she paid for the raw material; and thus France was enabled to arrive at such a state with respect to her woollen manufactures, as to rival us in that very commerce of which we were so jealous. Lord Nugent's motions, as they were then stated, or afterwards altered in the committee or house, were placed under four heads, and directed to the following purposes:—That the Irish might be permitted to export directly to the British plantations, or to the settlements on the coast of Africa, in British ships navigated according to law, all goods, wares, and merchandizes, being the produce or manufacture of that kingdom, wool and woollen manufactures only excepted, or commodities of the growth, produce, or manufacture of Great Britain, legally imported from that kingdom, as also foreign certificate goods under the same condition. The second permitted a direct importation into Ireland of all goods, wares, and merchandize, being the produce of any of the British plantations, or of the settlements on the coast of Africa, tobacco only excepted. The third permitted the direct exportation from Ireland, to all places except Great Britain, of glass manufactured in that kingdom. The fourth, by taking off a duty amounting to a prohibition, permitted the importation of cotton yarn, the manufacture of Ireland, into Great Britain. And the fifth, which was moved by Mr. Burke, permitted the importation of Irish sail-cloth and cordage.

Although the motions were unanimously agreed to for the present, with abundant expressions of regard for Ireland, yet some gentlemen could not forbear expressing

their apprehension, that if the proposed resolutions should pass into a law, it would prove highly detrimental to the manufactures of Great Britain; for they said, the taxes in Ireland being low, and labour cheap, the Irish would be able to undersell us in such a degree as would probably prove the ruin of several of our trading towns. To this it was answered, that the taxes in Ireland were, on the contrary, numerous and heavy; and that upon an accurate examination, they would be found, proportionally to the means of paying them, considerably greater than in England. That strangers, from the apparent opulence and splendour of the metropolis, with the magnificence and unbounded hospitality of people of fashion, were liable to be much deceived in their ideas with respect to the real state of that kingdom. In fact, the people of that country had languished so long under the most intolerable grievances, and the weight of the most oppressive laws, that they were now reduced to a state of extreme wretchedness. Their loyalty, however, and affection to this country, were so far superior with them to all other considerations, that in the midst of their own distress, they looked only to our danger; and though the oppressiveness of our acts compelled multitudes of their brethren daily to abandon their country, and all that was dear to them, who, without crime or charge, were undergoing in foreign lands all the miseries incident to a state of banishment, yet their remaining friends were still willing to strain every nerve to support England in the moment of her distress. A noble lord in office, who had embarked warmly on this side of the question, concluded his speech by declaring, that a braver, a more generous, or more loyal people were not to be found; and he flattered himself, therefore, that they would be treated by parliament according to their high deserts.

One of the leaders of the opposition took this occasion to urge a more lenient policy towards the Irish catholics; and after expressing his warmest approbation of the measure before the house, and declaring his happiness at seeing that the mist of prejudice was beginning to disperse, added, that it would increase his happiness to give the measure a broader bottom; for though he was as steadfast a protestant as any gentleman in the house, he wished to see some means adopted for granting such indulgencies to the Roman catholics of Ireland,

as might attach that great body of men to government: their affections had been alienated; he wished to recal them by indulgent behaviour. He hated the persecuting spirit of the Romish religion, and could not therefore wish to be a persecutor. To this challenge, lord North replied, "That he would with the greatest cordiality concur in any measure which tended to so desirable a purpose; but the proposed redress was not within their province; it properly belonged to the parliament of Ireland. The laws which were so severe against the Roman catholics had originated there, and redress of domestic grievances should likewise, of right, originate from them. The penal laws of that kingdom were the consequence of apprehensions: a cause which, however groundless, always produced the most severe and cruel policy. As these apprehensions had long ceased, he made no doubt that their own parliament would perceive and redress the grievance; for there was not anywhere a people of more liberal sentiments than the Irish. Leaving, therefore," he said, "to the candour of their own parliament, to grant such indulgence to the Roman catholics as their loyalty deserved, he requested the house would agree to what was in their power, and properly within their province. The Irish complained, and complained with justice, of the oppressive restrictions of our trade laws; a relaxation of them would benefit the Irish, and ultimately enrich ourselves: their profits, as in other cases, would finally centre with us; embarked in the same common cause with us, they were not to be considered as rivals in trade; but their rivals were in reality ours, as ours should be theirs. The exception of woollen manufactures he should say nothing to; it might not, perhaps, be just; that point, however, had been given up by the Irish themselves, and the resignation confirmed by an ancient compact." The farther consideration of the subject was adjourned till after the Easter recess.

This gave time for the formation of a strong opposition against the Irish bills, and

a general alarm was spread throughout most of the trading and manufacturing parts of the kingdom. It was considered that the admittance of Ireland to the participation in trade, would be not only destructive in the most ruinous degree to their property, but equally subversive of their rights. They were as little disposed to consent that the people of Ireland should cultivate their own manufactures, and dispose of their native commodities at the proper foreign markets, as they were to admit them to any limited degree of participation. The alarm ran like infection everywhere, and took absolute possession of people's minds. The city of London alone stood aloof from the movement, and continued uninfluenced by popular clamour. During the Easter recess public meetings were held for the preparation of petitions, and of instructions to representatives, which were accordingly brought up in considerable numbers at the meeting of parliament.*

The motion for the second reading of the bills for the relief of the Irish trade was made on the 6th of May, and gave rise to a very warm debate. The opposition was led by sir Cecil Wray, who moved that the bills should be read that day three months, and was seconded by sir Thomas Egerton. Sir Cecil said that he was ready to concur, at any time, in whatever might promote the true interests of Ireland; and expressed his hearty wishes that the British parliament might render her every assistance in its power without infringing upon the trade of Great Britain. He knew well the grievances of that country, and lamented them. Of these he numbered the Irish pension list, the sinecure offices, the penal laws against Roman catholics, absenteeism, and some others. He assured the house that he would not only gladly join in redressing these grievances, but that if the amendment he proposed should meet with their sentiments, he would move for a committee before they rose, to take into consideration early in the next session the restrictive laws on the trade of Ireland, and would do

* A curious circumstance occurred upon this occasion, which affords a striking instance of the eagerness with which ill-founded popular apprehensions may, in certain cases, be received and communicated. A motion had been made, and a bill accordingly brought in, for the importation of sail-cloth from Ireland. This was however founded totally in error, and the gentleman who brought it in afterwards discovered that the liberty of importing Irish sail-cloth was already established, by a positive law of long

standing. Yet this bill was as violently opposed by petitions from different parts of the kingdom, and as strongly charged with the most ruinous consequences, as any of the other four bills, its companions, which were all founded upon new grounds. From hence it was inferred in debate by the mover, and not unfairly urged, that the jealousy entertained of the other Irish bills was equally unfounded, and only originated in prejudice, ignorance, and the selfish views of a few interested individuals.

everything in his power to forward the interests of that country, where they did not immediately interfere with those of England. He further declared that he had no objection to admit of Ireland's participating equally with us in the benefits of a free trade, provided she bore an equal share of our national burthens; but that was not the case, nor was anything tending towards it proposed by the bills. Ireland was supposed to contain above two million of souls, and they were taxed at one million in money, which was about ten shillings on an average to each head. But Great Britain, with six millions of souls, was taxed at twelve millions of money, by which each inhabitant paid forty shillings towards the support of government. So astonishing a difference between the circumstances of both countries carried with it such intuitive conviction, as to supersede all argument upon the subject, and to shew, at the first view, the impolicy, the unreasonableness, and even the injustice to our own people, (who had undertaken this heavy burthen on the faith of our navigation laws, and the supposed security and stability of our commerce,) of passing the bills now depending. He was likewise of opinion that the present measure was brought in at a very improper time, when people's minds were occupied with matters of the most pressing importance; the business was, besides, of too serious and complicated a nature to be hurried through at the latter end of a session. A matter of such magnitude as that of overthrowing the whole system of our trade laws, was not to be lightly undertaken, nor hastily determined. Such a measure demanded the most mature deliberation, the strictest investigation of facts and circumstances, along with the fullest consideration of future effects and contingencies. As to any danger of a rebellion in Ireland from a failure of expected relief founded on these propositions, he could not think that there was the slightest foundation for any such apprehension. Besides that rebellion was not in the character of that nation, the people at large were not at all interested in the event of these bills; their operation would be confined to the metropolis and a few of the principal sea-ports, where it could only affect the capital merchants and traders. Opulence does not produce the men for rebellion, and, happily, the indigent in that country have no concern in the question; had America been rich she would

never have rebelled; they are the rich who in all countries are calculated for slavery. He observed that the petitions on their table required the particular attention of parliament, as the petitioners were men of a description entitled to respect, and to a patient hearing; their evidence was still to be examined, and their counsel heard; and he appealed to the candour of gentlemen on all sides of the house, whether the month of May was the proper season to enter into so laborious and important an investigation. Although, he said, he was not apprehensive of a rebellion in Ireland, that was more than he would venture to answer for with respect to England, if the present bills passed, considering the consequently increased want of employment which would then be superadded to the present distresses of our manufacturers. He concluded by strongly urging the house to lay the bills aside, to refer the general business of Ireland to a committee, whose report would lay the foundation for their future mature deliberation, and enable them to afford such redress to Ireland as the situation of both countries would admit of without prejudice to this.

The principal speaker in support of the bills was Edmund Burke, who began by pointing out the singularity of his situation. He had received his seat in parliament without expense from the free votes and predilection of the citizens of Bristol, and his constituents now thought their interests materially affected by the bills in question. He said that the bills before them were no more than restorations of that with which the wisdom of a British parliament had on a former occasion thought proper to invest Ireland. The navigation bills passed in the 12th of Charles the Second, extended to Ireland as well as to England. A kind of left-handed policy had, however, deprived the former of the freedom she had enjoyed under that law, and she had ever since remained under the most cruel, oppressive, and unnatural restriction. Deprived of every incentive to industry, and shut out from every passage to wealth, she had inwardly lamented, but she had never complained of her condition. She had gone the most forward lengths in defending the rights of Great Britain. She had assisted in conquests from which she was to gain no advantage, and employed her treasury, and desolated her land, to prove her attachment and loyalty to the government of this coun-

try. Such had been her conduct, and her reward had been restriction and commercial bondage of the most cruel nature. He did not mean, he said, by describing her situation, to engage the humanity of the house in her favour; he knew very well that alms are but poor resources: justice, and not pity, was to be the measure of our conduct. The Irish requested Britain to be wise, not to be generous; to provide for her own good, and to secure her own interest; sensible that wisdom and prudence would dictate that, to accomplish these, a different conduct towards them was necessary. The annual revenue of the two kingdoms, he said, had been exultingly but most inequitably drawn into comparison, to prove that Ireland paid no proportion of tax. It was not the number of inhabitants that constituted the specific in the article of taxation between two countries; but the distinction of internal opulence and external advantage. Compare the two countries by that line, and it will be found that Ireland is taxed in a quadruple proportion more than England. The internal wealth, and the external advantages of trade and commerce, are forty times greater in England than in Ireland. There is, therefore, no ratio of proportion in the mode of taxing the latter. She is taxed without enjoying the means of payment. There are several excises which England is subject to and which she is not. Suppose them laid; they must be laid for the sake of oppression, not production; and for the benefit of the officers, not of the revenue. Leather is taxed in England, but what would be the product of such a tax where such innumerable multitudes of the people never wear shoes? You tax candles in England, but there are two hundred thousand houses in Ireland in which probably a candle, such as you tax, was never lighted. The taxes must follow wealth, and not precede it. If any attempt against this rule is made, there will neither be wealth nor taxes. This, he said, was the order of nature, which must be followed. And as to the judgment of the proportion, it must be left to themselves, or they are not free; and surely the fault of the parliament of Ireland has never been illiberality in its grants. Restricted from trading, she enjoys no opportunity of acquiring wealth to defray and discharge the taxes imposed upon her. Enlarge her means of payment, and, in proportion to her ability, she will enlarge her taxes. An equality of com-

mercial advantage could not be established between the two countries. The opulence of one is a great obstacle to the other. The great disproportion of capital effectually destroys the possibility of an equality. And as the ability of proceeding will increase in the same proportion in the progress of the one and of the other, the same proportion of advantage will still remain. The Irish will be able to follow the English at an equal distance in every stage, both in the outset and in the continuance; but they will never be able to accelerate their motion so as to overtake them. The supposed operation of the cheapness of labour with respect to manufactures was totally unfounded, and the arguments built thereon nugatory; until the instant that the price of labour was equal in both countries, the superiority of manufacture would remain with the English. The price of labour rises with the growth of manufacture, and is highest when the manufacture is best. The experience of every day tells us, that where the price of labour is highest, the manufacturer is able to sell his commodity at the lowest price. He observed, that the difference of duty on some of the enumerated imported articles, was so abundantly overbalanced by the other advantages enjoyed by this country, that without it there could not be the smallest degree of competition in manufacture on the side of Ireland; nor could that in any degree hurt England. They had, he said, a strange opinion of the extent of the world, who believed that there was not room enough in it for the trade of two such islands as these. Most if not all the petitions on the table, tended to express the utmost fears of the consequences that would arise, from granting a free exportation of sail-cloth and iron to the Irish. At the same time the real matter of fact is, that the Irish long possessed, without being able to turn it to any advantage worth mention, the free exportation of manufactured iron and steel, as well as of sail-cloth. From hence it is evident, that the petitioners have not felt from the reality, what they dreaded in the idea; and it is fairly to be inferred, that the other matters of apprehension contained in the petitions, are as groundless as these; and are only founded, like them, upon mere conjecture. It also appears evidently, that the advantages possessed by the English are so far superior in these respects, that the Irish were not able to prosecute these manufactures to any purpose, nor conse-

quently to turn their liberty of exportation to account. And this, he said, was too truly the fact, that every species of iron manufacture, in particular, was actually exported in incredible quantities to Ireland. He shewed from other instances, as well as the present, how hastily and erroneously manufacturers are liable to form their opinions upon subjects of this nature; and upon what slight grounds alarms are raised, and apprehensions propagated amongst them. Particularly, when, some years ago, a bill was brought in for the free importation of woollen yarn from Ireland, an universal alarm was excited, and petitions were sent in from every quarter, stating and complaining of the ruinous consequences which it would produce; the bill, however, passed into a law, and now, upon a full experience of its effects, they both feel and acknowledge its beneficial tendency. But it was absurd, he said, to think, that a participation of manufacture would be detrimental to this country. Had we not seen the woollen manufacture planted in different parts of this country; and had we not also seen that it throve by the competition?

The supporters of the bills considered the proposition of going into a committee, as little better than a direct negative; it held out no security, but a vague promise to move a committee, which committee should appoint another committee. They said it would carry too unbecoming an appearance of trifling with the sufferings of Ireland; and they knew the temper of the people too well, to have any doubt of their not being satisfied with such treatment.

Lord North joined in this opinion, and said, that as the expectations of the Irish were raised from what had been already done, it would be unwise to protract the business for another session. Even those who opposed the bills seemed all to agree, that something ought to be done for the relief of Ireland, though they differed about the nature and extent. He held it the duty of Great Britain, to give Ireland a degree, at least, of recompense for the exertion she had made, supposing even we were not inclined, in policy, to give her relief from the restrictions she laboured under; and he urged the passing of the present bills as a test of their intention and inclination to befriend her more substantially in future.

The second reading of these Irish bills was carried, but counsel and evidence were more than once heard, and the opposition

was so strong, that a sort of compromise was made between the supporters and opposers of the bills, and it was thought prudent to abandon for the present the most important parts of them. Some enlargement was given to the linen trade; and an opening was given in the African and West Indian trades, which did not before exist. On the whole the half measure of the English government neither afforded any immediate benefit, nor even did it hold out any future advantage of any great importance to Ireland.

Thus was the important question of the extension of Irish commerce thrown aside for another year. But the hopes of the catholics were raised by the general expression of sympathy which had followed lord North's declaration in their favour, and the increasing feeling of indulgence seems to have extended itself in some degree to Ireland. On the 25th of May, 1778, upon a motion by Mr. Gardiner, leave was given in the house of commons of the latter country, to bring in a bill for the relief of the Irish Roman catholics, and the mover, with the hon. Barry Barry and Mr. Yelverton, were directed to prepare it. On the same day leave was given to bring in a bill for relieving protestant dissenters from the effects of the test act, but this measure was not eventually carried through. The preamble of the bill in favour of the catholics stated the disabilities under which they laboured by the various penal statutes against them, and declared that, "from their uniform peaceable behaviour for a long series of years, it appears reasonable and expedient to relax the same, and it must tend not only to the cultivation and improvement of this kingdom, but to the prosperity and strength of all his majesty's dominions, that his subjects of all denominations should enjoy the blessings of our free constitution, and should be bound to each other by mutual interest and mutual affection." The bill itself allowed all Roman catholics who testified their allegiance according to the act passed four years before, to take, enjoy, and dispose of a lease for nine hundred and ninety-nine years certain, or determinable on the dropping of five lives; that the lands then in possession of the catholics should in future be descendible, devisable, or alienable, as fully as if they were in the seisin of any other subject of the crown; and that a catholic father should be no longer exposed to the extortions of such of his children as might become

protestants, which was the case by the statutes of queen Anne. This was a very moderate boon, but it was a fresh breach in the existing system of penal laws, and must eventually lead to their entire destruction. Burke observed well on this occasion, in a letter to sir Hercules Langrishe, one of the most zealous supporters of the bill,—“My opinion ever was (in which I heartily agreed with those that admired the old code), that it was so constructed, that if there was once a breach in any essential part of it, the ruin of the whole, or nearly of the whole, was, at some time or other, a certainty. For that reason I honour, and shall for ever honour and love you, who first caused it to stagger, crack, and gape. Others may finish, the beginners have the glory; and take what part you please at this hour (I think you will take the best), your first service will never be forgotten by a grateful country.”

Slight as were the concessions made by this bill, it met with the most determined opposition, and was contested at every step in its way through the house of commons. Five divisions took place upon it on the 5th of June; and three on the fifteenth; and at last it only passed the house by a majority of nine, the numbers being forty-seven against the bill and fifty-six in its favour. But in the house of lords it passed by a majority of thirty-six against twelve.

Having secured this bill, the lord lieutenant closed the session on the 14th of August, and he told the parliament in his speech that he flattered himself, “that the regulations which have taken place this session will prove essentially serviceable to that valuable branch of commerce the fisheries of Ireland. It is with pleasure,” he added, “that I see an act passed for establishing a militia, which, by enabling his majesty when he shall think proper to call forth that part of the national strength, may materially contribute to the protection and defence of the kingdom. The law for relieving the Roman catholics from some of those disabilities under which they have hitherto laboured, will, I hope, attain the desirable end of promoting and establishing goodwill and mutual confidence among his majesty’s subjects, and, by rendering us more united at home, make us more formidable to our enemies abroad. I congratulate with you on the late extension of the trade and commerce of this kingdom; it is a circumstance peculiarly fortunate to me, that an event which promised such advantages to

Ireland, should have taken place during my administration.”

For the present, however, all other questions of Irish agitation seemed absorbed in that of free trade, to which attention was forced daily more and more by the distresses of the nation. England had certainly miscalculated the force of her sister kingdom, and had over-rated her capability of contributing to the expenditure occasioned by the war. Thus taxed even beyond her means under the best of circumstances, she had to contend with a general falling of the revenue in consequence of the destruction of her commerce. The embargo that had existed since 1776, and which deprived her of her old export trade, naturally made her feel more severely the restrictions which had been placed upon her by the jealousy of the British merchants. The embargo itself was represented as a thing without utility. It was said, and apparently not without reason, that it answered no beneficial purpose; for it did not appear that the French armaments were injured or delayed through the want of Irish provisions; and their West Indian islands were so far from being ruined upon that account, that it was well known that they were supplied with many articles on as good terms as our own. On the other hand, the Irish beheld with grief and dismay, that the northern parts of Germany, and other countries adjoining to the Baltic, were with great avidity preparing to grasp at the beneficial trade which they were losing, and that they were sparing neither industry nor expense for the purpose; they had obtained proper persons for instructing them in the art of curing and packing their beef, and had even sent some considerable quantities to the French market. Although these samples could not come in any degree of competition with the Irish beef in point of goodness, yet the attempt, or even the idea of it, was exceedingly alarming. The vast profits which resulted from the lowness of rents, and the cheapness of cattle in those countries, would lead to great improvements both in feeding and curing; and there are few ignorant, that a branch of trade once lost or transferred, is scarcely ever recoverable. To render all these circumstances of loss and apprehension the more vexatious and grievous, it was universally said in that country, and not without some considerable concurrence both of words and opinions in this, that the source of all these mischiefs was nothing more or less than a

job, which owed its origin, or at least its continuance, merely to the design of throwing immense fortunes into the hands of some favourite contractors. Other circumstances united in the unhappy tendency to discontent, and served to render the calamity more sudden and conclusive. The rent of land in Ireland within the last thirty years, had been very much increased. Although this rise in the rents, must have been generally supported by the prices given in those markets which took off the produce of the lands; yet it was asserted by those who were acquainted with that country, that competition, and the spirit of speculation, which had lately produced such pernicious effects in both kingdoms, had their share in the rise. This speculation failing, and the competition along with it, lands fell, the landowner was distressed, the farmer ruined, and a very general failure of all credit ensued. The labouring population were thus turned out in a state of destitution of the necessaries of life; and although all the means were used which great and numerous acts of private charity, and liberal public subscriptions, could possibly reach to, for alleviating this dreadful calamity, and that twenty thousand poor were said to have been daily fed by charity for some considerable time, in the city of Dublin alone, yet all these efforts could only cover a small part of the evil, and it was evident that nothing less than employment could procure that subsistence, which their daily labour had hitherto provided.

Towards the end of 1778, the calamitous state of Ireland was alluded to several times in the British house of commons by those members more particularly interested in that country: they pictured in strong colours the distresses of that people, and shewed the necessity of affording them speedy and substantial relief, which could, as they asserted, only be done to any effect by removing those impolitic restrictions on their trade which owed their rise merely to the narrow spirit of monopoly, operating upon mistaken notions of all true commercial principles; these restrictions being in reality as contrary to the real interests of this country, as they were absolutely ruinous to Ireland. They accordingly gave notice that they would, after the holidays, move for a bill or bills for granting commercial relief to that country. Many reasons were urged in favour of such a measure. It was contended on the one side, that leaving all

ideas of liberality and justice out of the question, England was now impelled by absolute necessity, by a regard to her own present security and future preservation, to cherish and preserve the remaining parts of the empire, and to concentrate all the people in one common bond of union and defence, which could only be done by a general communion of interests, and participation of benefits. That the people of Ireland expected, and had the strongest right to expect relief. That this was no time, after the heavy loss of our colonies, and of our American commerce, to hazard that of Ireland, either by invasion or separation, one of which was already threatened, and the other equally to be apprehended, if we did not speedily afford that relief which was expected and now proposed. For, they said, however exemplary and invincible the loyalty of Ireland had hitherto been, and however singular her long enduring sufferings, patience, and forbearance, there were certain fixed limits to those qualities and dispositions of the mind, beyond which human nature was utterly incapable of passing; and was even liable to the danger of recoiling with greater violence in the attempt. But if neither of those dreaded events of separation or conquest should take place, and that we should still retain the inglorious and unprofitable boast of remaining the sole tyrants of the soil, we should even in that case infallibly lose all that could stamp any value upon it—we should lose the inhabitants. For it was evident, that as soon as a peace took place, if our oppression and their miseries still continued, the people of Ireland would inevitably, under the impulse of the first law of nature, emigrate to America; whither they would convey their manufactures, arts, and their industry. It was already too well known, that the American armies were principally recruited, and their best troops in a great degree composed, of those unhappy emigrants from Ireland who, being driven from their country by want and oppression, were compelled, under an equal necessity, to take up arms in a quarrel in which they had no natural interest, and to shed their blood in a contest with their friends and brethren. The advocates of the measure stated that the Irish were our best customers in many great articles of our merchandize and manufactures; they shewed the great wealth, with the additional strength and power which we had so long

derived from that country; they endeavoured to demonstrate the infinitely greater advantages of every kind which she was capable of affording under a wise and liberal system of government; and insisted that the fruits of every benefit we afforded to her in commerce would come back to ourselves with accumulated interest. To justify their various assertions, and establish their facts, they had moved for various papers, from which they shewed that the exports from England to Ireland, on an average of ten years, amounted to two millions fifty-seven thousand pounds yearly; that the exports from Ireland into England, upon an average of the same time, did not exceed one million three hundred and fifty-three thousand pounds by the year; that, consequently, the balance of trade in favour of England exceeded seven millions sterling in that time; that this was exclusive of the immense sums drawn from that country every year under the following heads, viz., rents to absentees, pensions, and the emoluments of places to those who never saw the country, appeals in law and equity, business, and pleasure. They also shewed that the decrease of the exports from England to Ireland during the last two years of calamity in that country amounted upon an average to no less than seven hundred and sixteen thousand pounds per year. From thence they urged the prodigious loss to the revenue, as well as to the trade and manufactures of this country, which must proceed from a continuance and a consequent increase of the distresses of that country. They concluded by asking whether such a country and such benefits as we derived from it were to be wantonly played with, and committed to unnecessary danger and risk; if it were not better to afford a just and reasonable indulgence, than to hazard the loss of a nation; whether it were desirable to have the trade, manufactures, and inhabitants of Ireland transferred to America, or rendered a constituent part of our body politic, or our common stock of wealth, strength, and defence? And whether a kingdom should be sacrificed to a single town, to the monopoly of a particular district, or to the ill-judged clamours and absurd prejudices of any body of manufacturers whatever?

On the other side it was not believed that the distresses of Ireland were so great as they had been represented; but if the melancholy description were really true, it

was not so much to be attributed to the trade laws here, as to mal-administration there; to faults in the internal constitution of their government, and to general mismanagement in the conduct of their affairs. These were matters which should be inquired into and redressed, and without that no substantial relief could be afforded. They said that the unhappy consequences of the American war were equally felt in both countries; that Ireland bore no more than her share of the calamity; that if her people were famishing, our manufacturers were starving; for that the plenty or cheapness of provisions were of no avail to those who wanted the means to procure them, and who were rendered incapable of obtaining the means through the general lack of employment which now prevailed. That in this state of common distress, however our feelings might be affected with respect to our brethren in Ireland, our sympathy was more strongly and more naturally attracted by those sufferings which were immediately within our knowledge; and that however alarming it might be, it could not surely be so much a matter of apprehension as one at home; an event which was to the full as probable, if any addition was made to the sufferings and grievances which our manufacturers endured by a surrender of those advantages in trade which they considered as their birthright.

The first propositions held out in favour of Ireland, although not specifically applied or moved for, went to the granting of a general exportation of all articles except her woollens. The establishment of a cotton manufactory was also contemplated, with a liberty of trading to and from America, the West Indies, and the coast of Africa. But these being thought on the other side too general and extensive, as well as too alarming to the manufacturers there, they were by degrees narrowed, until at length lord Newhaven, who conducted this business in the detail, entered into a kind of compromise, on the 15th of February, 1779, to give up the general outline of relief, and to confine himself to some particular and specific proposition. He accordingly moved, on the 10th of March, that the house should, on a given day, resolve itself into a committee, to take into consideration the acts of parliament relating to the importation of sugars from the West Indies into Ireland. The object of this motion was to repeal that clause in the act

A.D. 1779.]

HISTORY OF IRELAND. [THE FREE TRADE AGITATION.

of navigation by which all ships laden with sugars were compelled to bring their cargoes directly to England, from whence the quantity necessary for the consumption of that country was afterwards to be re-exported to Ireland. As the minister had still kept himself clear of the business, the question was fairly and coolly debated on both sides, without any other appearance of party than what merely arose from the locality of representation, and after a full discussion was carried by a majority of forty-seven to forty-two.

Meanwhile the clamour out-of-doors had in some degree subsided, and the opposition from the manufacturing districts was less than it had been in the preceding session. Glasgow and Manchester, however, petitioned, and the ministers began to cool under the continued accusations of their friends as well as enemies, that they were sacrificing the mercantile interests of Great Britain. Lord North suddenly set his face totally against the proposed relief, which was accordingly rejected upon a division on the question for the speaker's quitting the chair, in order that the house might, on the day appointed, resolve itself into a committee. The majority against affording relief to Ireland was only sixty-four against fifty-eight.

The opponents of the measure for giving commercial relief to Ireland had done their utmost to raise an anti-Irish feeling in England, which was exhibited in numerous caricatures and bitter newspaper paragraphs. These only served to increase the irritation of the Irish, which reached an alarming height, when it was known that the English parliament had refused the immediate relief which they had been led to expect. On the 16th of April, a meeting of the citizens of Dublin passed resolutions stigmatizing the opposition which the Irish bills had met with in England as "unjust, illiberal, and impolitic," and binding themselves, "that we will not, directly or indirectly, import or use any goods or wares, the produce or manufactures of Great Britain, which can be produced or manufactured in this kingdom, till an enlightened policy, founded on principles of justice, shall appear to actuate the inhabitants of certain manufacturing towns of Great Britain, who have taken so active a part in opposing the regulations proposed in favour of the trade of Ireland, and till they appear to entertain sentiments of respect and affection for their fellow-subjects of this kingdom." The example of

Dublin was soon followed in other places. At Waterford, the high sheriff, with the grand jury, and a number of the most respectable inhabitants assembled on that occasion, came to a resolution, "that we, our families, and all whom we can influence, shall, from this day wear and make use of the manufactures of this country, and this country only, until such time as all partial restrictions on our trade, imposed by the illiberal and contracted policy of our sister kingdom, be removed; but if, in consequence of this, our resolution, the manufacturers (whose interest we have more immediately under consideration) should act fraudulently, or combine to impose upon the public, we shall hold ourselves no longer bound to countenance and support them; that we will not deal with any merchant or shop-keeper who shall, at any time hereafter, be detected in imposing any foreign manufacture as the manufacture of this country." Resolutions of this kind, and associations to carry them into effect, became now frequent throughout the kingdom, so that at last dean Swift's famous project of resistance to the English commercial restrictions upon Ireland was put in full practice. The effects were soon felt by the English merchants who had traded with Ireland, and, as the agitation began in Ireland to take a still more turbulent character, people in England began to look upon the matter more calmly, and to acknowledge the expediency of listening to the complaints of the sister kingdom. Before the session of the English parliament closed, several attempts were made to draw attention to the condition of Ireland, which were so far effective, that the ministers made a promise of preparing a proper plan for accommodating the affairs of that country, which should be ready to be laid before parliament at the opening of the ensuing session. The king's speech on the adjournment of the session contained an expression of especial sympathy for Ireland.

In Ireland the agitation went on increasing as the time for the meeting of the parliament of that country approached, and it was alluded to in the speech with which the lord lieutenant opened it on the 12th of October, 1779. He said, "at a time when the trade and commerce of this kingdom are, in a more particular manner, the object of public attention, it were to be wished that the general tranquillity, ever desirable, had been restored, so as to have left you entirely

at leisure to deliberate on those great and important subjects. But I am persuaded you will not permit any interests, however dear to you, to impede your efforts or disturb your unanimity at this most important period; and I have it expressly in command from his majesty to assure you, that the cares and solitudes inseparable from a state of hostility have not prevented him from turning his royal mind to the interests and distresses of this kingdom, with the most affectionate concern; of which the money remitted to this country for its defence, when England had every reason to apprehend a most formidable and immediate attack, affords a convincing proof. Anxious for the happiness of his people, his majesty will most cheerfully co-operate with his parliament in such measures as may promote the common interests of all his subjects." With regard to the finances, the statement of the lord lieutenant was not encouraging. "It is with great concern," he said, "I am to inform you, that on account of the extraordinary decline of the revenues, the very liberal supplies of the last session have proved inadequate to the exigencies of government; so that, contrary to my most sanguine expectations and most earnest endeavours, there is a considerable arrear now to be provided for." The exhausted state of the treasury, he added, had rendered it impossible, even in these times of threatened danger from without, to call out the militia.

The temper of the Irish house of commons at this juncture, was shewn by the warm debate upon the address, which was moved in the usual laudatory and complimentary style by one of the great supporters of the court, sir Robert Deane, and seconded by Mr. R. H. Hutchinson. The latter spoke more feelingly of Irish grievances. He said this was a great, critical, and important period, in which the declaration of the king and the British legislature, left us no room to doubt but every good was designed for Ireland; that his majesty's speech in the British house, at the close of the last session, was the harbinger of good tidings and great events, which was this day confirmed in the lord lieutenant's speech, who said he had it in command to declare his wish to co-operate in such measures as may best promote our interests, which, in the hands of the present administration, must be well managed, as their designs are pure; that under such an ad-

ministration the general benefit of the empire would be attended to, above all partial and selfish consideration; and the evil of calumny, which so long traduced them, would disappear, and the factious calumniators, touched with truth, as with the spear of Ithuriel, would start into shape. "What thanks were due to our chief governor, who so respectfully mentions the societies of armed patriots throughout the kingdom? What must our opinion be of a chief governor, who speaks so honourably of that great bulwark of constitutional liberty, a national militia? Though our distresses are great, from them prosperous days may spring, like that fair flower the fabling poets tell of, which sprung from a hero's blood."

Mr. Henry Grattan, who was now taking the lead in the ranks of the patriots, spoke next, and said that the speech contained nothing explicit, nothing satisfactory; it meant to quiet the minds of the people without any declaration whatever. After his majesty had been addressed by his Irish subjects for a free export trade, did such addresses require no answer? Were the people of Ireland undeserving the notice of the British ministers? Was there no respect for the interest of these kingdoms among the servants of the crown on this side the water? Were not these servants of the crown also representatives of the people? Why not, then, speak out? Are our distresses of so private a nature that they must not be mentioned? After launching into an eloquent and pathetic picture of the miserable condition of the kingdom, he went on to say, "It is plain we have nothing to expect, since applications from the people, backed with the same from the officers of the crown, are not attended to. Ireland, then, has nothing to depend upon but her spirit; no redress of grievances, no extension of trade, but from the efforts of her people! and will it be politic, will it be safe, here or elsewhere, to oppose these efforts? Why does not our address also speak out? Why have we less spirit than the people? Shall the commons of Ireland shew less spirit than the most insignificant corporation? Are we so fallen, so despicable, as to be more afraid of England's censure than of the cries of our starving manufacturers?" The distresses of Ireland, he said, were twofold, the beggary of the people and the bankruptcy of the state. The first he would not ask the commissioners of the revenue to prove, but he

would ask them upon oath whether the restrictions on our trade were not the cause; whether the prohibitions laid on by England against the exports of woollen cloths did not occasion it; whether there were not too many inhabitants in this kingdom, though not half peopled: whether if to those inhabitants the American continent were still open, they would not have emigrated thither rather than pine in their native land, the victims of English tyranny, rather than starve in it by an English act of parliament? And, lastly, was there one rich merchant in the kingdom? "This kingdom," he continued, "ruined by a balance of trade against her for so many years, and the drain of absentees, owes its present existence to associations; this is but a temporary expedient, and something more effectual must be done." As to the bankruptcies of the state, they were the consequence of a system of boundless prodigality, profligacy, and violence; a boundless prodigality, while the means were limited; a profligacy and violence uniformly maintained. One instance would suffice, where the late attorney-general had obliged the merchants of Cork to sign an illegal bond, as a collateral security to an illegal oath. "The peace establishment of this poor country amounts to one-sixth of that of England; what proportion is there in our means? What is this establishment? infamous pensions to infamous men! And will those men, whom we pay, vote against an extension of our trade? vote against the means of supporting them! To what pass have these profligate administrations reduced this kingdom! to be insulted with our poverty in the speech from the throne; to be told of our beggary; that the officers of the crown here have begged fifty thousand pounds from England, or the troops could not have marched into camp; when it is known that it is this profligacy that has unnerved the arm of government, and made the sword of defence fall in its hand." Grattan then moved an amendment to the address, to be inserted in the following words: "That we beseech your majesty to believe, that it is with the utmost reluctance we are constrained to approach you on the present occasion; but the constant drain to supply absentees, and the unfortunate prohibition of our trade, have caused such calamity, that the natural support of our country has decayed, and our manufacturers are dying for want. Famine stalks hand-in-hand with hopeless wretchedness,

and the only means left to support the expiring trade of this miserable part of your dominions, is to open a free export trade, and let your Irish subjects enjoy their natural birthright." Lord Westport seconded Mr. Grattan's motion for amendment.

Mr. Flood, another name celebrated in Irish history, who at this time held place under government, said he also considered the address as not sufficiently explicit. Sir Henry Cavendish then declared his opinion that this business would be better effected by opening a committee on purpose, or rather following a precedent in the year 1661, when the lords and commons of Ireland appointed commissioners to attend the king to supplicate the redress of grievances. Upon which Mr. Ogle rose up indignantly and reprobated the idea of entering into a committee on the subject of our grievances; he was sick, he said, of the mode of trifling with the nation in order to gain time; that the ghost of the committee on the embargo haunted him every time he heard a committee mentioned; and, lastly, if we did not mention something in the address, the ministry might again shelter themselves under the old excuse, "That truly they did not know what the Irish wanted, as their parliament was silent on the head," and so go on with the old system of duplicity. Another patriot, sir Edward Newenham, conjured the house, by all they held dear, to reassume their wounded dignity and power; he charged the British ministry with contempt and neglect to the nation, said he perfectly agreed with Mr. Flood, that the address did not go far enough, and that he thought the original address a servile echo to the speech. After some other observations, for and against the address, the debate took quite a new turn; for several of the ministerial party declared, that though they thought this business might have come more properly otherwise, yet that there might be an unanimity, they would not oppose the amendment. Flood then declared for the amendment, and entered largely into a justification of his political conduct, which, he said, had unfortunately been much misrepresented; that the office he held was the unsolicited gift of his sovereign, which he had received with gratitude and held with honour; that when the time came he could no longer do so, he would gladly throw the bracelet into the common cauldron. Mr. Prime Serjeant, after expatiating on the necessity of immediately laying, in an unequivocal manner,

the state of Ireland before the throne, moved, instead of the amendment proposed, the insertion of the words, "That it is not by temporary expedients, but by a free trade alone, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin."

The amended address was carried without further opposition, and it then stood thus: "We beg leave humbly to represent to your majesty, that it is not by temporary expedients, but by a free trade alone, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin. And from your majesty's gracious declaration, a declaration imprinted in our hearts in characters of indelible gratitude, that 'anxious for the happiness of all your people, you will most cheerfully co-operate with your parliament in such measure, as may promote the common interests of all your subjects,' we draw the happiest presages in favour of a measure essential to the existence of this kingdom, and which appears to us conducive to the interests of Great Britain. Permit us to assure your majesty, that we have every disposition to go as far as the national abilities will, in making a provision for the honourable support of your majesty's government; but with hearts glowing with the warmest wishes for the prosperity and glory of the British empire, and full of zeal against the common enemy, we have the mortification to find that the limited state of our trade and commerce must, by narrowing our resources, set bounds to our liberality, very far short of our earnest inclinations."

When this address was carried up by the speaker to the lord lieutenant, the streets through which he had to pass were lined by the Dublin volunteers, drawn up in arms under their commander, the duke of Leinster, amid the shouts and acclamations of the populace, who were assembled in vast numbers.

This first triumph blew into a flame the agitation which had been gathering during the summer. Owing partly to the easy temper of the earl of Buckinghamshire; and partly to the want of attention shown habitually towards the internal affairs of that country, Ireland was at this moment in a condition to give serious alarm. The continued defeat of all projects for the relief of the Irish people that were brought forward in the English parliament aggravated their resentment, which was never allowed to rest a moment by the patriotic newspapers. The acts in favour of Ireland

which had been passed by the English legislature, such as those permitting the cultivation of tobacco in Ireland and encouraging that of hemp, were so ridiculously disproportioned to its wants, that they were looked upon only as mockeries, and spoken of with contempt. The system of association was spreading daily, and resolutions were everywhere entered into against importation or consumption of foreign articles, with denunciations of vengeance against those who acted contrary to them. It was computed that, even in the present condition of their manufactures, they would thus save not less than a million sterling which had gone annually to Great Britain, and at the same time they would punish the towns of Manchester and Glasgow, which had been constant and immense gainers by the Irish trade, although they had been the foremost in opposing every measure of redress. At this moment of discontent, accidental circumstances raised up a new class of champions for the popular cause.

England was now involved in a war at the same time with America, France, and Spain, and was threatened with an invasion by the latter powers. The country most exposed was Ireland, which was the more unprotected, since the regular troops had not only been mostly drawn for service in America, but, as we have seen, the low state of the public treasury had rendered it impossible even to call out the militia. Under these circumstances it became necessary to entrust the defence of that kingdom to volunteers, who rapidly and spontaneously arose in most parts of the country. Thus, vast military associations were formed, and all classes took up arms to resist foreign invasion, and, as they professed to defend the national liberties, it soon became a mark of disgrace not to belong to some one of the volunteer corps, and noblemen and gentlemen not only considered it a mark of distinction to be chosen officers, but even offered themselves to serve in their ranks. The spirit of volunteering seemed to have absorbed the popular energies, and, with its population arming themselves as protectors of the peace, the country became unusually tranquil; and it was observed that obedience to the laws was never better provided for.

It was this orderly behaviour, apparently, which calmed the apprehensions of the government. The latter, aware of the uses to which such a powerful instrument might be turned, saw its utility against foreign

enemies, and furnished the volunteers with arms. They made an ineffectual attempt to draw this new force under the immediate regulation and control of the crown, but, finding much greater resistance than they expected, they thought it best to concur in what they could not prevent. Thus this new establishment, flattering to the feelings of the people at large and threatening no immediate evil, was recognised and in a manner sanctioned by the state itself. It is said that at the beginning of the year 1780, the volunteer force in Ireland amounted to not less than forty thousand, some said sixty thousand, men, well appointed and perfectly disciplined.

Being thus acknowledged by the government, the volunteers soon began to shew that their object was by no means confined to the defence of the kingdom against attacks from foreign enemies, for they proceeded to canvass the political questions of the day, and declared their intention to unite in demanding and protecting the national rights. Thus supported, the Irish patriots assumed new courage. They declared all authority over them, claimed by the British parliament, to be a gross usurpation. Among other of its "usurpations," they denied the validity of the British mutiny act; and this was carried to such a length, that the regular troops were for some time almost confined to their respective stations, as scarcely a magistrate could be found who would issue billets for their quarters. It required the greatest degree of temper and circumspection in those who governed in Ireland, and especially in the commanders of the king's forces there, to prevent a collision between them and the newly established force. To add to the unanimity of the Irish people at this moment, the animosities between the protestants and catholics seemed abated, and the latter, encouraged by the indulgence shown to them, joined heartily in the general movement.

Such was the state of affairs when the parliament met on the 12th of October, 1779, and it was under the influence of this new system that at the beginning of the session the ministerial phalanx in parliament was broken up on the question of the address. The duke of Leinster commanded the volunteers of Dublin, and he not only, as we have just seen, escorted the speaker of the house of commons to the castle, when he carried the address, but im-

mediately afterwards he moved for the thanks of the lords to the volunteer corps throughout the kingdom, and his motion was carried with only one dissentient voice. Thus further encouraged, the patriot party became jealous of the power they had so suddenly obtained, and, fearful of some sudden act, such as a prorogation, which might deprive them of the benefit of it, they set up a loud clamour for a short money bill, for six months only, by which means the parliament would still continue indispensably necessary to government. The court at first used all its strength in opposing this measure, which increased the cry and agitation to such a degree that the mob of Dublin, always turbulent, proceeded to the grossest outrages. They attacked the members of parliament who were suspected or known to be opposed to the popular measure, and compelled them to promise it their support, and they resorted to acts of violence towards its more determined opponents. On the morning of the 15th of November, the mob assembled, with the declared resolution of exacting vengeance of the attorney-general (Mr. Scott), sir Henry Cavendish, and Mr. Monk Mason. About mid-day they marched to the house of the attorney-general with the intention of destroying it, but, after they had demolished the windows on the ground-floor and done some injury to the next story, some of the leaders of the patriotic party in parliament contrived to mix with them and persuade them to desist. They then marched to the parliament house, having detached a body to the four courts, into which they rushed in search of the attorney-general and sir Henry Cavendish, but both managed to keep out of their way. Disappointed here, they returned to the parliament house, and administered an oath to all the members who fell into their hands, that they would be true to Ireland and vote for a short money bill. The only force that could be employed against this turbulent populace was the volunteers, and as the lawyers' corps was an especial favourite with the people, the lord mayor requested them to use their influence to disperse them. That body accordingly went among the crowd unarmed, and by dint of talking and persuasion, drew them away, and after marching them in procession through several streets, prevailed on them to disperse.

The Irish house of commons took the proper means of expressing their indigna-

tion at these outrages, and of maintaining their dignity. But they did not think it wise to resist a cry which had become universal, and they complied by voting the money bill for six months only. The ministry in England also thought it prudent to approve of what they had done. It was in the parliament of the latter country that the question of relieving Irish trade of its restraints was again debated with more warmth even than in Ireland itself. The session had commenced soon after that in Ireland, and not only after its opening the earl of Upper Ossory, seconded by lord Middleton, moved in the commons for a vote of censure upon the ministers for their conduct and neglect with respect to the affairs of Ireland. In defence of administration in England, it was contended that the distresses and miseries of Ireland could not with justice be attributed to the present or any late ministers; that her grievances originated many years before in the general system of trade laws; that the restrictions then laid on arose from a narrow, short-sighted policy, which, though conceived in prejudice, and founded on ignorance, was yet so strengthened by time, and confirmed by the habits of a century, that it seemed at length wrought into and become even a part of the constitution. That the prejudices on that ground were so strong, both within the house and without, that the attempts made in two preceding sessions, only to obtain a moderate relaxation of the restrictions with which Ireland was bound, had met with the most determined opposition; the few who undertook that task found themselves obliged to encounter prejudice without, and at last to be overborne by numbers within the house. Thus ministers were fully exculpated from the charge that was brought against them; and it was demonstrable, that they had no share whatever in drawing on the calamities of Ireland; and it was as clearly evident, that it was not in their power to have afforded that timely redress to her grievances, a supposed or imputed neglect in which had been made the ground of so much ingenious but unfounded, and therefore unjust invective. It was further alleged, that it would have been highly unfitting, and might have been attended with obvious ill consequences, for the British parliament to have at all entered upon the affairs of Ireland until they were properly informed what the nature of her wants, and the extent of her demands were;

as it was from these circumstances only that any true judgment could be formed as to the measure of relief which it would be fitting to afford to that country. That now, by having convened the parliament of Ireland first, its sentiments were properly brought forward, and came fairly within the cognizance of the British legislature; and all they had now to consider was, how far it would be advisable to comply with the requests made by Ireland, and with what terms and conditions it might be thought proper to charge the favours granted. That the present ministers, instead of being inimical to Ireland, or inattentive to her interests, had been her best and warmest friends. That they had done more for her than all their predecessors during a century past. If any blame were due for not affording more early relief to Ireland, it was imputable only to the prejudices and temper of the people and parliament of England, and not by any means to the ministers, who, as they had no share in the causes of her distresses, were equally guiltless as to their continuance. In reply, the supporters of the motion, who reprobated in terms of high indignation the imputation of prejudice laid on that house, by which ministers, they said, according to their usual practice, attempted to father all their blunders and misdemeanours upon parliament, laughed at the pretended weakness and inefficiency with respect to the transactions of the house, which ministers then affected in order thereby to shield their own neglect. They however absolutely denied that lord North had been passive, neutral, or inefficient as to the affairs of that country; and, on the contrary, charged him with having taken a very active part in the business during the preceding session; for a bill having been brought in to afford relief to Ireland by admitting the direct importation of sugars for her own consumption, and he having, as they said, for some time suffered things to take their natural course in that house, the bill was accordingly coolly and deliberately canvassed and debated in all its parts; and by the strength of its own intrinsic merit worked its way through repeated divisions, until it had nearly arrived at the last stage of its progress, when the minister having by some means been roused from his slumber, most unhappily reassumed his activity; and departing at once from that neutrality which he had hitherto professed,

he came down with all the power, and surrounded with all the instruments of office, in order to defeat the measure, and thus succeeded in throwing out the bill. When the people of Ireland saw that the ministers had thus openly set their faces directly against them, and found after that every effort in their favour was rendered abortive by their influence or management, until they saw themselves at length totally abandoned by the rising of the British parliament, it was not to be wondered at if they became desperate, and sought in themselves for the means of that redress from which they were so unjustly excluded. Ministers, they said, boasted that the distress of Ireland had not originated with them. It could be readily admitted that she was not without grievances previous to the fatal period of their administration; but her immediate calamities sprang principally from the same grand source of all our general evils and dangers, from the American war. By that, Ireland, like England, lost a valuable part of her commerce, with less capability to support the loss; and the corrupt expenses of a feeble government increased, as all the means of supplying them diminished.

The ministers succeeded in negating this motion by a majority of a hundred and seventy-three against a hundred, it being understood that they were prepared soon to lay their own plans for the relief of Ireland before parliament. A similar motion, by lord Shelburne, had met with the same fate in the house of lords two or three days before. Alarmed at the conduct of the Irish volunteers and at the spirit shown in the Irish parliament, lord North, on the 13th of November, laid before the English house of commons his three propositions for affording relief to the sister kingdom, which consisted in allowing Ireland a free export of her wool, woollens, and wool flocks, as well as of glass and all kinds of glass manufactures, and a freedom of trade with the British plantations, on certain conditions, the basis of which was to be an equality of taxes and customs upon an equal and unrestrained trade. Lord North made a long speech, in which he explained the justice and propriety, as well as the necessity of affording relief to Ireland, entering fully into her claims, and expatiating on the mutual and respective interests of both countries. The ministerial propositions met with no opposition, and bills founded on the two first passed the houses and received

the royal consent before the recess. The third was left open till after the holidays, to give time for inquiries as to its probable effect.

These proceedings had little effect in calming the agitation in Ireland. The volunteer corps, now so numerous, had sunk all other objects in that of asserting the constitutional rights of their country, and the people began to look to them, rather even than to their representatives in parliament, for redress. A continued intercourse had been carried on between these armed associations in different parts of the island, to insure a uniformity of sentiment and determination, and they made no secret of their intention to retain their arms until they had accomplished the liberation of their country from the sovereignty of the British parliament. At the beginning of 1780 they entered upon a plan of general organization, appointing reviews for the ensuing summer, and choosing their exercising officers and reviewing generals. They now declared publicly their opinions on state affairs, in the shape of resolutions of the different corps, which were printed in the newspapers, and were uniform in declaring the general opinion that Ireland was an independent kingdom, that no power but the king, lords, and commons of Ireland could make laws to bind its people, and that they were ready to resist at the risk of their lives the encroachments of any foreign legislature.

A similar feeling shewed itself in the Irish house of commons, where, on the 19th of April, 1780, Mr. Grattan, after a very animated speech, moved that the house should resolve and enter on its journals, "that no power on earth, save that of the king, lords, and commons of Ireland, had a right to make laws for Ireland." The debate lasted with much warmth until six o'clock in the morning, when Mr. Flood, who knew that the ministerial members were committed to vote against the motion, suggested that no question should be put, and that the business should thus not be entered on the journals, to which Mr. Grattan consented, and the matter was dropped. The Irish parliament was more conciliated than the people by the measures of relief brought forward and passed in England, and they shewed their satisfaction by granting the supplies for a year and a half longer. It was ordered that two hundred and sixty thousand pounds should be raised by treasury bills, or by a lottery, at

the discretion of the lord lieutenant. Both means were adopted, and this was the first time that the expedient of a lottery to aid the raising of the loan, was resorted to in Ireland.

In delivering the money bills, the speaker, Mr. Pery, followed an usage which had of late become habitual, in making a speech to the lord lieutenant; and in this instance he gave so much satisfaction, that he received the thanks of the house, and was desired to print his speech. "During the vicissitudes of a foreign, and still more dangerous civil war," he said, "which has wasted a great extent of the British empire, it has been the peculiar felicity of this nation to preserve the public tranquillity; and though long depressed by the narrow policy of former times, still to retain such vigour, and at the same time such temper and caution, as animated it to claim with honest confidence its rights, and yet restrained it from transgressing the bounds of its duty, or hazarding the loss of that inestimable blessing, the British constitution. To this state of union and moderation, unexampled in any age or in any country under similar circumstances; to your excellency's judicious conduct and faithful representations; to his majesty's benevolent disposition and tender concern for the sufferings of his people; to the wisdom of his minister, however questioned in some instances, in this acknowledged by all; to his resolution and constancy in combating established habits and rooted prejudices; and to the justice and generosity of the British nation; must be ascribed the happy restoration of that equitable system of equality in commerce, which has silenced, I trust for ever, those pernicious suspicions and jealousies which lately threatened the peace of both kingdoms. But, whatever advantage this change in our condition may promise, it will avail us little if it inspires false hopes and vain expectations of sudden affluence; the future prosperity of this kingdom will depend upon our industry and economy, public as well as private, the effects of which, though certain and permanent, are ever gradual and slow; and unless our expenses are regulated by our acquisitions, disappointment will be our portion, and poverty and distress must be the consequence of our conduct. Notwithstanding these considerations, and the reduced state of this kingdom, the commons have granted to his majesty much larger

supplies than in any former session; they have borrowed a sum of six hundred and ten thousand pounds to discharge the arrears of the establishments; and in order to provide against any future deficiency, they have made an addition to the revenue estimated at above a hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year. Nor have they been less attentive to the interests of the people, than to the honour of the crown. The public good has been the object to which all their efforts have been directed; and their conduct through the whole of this session has alike entitled them to the confidence of their sovereign and of their constituents, and will leave to all future parliaments a memorable and instructive example of fortitude, moderation, and wisdom."

In spite of this momentary effusion of grateful sentiments, the ministerial measure of commercial relief was far from giving satisfaction to the commercial interests of Ireland, and people in general had begun to place their expectations much higher. It was at this moment, when the people were in arms, asserting the independence of their parliament, that the English ministry, with singular imprudence, chose to make a new attack upon it. A bill for punishing mutiny and desertion in the army for a limited time, after having passed the Irish parliament, was transmitted as usual to England, and when returned it was found to have been altered in the English privy council from a temporary bill to a perpetual one. A bill relating to the import duty on sugar experienced a similar treatment. This seemed like an intention on the part of the British ministry to bring the question of the dependence of the Irish parliament to a crisis—a challenge held out to the Irish volunteers. The consequence was a great popular irritation, and petitions against the alterations in the bills were sent up from different parts of the kingdom. Among others, the borough of Newry presented a petition to the Irish house of commons, stating that the petitioners had heard with deep concern of alterations then said to have been made in the bill for laying a duty on imported refined sugars, and also in the bill for the better regulation of the army, of both of which they complained, but especially of the latter, for they considered a perpetual bill for the regulation of the army, or one of any other duration than from session to session, as a daring attack on the constitution of both coun-

tries. They further prayed, that by an equal distribution of justice, the mutual cordiality between Great Britain and Ireland might be insured, and the necessity for this country to resolve to consume her own manufactures only might be removed; and that a *parliamentary* army might be maintained in Ireland, regulated upon principles such as Great Britain could approve of and Ireland submit to."

These petitions produced a considerable sensation on the public mind. On the sixteenth of August, the house of commons resolved itself into a grand committee, to take into consideration the altered mutiny bill. It was contended in support of this measure, that if parliament had an intention to preserve the peace of this country, they must pass the bill in its present state; that as long as parliament held the purse of the nation, they could, by refusing to pay, annihilate the army; that the hereditary revenue never could be applied to the payment of the army, because it would destroy itself in the very ends it should be employed for; that if the king had the liberty of raising an army, he should also have the perpetual power of regulating that army. It was argued, on the other side, that the present bill tended to the subversion of all public liberty; that it would not be wise to grant to the crown a dictatorial power over fifteen thousand men for ever; that it was the wish of the kingdom to be governed by its own laws; that they considered the power of originating this very act as a declaration of rights, and they were consequently contending with the minister of Great Britain, not for any concession which might wound the interest or pride of the English, but for a measure which would bring every man in Britain on their side, as they could not wish to see the power of the crown rendered so dangerous to the constitution of both kingdoms, with a perpetual army, which might vest his majesty with too great an influence over the laws; and that any articles of war which the king might hereafter make would be articles of war for this kingdom; for the act extended a power over all his majesty's forces, by which means Ireland would be under the control of an English statute, and this kingdom would become a place of arms. The debate was long, but the court exerted all its strength, and the bill was agreed to as it then stood, and afterwards passed into a law.

The defeat of the patriots on this occasion, increased the general discontent, and meetings were held all over the country, at which resolutions, sometimes of an inflammatory character, were agreed to. A meeting of the merchants' corps of volunteers was called at the royal exchange in Dublin, when the following resolutions were passed, and ordered to be printed in the public papers:—"Resolved, that the late decisions of the house of commons (so destructive, in our opinion, to the constitutional rights, and injurious to the commercial interests of this kingdom), demand the most serious attention of every Irishman. That we consider their consent to the mandate of the British minister, by which the bill for the regulation of the army is made perpetual, and the control thereof for ever vested in the hands of the crown, as a subversion of the constitution, and a stab to the liberty of the subject. That considering the army of this kingdom as a body of men embarked in the cause of their country, and equally entitled with ourselves to the protection of its legislature, we cannot but feel for their situation, who, by this law, are in danger of being made, at a future day, the unwilling instruments of despotism, to violate the liberties of Ireland. That we consider the compliance of that house with the alteration made in the sugar bill by the English privy council, reducing the proposed duty on lump sugar, as an overthrow to the refinery of this kingdom, and a total obstruction to the extension of its manufactures by an export to the British colonies and West Indies. That we will concur with the volunteer corps of this kingdom, and the rest of our fellow-subjects, in every effort which may tend to avert the dangers we are threatened with. That the strenuous, though unsuccessful efforts of the minority of the house of commons in defence of the constitution, merit the thanks and firm support of every friend of this country."

The irritation throughout the country was now at its height. Mercantile bodies, corporations, volunteer corps, all met and entered into resolutions against the decision of parliament, which they said had surrendered the rights of the nation to the court. The citizens of Dublin were among the most forward in this manifestation. All these hostile resolutions were given at full in the opposition newspapers, with a variety of comments which rendered them still less palatable; and the house of commons, under

the influence of the court, or at least the ministerial majority, thought right to show its resentment by passing a vote of censure on the printers by whom these proceedings were published, and an address to his excellency the lord lieutenant, requesting he would be pleased to give orders for effectually prosecuting the printers and publishers, as well as the authors, if the latter could be discovered. It was understood that this vote of censure was really directed against the volunteers, whom the government was afraid to attack openly.

Among the bills passed in this session of the Irish parliament, was one for the relief of the protestant dissenters, and another to naturalize such foreign merchants and manufacturers as should settle in this kingdom. Towards its close, the ministerial majority had become all-powerful in the house. After a very protracted session, the lord lieutenant closed it on the second of September, with a speech which deserves to be given entire for its conciliatory tone; it appears to have been the result of a very adulatory address presented by the commons to the lord lieutenant a few days previously. It was the last speech that lord Buckinghamshire made to an Irish house of commons.

*“My lords and gentlemen—*I am happy at length to congratulate you on the conclusion of this session of parliament, though the important measures under deliberation must have made your attendance less irksome to you. If your long absence from your several counties has been productive of any inconvenience, such inconvenience is fully compensated by permanent and solid benefits, the successful consequences of your labours.

*“Gentlemen of the house of commons—*I thank you, in his majesty's name, for the liberal supplies you have granted; your cheerfulness in giving, and your attention to the ease of the subject in the mode of raising them, must be very acceptable to his majesty; on my part, I assure you, they shall be faithfully applied.

*“My lords and gentlemen—*The satisfac-

tion with which the heart of every Irishman must exult at the fair scene of prosperity now opening to this country, may equal, if cannot exceed, the glow of my private feelings; and whilst you applaud the conduct of Great Britain, in removing the restrictions upon the trade of this kingdom, you cannot but particularly acknowledge the unequivocal demonstration of her sincere affection, in admitting you, upon the most liberal plan, to an immediate, free, and equal intercourse with her colonies. The wise and salutary laws which you have framed, naturally lead to the most beneficial enjoyment of that intercourse. And when I reflect on those great objects, and on your meritorious attention to the trade, agriculture, and manufactures of this kingdom, so conspicuously manifested by the laws passed for granting ample bounties on the export of your corn, your linen, and your sail-cloth, by the premiums for encouraging the growth of hemp and flax-seed, and by the judicious provisions for the better regulation of your manufactures, I feel a conscious satisfaction, that the commerce of this kingdom has been established upon an extended, firm, and lasting basis; and that Ireland must, in the course of her future prosperity, look back to this æra, the labours of the present parliament, and the diffusive indulgence of his majesty, with a most grateful veneration. Your own discreet judgment will naturally suggest the expediency, when you return to your several counties, of impressing upon the minds of all ranks of men the various blessings of their present situation. Demonstrate to them, that every effectual source of commercial wealth is now their own, and invites that industry, without which the wisest commercial regulations remain a dead letter, and the bounties of nature are lavished in vain. Cherish such a spirit of industry, and convince them of the essential advantages they derive from their free and excellent constitution, the maintenance of every branch of which in its just vigour and authority can alone secure their liberties, and preserve their happiness.”

CHAPTER V.

ADMINISTRATION OF LORD CARLISLE; POWER AND ACTIVITY OF THE VOLUNTEERS.



WO questions were now objects of dispute between Ireland and England, freedom of trade and legislative independence. The latter had been brought forward prominently at this time by the alteration in the Irish mutiny act, and a multitude of pamphlets and newspaper paragraphs, published almost daily, and read and commented upon with the utmost avidity, kept the public mind in a state of great excitement. Grattan had printed, in a pamphlet, the substance of his speech against the right of foreign legislation and the clause of perpetuity in the mutiny bill, and this had an immense circulation. The majorities in the house of commons against the popular wishes on this subject tended to irritate the nation, and increased its distrust of the legislative body and its confidence in the volunteers. The opinion became more fixed, and was more publicly declared, that the wealth of Ireland was employed to buy a majority in parliament to betray their country. In the midst of the public agitation consequent upon this state of things, lord Buckinghamshire had become unpopular in Ireland, and his administration had not given satisfaction to the ministers in England. The power which had been assumed by the volunteers was ascribed in some degree to his remissness, although it might perhaps be charged equally as much to the weak and vacillating counsels of the English court. He was recalled after the close of the session, and on the 23rd of December lord Carlisle was appointed in his stead.

While the English government was naturally alarmed at the position assumed by the volunteers in Ireland, the claims made by the Irish to absolute legislative independence were not generally approved in England, even by those who were usually the advocates of Irish interests. On the 23rd of February, 1781, when the English mutiny bill was before the British house of commons, it was announced that in com-

mittee the name of Ireland had been totally omitted. This gave rise to a rather animated debate, some objecting to the course pursued by the ministers, as though it were a tacit giving up of the right of legislative supremacy over Ireland. The debate was rendered interesting by the speech of Mr. Fox, who took that opportunity of stating his sentiments on this important question. He rose, he said, agreeably to his intimation to the house, to move for the recommitment of that bill, for the purpose of correcting a very material and important alteration that had taken place in it. He began his speech with stating, that if he had not been sensible of the difficulty and delicacy of his situation in the question which he was about to agitate, the observation that had fallen from a gentleman high in office, and an old well-informed member of that house, would have opened his eyes, and convinced him, that he was treading upon ground at once difficult and dangerous. The honourable gentleman had said, that the house ought not to attempt to do that which it could not fully and perfectly accomplish, and had advised them rather to overlook the attack upon their dignity, by the presentation of a frivolous petition, than attempt a punishment which they could not enforce. This was his sentiment; it was at all times so, since he constantly was of opinion, that prudence ought at all times to be consulted in measures of dignity, and that they ought not to assert powers of authority at a season when, from weakness, they were unable to support their claim. To agitate a question, therefore, respecting the powers of supremacy and superintendency, which this country asserted over a sister kingdom, at a time when that kingdom was disposed to militate the principle, must certainly be dangerous ground, and particularly so at a moment when the country was involved in a scene of complicated calamities, and was threatened with the most decisive ruin. He trusted that the house would forgive him, if, in the situation he then stood, he should take up a few minutes of their time in stating his sentiments of the question; since he knew from experience, that

pains would be taken to misrepresent what he should say, in order to place him in a light unfavourable to the people of Ireland. The insidious pains that had been exerted on a former occasion to misrepresent both him and other gentlemen on the same side of the house, had not altogether failed in producing the intended effect of making them odious in the eyes of a people whom they loved and honoured. Difficult and dangerous as the situation was, he could not be induced from any apprehensions of personal consequence to permit a matter charged with so much apparent danger to pass unnoticed; at the same time, he was not insensible of the unfavourable opinions of his fellow-citizens. He had many reasons of friendship and affection for wishing to stand well in the eyes of the people of Ireland; and it was not his purpose to attack the claim which they had set up to legislative independency. They had not a friend in that house more warmly attached to their interests than himself. He wished to show the dangers and alarming tendency of this bill both to the liberties of England and of Ireland; and he thought, to be silent on such a subject would be tacitly to assist in taking away from the people in order to enlarge the prerogative of the crown, in demolishing and subverting the liberties of the subject in order to give the prince a means of becoming absolute. He had been held out, he was aware, as the enemy of Ireland, and the first lord of the treasury (lord North), had been declared to be the best friend of that country, though he (Fox) had uniformly endeavoured to support the rights and liberties of the Irish, and to give them all they requested long ago, which the noble lord had positively denied them till they had armed themselves, and then, by three specific propositions, had given more to force than he had before denied to supplication. In better times than these, Mr. Fox said, he should probably have entered upon the topic in a manner and in language widely different from that he meant to adopt and to use on the present occasion. In better times than these, he should have talked of the superintending power of the British parliament over Ireland, and over every part of the British monarchy; but such was the miserable situation to which the king's servants had reduced this country, that the question was of a very delicate nature indeed, and it was by no means a

matter easy to be handled without disturbing what ought not to be disturbed, and without producing consequences which every man who wished well to his country must wish to avoid. In the present question, he wished to speak and act agreeably to the sentiments of some of the first and best men in the parliament of Ireland. The power of supremacy and superintendency of this country over her distant connexions, were topics which he knew were at that time dangerous to be touched, but which had never been so at any former period of our history. Ten years ago it would not have been considered as improper or dangerous to talk on these topics, because then they were considered as necessary to the liberties and the well-being of the empire. They were not only considered by that house in this light, but by every part of our extended empire they were allowed and acknowledged the same. It was the weakness of administration that had given rise to different ideas. America had never complained of these powers till her calm and sober requests were refused; and Ireland had not asserted the contrary till relief was denied when her grievances were manifest. But now the topics were dangerous to be touched. The weakness and the wantonness of ministers had introduced into that house difficulties and embarrassments new and unprecedented, and he must yield to the disagreeable necessity of submission. But he might say, that if he had been speaking on this subject ten years ago, he would have found no difficulty in saying, that the superintendency and supremacy of this country was necessary to the liberty of the empire, for many great, and, in his opinion, unanswerable reasons, and that in particular they ought to be careful never to give out of their own hands the power of making a mutiny bill. He would have been able to have advanced various reasons for retaining this privilege, the first and most powerful of which would have been a reason of apprehension lest at some future moment of negligence or corruption, the parliament of Ireland, the assemblies of any of the colonies of America, or of any other of our foreign connexions, should be tempted or prevailed on to grant a perpetual mutiny bill. If he had advanced this argument, he knew that it would have been immediately said of him, that he pushed speculation to excess, that he was chimerical and libellous in his ideas, for

that no house of representatives could be so negligent or corrupt as to grant such a bill, and no people so blind and supine as to bear it. Might he not then now say this, when it was not an argument of speculation but experience, and when the parliament of Ireland had actually granted a perpetual mutiny bill to the crown, by which they had invested the sovereign with the power of a standing army, unlimited in point of numbers or duration. There were in the passing of this bill, so granted, also several circumstances of a suspicious nature, which implied, in pretty plain language, that it was imposed upon them by the cabinet of England. It originated in the privy council of this country, and was sent over at a time when Ireland was loud in her claim of independent legislation. The cabinet took advantage of the heat and the inflammation of Ireland, with respect to independence, and granted them the one thing, provided they would purchase it at the price of the other. They applied to the passions of the country; they seized on parliament in the moment of their warmth, and appealing perhaps to other passions than those of patriotic phrenzy, they procured the consent of parliament to this, and received a perpetual standing army, in defiance of the declaration of rights. Many of the first members of the Irish parliament were sensible of the shock which that bill gave at once to the liberty of Ireland and England. Mr. Grattan called upon the people of this country to stand forward and protect the liberties of both by preventing the dangerous effects of a law so violent and contradictory to the constitution. It was therefore a business in which both nations were equally affected, and in which they ought equally to unite. It was a species of conspiracy between the cabinet and that part of the people of Ireland, who, anxious for independence, were intoxicated with the idea, and inclined to purchase it at any price. A conspiracy to give a mutiny bill of their own to Ireland, in return for a grant from Ireland of a perpetual army to the crown, a thing wholly unwarranted by the constitution. It was curious and alarming that in the Irish mutiny bill, the preamble was left out which recited the declaration of rights. What could be the inducement of that omission? It contained no enacting law, and consequently was in no ways an attack on the legislative independence of Ireland. It was merely declara-

tory, and as the constitution and rights in both countries were the same, the declaration of those rights was equally applicable to both; but it was found expedient to leave out the preamble because the words "Whereas it is illegal in the crown to keep a standing army in times of peace," were in direct contradiction to the bill which had been granted. The danger of the bill would appear in its full magnitude when gentlemen reflected that all that was necessary now to the maintenance of a standing army in Ireland, unlimited in number and duration, was the power of the purse. He considered the statute of king William, commonly called the disbanding statute, reducing the number of troops to twelve thousand, and which by a late act had been raised to fifteen thousand, to be still in force with respect to this country, but it was not so agreeable to the present idea of the people of Ireland, so that there was no power sufficiently restrictive on ministers against maintaining in that country an army to any extent. But it might be argued, that without the power of the purse, the power of the army was nothing. It had been the policy of Britain to keep them both in her own hands, and she had granted them only for one year. As there was no responsibility in the ministers under the existing laws, and as it was not in the power of either kingdom to bring them to a legal parliamentary conviction, the ministers who advised the perpetual mutiny bill were guilty of high treason. The act giving the crown a perpetual mutiny bill, in direct violation of the declaration of rights, was high treason against the constitution of the realm. But how could he get at the authors of the treason in the present circumstances? It was perfectly impossible, for there was no responsibility to be established against them. This difficulty had been incurred by a system of negligence and incapacity. Any other minister would have softened when it could have been done with propriety, or resisted when it could have been done with success; but the noble lord had acted contrary to every expectation. When Ireland, in a decent, sober style, applied to parliament for relief from restrictions which were at once impolitic and illiberal, the noble lord attended more to the representations of individual members, influenced by their constituents, the manufacturers of trading towns, than to the unanimous call of a whole country. The minister was obliged,

on account of the American war, to court the votes of individual members, and when the gentlemen on that side of the house had carried a decisive question, he came down two days afterwards, and resisted their anxious endeavours to redress the grievances of the Irish, when they were temperate in their requests. The honourable gentleman then stated the powerful and rapid effect of the resolution and spirit of Ireland. Their associations had done more in a moment than all the effects of friendship in their favour. All false reasoning had vanished; all little partial motives of resistance had ceased; local considerations died away instantly; and the noble lord in the blue ribbon, who had shewn himself the last man to listen to supplication, was the first man to give way to force. The noble lord came down to that house, and by three lumping propositions did more for Ireland than she had ventured to ask; not that he blamed the noble lord for the concessions; he had acted wisely, and had properly told the house, that commercial considerations ought not to be taken upon a narrow illiberal scale, but should be looked at as great objects. All that he blamed in the noble lord was for having done that meanly which he might have done with grace and dignity. An army might thereafter be raised and maintained in Ireland under that law, which, though legal in Ireland, would be illegal in England, and not the less dangerous from being illegal; soldiers raised, enlisted, and attested in England, might be sent to Ireland, and placed under the military law, which in one instance at least was different from the law of England, since it gave the king a power over them in everything short of life and limb. Though an enemy to the dangerous influence of the crown, he was a friend to its just prerogative, and he considered the power vested in his majesty of sending troops to whatever part of his dominions that might require their assistance, a most valuable prerogative. It was on this ground that the earl of Chatham said that retrenching the number of troops to be employed in Ireland, was "tearing the master-feather from the eagle's wing." That bill therefore, containing different laws, became dangerous to the prerogative. Many more things he had on his mind to offer on the subject, but he saw the impropriety of urging all that had occurred to him. He was restrained by the consciousness that everything which he said would be misre-

presented in Ireland, and that for the basest of purposes. He reminded the house again, that the Irish mutiny bill had originated in this country, and that it had passed under the most suspicious and alarming circumstances. He concluded with saying, that he should move for the recommitment of the bill when the present question was settled.

Fox's motion led to no result with regard to Ireland; nor does the subject appear to have been pursued any farther. In Ireland, the summer of 1781 was chiefly occupied in reviewing and organizing the volunteer corps, and in popular meetings, and was marked by no event of prominent importance. On the 9th of October, the earl of Carlisle opened a new session of the Irish parliament; and in his speech, after the usual mention of the charter schools, he proceeded to allude to other branches of national industry. "I am sensible also," he said, "of the expediency and good policy of the encouragements which are accustomed to be given, as well to the linen manufacture as to tillage, to the fisheries, the inland carriage and export of corn, and other great national objects. It will deserve, however, your best attention and vigilance to ascertain and enforce the strict and due expenditure of such sums as may be granted for these wise and benevolent purposes. His majesty ardently wishes the happiness of his people of Ireland, in whose affection and loyalty he places the firmest reliance; and though I am not directed to call upon you for any extraordinary supplies in this time of general hostility, when these kingdoms are exposed to an unnatural and dangerous combination of enemies, I have not the smallest doubt that I shall be enabled to assure his majesty of your cordial disposition to give him every assistance compatible with your means and circumstances. No event could more contribute to the public security than the general concurrence with which the late spirited offers of assistance were presented to me from every part of this kingdom; and I am fully convinced that, if necessity had arisen, it was in my power to have called into action all the strength and spirit of a brave and loyal people, eager, under my direction, to be employed in aid of his majesty's regular forces, for the public defence. I trust that every part of my conduct will demonstrate how much it is the wish of my heart to engage your confidence. I shall claim it

only in proportion as I shall be found to deserve it, by an unwearied endeavour to promote the prosperity of Ireland; and I am sensible that this is the best method of recommending my services to our sovereign, and of obtaining your concurrence toward the ease and honour of my administration."

Thus, in continuance of the weak policy of his predecessor, or rather, it would appear, that of lord North's government, the new lord lieutenant actually gave his public approbation to the very volunteer force which had been indirectly censured at the close of the preceding session of parliament, and on which the government certainly did not look with a favourable eye. On the contrary, it was now generally understood that the government wished to check and disarm the volunteers, and that it was fear alone which forced the ministers into an outward acquiescence.

The debate on the address turned principally on the volunteers, and it was remarked how cautiously direct mention of them was avoided, although every one knew that the speech and the address were intended as an approval of their conduct. At length Mr. O'Neill, seconded by Mr. Connolly, moved a direct vote of thanks to the volunteers, "for their exertions and continuance, and for their loyal and spirited declarations on the late expected invasion." This proposition led to a rather animated discussion. Some members urged the inconsistency of the house in closing one session with a vote of censure on, and commencing the next with a vote of thanks to, the same body of men. In reply to this it was insisted that the vote of the preceding session was directed against the printers and publishers of their resolutions, and not against the volunteers themselves, while others insisted that parliament was not infallible, but that it might commit an error on one occasion, and afterwards correct itself. Some even urged that the house should order the vote of censure to be expunged from its journals. In the end, the vote of thanks to the volunteers was passed unanimously, and it was ordered that they should be presented by the sheriffs of the different counties.

The patriotic party in the house of commons were particularly active at the commencement of the session. On the 10th of October leave was obtained to bring in a habeas corpus bill; Mr. Grattan announced

his intention of again bringing the mutiny-bill under discussion; and among other announcements of popular bills, Mr. Yelverton declared his intention, immediately after the recess, of asking leave to bring in heads of a bill to regulate the transmission of bills to England. The recess lasted three weeks, and on the first day of meeting after it, which was the 29th of October, the recorder of Dublin, Mr. Bradstreet, one of the most zealous of the patriots, presented a petition from the guild of merchants, complaining of the little advantage likely to be derived from the late concessions of the English legislature in favour of their commerce. It appears that great hopes had been placed in an extensive trade with Portugal, and now that country had somewhat capriciously refused to admit Irish manufactures. This refusal gave rise to considerable discussion, but it only took off attention for a moment from the more general subjects of complaint. The exertions of the court to keep the ministerial party entire were not sufficient to hinder several defections from their ranks, among which the principal was that of Mr. Flood, whose opposition to ministers was rendered more bitter by the loss of his place. On the 13th of November a warm debate arose upon a bill to amend and limit the mutiny bill, which was moved by Grattan and seconded by Flood, and on that occasion the patriotic party numbered seventy-seven votes against a hundred and thirty-three. Mr. Yelverton had promised to move for leave to bring in a bill to amend Poyning's act on the 5th of December, but when that day came, the melancholy news of the surrender of lord Cornwallis's army in America had just arrived. Mr. Yelverton rose in the house of commons to adjourn the consideration of his motion, and made a speech which was deservedly admired by all parties. "I had determined this day," he said, "to bring on a motion, which I think it my indispensable duty at a proper time to pursue; a motion of which I will never lose sight, until a mode of legislation utterly repugnant to the British constitution shall be done away; but the melancholy intelligence received from America has, for the present, diverted my attention from that object, and turned my thoughts into another train; and I think it but decent to defer the consideration of Poyning's law, and for the present devote my whole faculties to the momentous situation of the public affairs of the British empire. I have

always looked upon the true interest of Great Britain and Ireland as inseparable; and I thank heaven we have now more reason to say so than ever. Great Britain cannot experience a misfortune which we shall not feel. She cannot gain an advantage which we shall not partake. It would then ill become the approved generosity and unshaken loyalty of the Irish people to remain in silent apathy or sullen insensibility on so great an occasion, when Britain, surrounded with enemies, and struggling with magnanimity against a warring world, becomes the object of admiration of every generous mind. But when, as Irishmen, we consider our connexions with England, what ought to be our feelings? We are called upon to testify our affection and unalterable attachment to that country, and to convince foreign nations that we do not despair of the commonwealth, but that the British empire still has power and resources to render her formidable to her numerous enemies, and to convince them that the dismemberment she has suffered has only served to draw the remaining parts into closer union and interest. I will therefore move, that an humble address be presented to his majesty, to express our unalterable loyalty and attachment to his majesty's royal person, family, and government, and to assure his majesty that in the present critical situation of affairs, when his majesty's dominions are exposed to a powerful and dangerous combination of enemies, we think it peculiarly incumbent on us to declare our warmest zeal for the honour of his majesty's crown, and our most earnest wishes for the British empire. That, conscious that our interests are become inseparably united with those of Great Britain, we feel that the events of war involve both countries in a common calamity; and to entreat his majesty to believe, that we hold it to be our indispensable duty, as it is our most hearty inclination, cheerfully to support his majesty to the utmost of our abilities in all such measures as can tend to defeat the confederacy of his majesty's enemies, and to restore the blessings of a lasting and honourable peace."

The only opposition to this motion was made by a few members, who fancied that it implied their approval of the American war, and it was carried by a very large majority.

On the seventh of December Mr. Grattan again led the patriots of the house of commons, in an attack on the financial management of the government. "Your debt," he

said, "including annuities, is £2,667,600; of this debt, in the last fourteen years, you have borrowed above £1,900,000, in the last eight years above £1,500,000, and in the last two years £910,090. I state not only the fact of your debt, but the progress of your accumulation, to show the rapid mortality of your distemper, the accelerated velocity with which you advance to ruin; and if the question stood alone on this ground it would stand firm; for I must farther observe, that if this enormous debt be the debt of the peace establishment, not accumulated by directing the artillery of your arms against a foreign enemy, but by directing the artillery of your treasury against your constitution, it is a debt of patronage and prostitution." He then proceeded to analyze the various articles of the government estimates; in reply to which the ministers attempted to deny his facts, and refute his deductions. However, when the speaker presented his money-bills, he could again rejoice in the despatch and facility with which the supplies were granted, and he did not lose the opportunity of again flattering the volunteers. "Though no material change in the circumstances of this kingdom has taken place since the conclusion of the last session, it ought to be, and I am persuaded is, a subject of general satisfaction to reflect that, amidst the horrors of war, it has shared none of its calamities; that the public tranquillity has been preserved within, and that the dangers with which it was threatened from without, have been averted by his majesty's paternal care, by your excellency's vigilance and judicious conduct, and by the voluntary and virtuous exertions of its own loyal and brave inhabitants; nor is the future prospect less pleasing than the view of what is past. Several attempts have been lately made, and with some success, to establish in this kingdom new manufactures, to revive and improve the old, and to extend its commerce; the lower orders of the people are recovering from their former indolence and ignorance, and the spirit of enterprise and of industry, the great spring of national happiness, begins to diffuse itself throughout the nation. From these dispositions in the people, and the generous encouragement given to every useful undertaking by those of higher conditions, it seems not too much confidence to hope that the time is not far distant when this kingdom will emerge from that state of inaction and languor into which it was sunk,

and that it will assume that rank in the empire which belongs to it, and become one of its principal pillars. The commons, sensible of the benefits they enjoy under your excellency's just and wise administration, have, with unusual dispatch, granted all the supplies which were required, and have also made provision for the discharge of an arrear of £300,000 incurred since the last session; and though they have not imposed on the subject any new or additional tax, except for the purposes of regulation, they are not without hopes the revenue will hereafter prove adequate to the public service, and that the augmentation made by such regulation, and the reformation already commenced in the collection and management of it, will prevent any future deficiency."

Poynings' law, as the ground of many of the most unpopular pretensions of the crown, although it was certainly intended originally to protect the people against their governors, now became the object of attacks which ended in its abolition. On the 11th of December, 1781, Flood carried out the design of Mr. Yelverton in moving for a committee to examine the precedents and records that day produced, and such others as might be necessary to explain the law of Poynings. The argument he followed was, that Poynings' law was itself a constitutional one, but that the interpretation put upon it was unconstitutional, and that it was contrary to its intention and spirit. He said that it was highly unconstitutional for any of the three estates, king, lords, or commons, to intrench upon the privileges of either of the other; that each had its separate and distinct province, the deliberative authority of the state resting with the houses of lords and commons, the executive with the king. The constitution had invested the two houses with the deliberative authority of propounding and framing laws by which the people were to be governed, because they themselves were the people's representatives; and it had given the king only a negative on the laws when proposed, because he was the executive officer, and had no occasion for any right of interference in the business of legislation, but just so much as was necessary to defend his own prerogative from the encroachments of the other estates, which he was sufficiently enabled to do, from a power of negating any law which he thought might be injurious to that prerogative. But this, which was the beauty and strength of the British con-

stitution, and to which the people of Ireland were fully entitled as participating in that constitution, had been wrested from them, not by the act of the 10th of Henry the Seventh, commonly called Poynings' law, nor by the explanatory acts of Philip and Mary, but by the corrupt and vicious construction and interpretation given to those acts, by the twelve judges of England, but more especially by the decision of nine judges of Ireland, whose names that decision had consigned to everlasting infamy. Yet corrupt and venal as that decision was, there were two subsequent authorities generally urged in support of this false construction of the law, that went further than even the judges had ventured to go. He observed that the reigns antecedent to the coming of the family of the Stuart, had produced the worst precedents for the English, and the reigns since the worst for the Irish constitution. The first warp and perversion was given in the reign of James I., who came from the throne of Scotland, to that of England and Ireland, filled with Scottish prejudices, and entertaining a very exalted notion indeed of royal prerogative. In very early times the Scottish parliaments enjoyed the full power of enacting all laws; the king only put them in execution, but had not even a negative on their passing; this was much less power than a king ought to have; and in time the Scottish kings contrived to acquire more; for at the period that parliament enjoyed this plentitude of power, attendance on public business was thought a very great hardship. There are many instances of boroughs, &c., praying to be eased of the burden of sending representatives. This reluctance and disinclination to attend gave rise to an alteration in the constitution; for in order, as much as possible, to ease the members of parliament, that their term of attendance might be shortened, and that they might only have to decide upon such laws as were to be passed, a committee was selected under the name of lords of articles. The office of this committee was to prepare all the laws which the parliament was to pass, consequently it became an object of great importance to the Scottish kings to have the selecting of the persons who were to sit in this committee; and this object they found means to attain. Then began that favourite doctrine, "that the parliament could not take any matter into consideration till it had been propounded on the part of the crown;" and though in

the worst times it was never fully obeyed, so as to make the king absolute master of the parliament, yet the power acquired by the king in nominating the lords of articles, put the parliament down as much below its natural dignity as the king had formerly been. King James attempted to introduce this practice into Ireland, and with but too much success; for when some opposition was made to it in parliament, he sent over for a committee of the members, whom he ordered to attend him in England, and having lectured them upon the sublime authority of kings, and the mysterious art of legislation; and having informed them that it was a subject above the capacity of parliament, those gentlemen came home much better courtiers than they went, and consented to a resolution soon after proposed, "that parliaments were but humble remembrancers to his majesty." Another attempt was made to divest parliament of their authority, which, indeed, had no weight as a precedent, being under the infamous administration of lord Strafford. The lords of Ireland he had reduced so low, as to make their own journals the record of their shame; and the commons (whom at his first coming he had called together, and from whom he had demanded a supply) pleading the poverty and inability of the nation, he told them that that he stood there in the person of the king, not to supplicate, but demand his right; and if it were refused, he would think himself bound to use the army to enforce it. Mr. Flood then went back to an early period of the English history, and proved the manner of originating laws in parliament, on which the king had only a negative, and that even during the most despotic reigns, till the pernicious principles brought in by the Stuarts were attempted to be enforced against the people's rights, and the unfortunate Charles fell a victim to his own ambition, as did lord Strafford to the corrupt and tyrannic disposition which influenced his conduct in Ireland.

Flood then proceeded to analyze the law of Poynings, and show its meaning and object. He was opposed by the provost and the attorney-general, and on a division, the motion was negatived by a majority of a hundred and thirty-six against sixty-seven. Yet Flood was not deterred from repeating his motion under other forms.

This attempt was followed by a new effort to give relief to the catholics. The subject was laid before parliament on

the 13th of September, when Mr. Luke Gardiner, afterwards lord Mountjoy, announced his intention of moving for leave to bring in a bill in their favour. The struggle for political emancipation seemed to have softened down religious prejudices, and Mr. Gardiner's proposal was in general well received. A few still preserved all their old animosities against the papists, and manifested the utmost alarm. Sir Richard Johnson declared his intention of opposing any bill which might permit the papists to carry arms; and others expressed similar apprehensions, which Mr. Gardiner calmed by declaring that it was not his intention to introduce in his bill clauses of the description which seemed to give so much uneasiness. The general feeling, however, seemed to be a wish to unite all classes of Irishmen in the cause of patriotism, and before the Christmas adjournment, Mr. Gardiner caused to be printed and distributed the heads of his bill, the main object of which was to allow the catholics to possess land. On the last day of January, 1782, immediately after the adjournment, another debate occurred on this subject, when Mr. John Burke declared his intention of opposing any measure for taking off the restraint which had been placed by the wisdom of their ancestors on the catholic portion of the population. On the 5th of February, the heads of the bill were brought forward, which caused another warm debate, and this was renewed on the 15th, when it was moved to go into committee upon the bill. On this last occasion, Mr. Fitzgibbon, who had hitherto supported the bill, alarmed the house by declaring that on reading the bill over more carefully, it had struck him that the first clause amounted to a repeal of the act of settlement, the act of forfeiture, and the act of reassumption, and that, if this were the case, the whole kingdom would be thrown into the utmost confusion by it. Mr. Grattan complained of the delays and interruptions which the bill had experienced, and said that the promoters of the bill did not object to any alteration of the clause complained of which might meet the approval of the lawyers. On the 18th, however, all further delay on this ground was prevented by the declaration of the lawyers that the clause did not go so far as it was imagined, and Mr. Fitzgibbon professed himself satisfied. Still the bill met with a very resolute opposition, against which it required all the talent of Grattan

and his colleagues to support it. Some stigmatized it as utterly ruinous to the protestant ascendancy in Ireland. Even Flood, who advocated the principle of the bill, was afraid that the possession of the fee-simple would give the catholics political power, as it would carry with it influence in elections. Several members spoke in support of this objection. Others were opposed to the catholics receiving foreign education, and suggested that they should be admitted to the university. Others, again, objected to their being permitted the open and public exercise of their religion, and they were still more opposed to allowing the same toleration to the regular clergy as to the secular priests. Others declared their opinion that it would be but justice and policy to abolish the whole penal code without any exceptions.

Wishing to take advantage of the various degrees of indulgence expressed by different members of the house, and at least to secure some degree of relief, Mr. Gardiner sepa-

rated his measure into three different bills, the first of which passed into a law, and enabled the catholics to take, hold, and dispose of lands and hereditaments in the same manner as protestants, with the exception of advowsons and manors, or boroughs returning members for parliament; as well as removing some other disabilities and repealing some of the most obnoxious parts of the penal acts.* The second bill also passed into a law under the title of "An act to allow persons professing the popish religion to teach school in this kingdom, and for the regulating the education of papists, and also to repeal parts of certain laws relative to the guardianship of their children." This relieved the catholics from some of the most obnoxious restrictions on the education and guardianship of their children. The third of these laws, which was to authorize intermarriage between catholics and protestants, was negatived by a majority of eight. Thus another breach was made in the oppressive penal code.

CHAPTER VI.

PROGRESS OF THE VOLUNTEERS; MEETING AT DUNGANNON; LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE GRANTED.



WHILE matters were thus progressing in parliament, public opinion was making much more rapid strides without. People saw that the efforts of such of their representatives in parliament as supported the popular cause were fruitless, or their fruit came but slowly and

imperfectly, and they became more impatient. The parliamentary majority was in the hands of a government little inclined to make concessions to popular demands, and the concessions to which they were forced were insufficient, and generally granted too late. On the other side, the people of Ireland stood in arms, asserting their rights, whether real or imaginary, and declaring their resolution to obtain them. It was evident that things could not long go on thus, and executed for the offence. A single catholic might be compelled to pay the whole sum, even though he lived at the opposite extremity of the county to that in which the depredation had occurred. An instance was given of a gentleman who resided nearly thirty miles from the place where an offence of this kind had been committed, on whom, nevertheless, the amount was levied by virtue of an execution taken out of the crown office, and he and his family were turned out upon the country beggars. Among the obnoxious laws now repealed, was that which prohibited papists from possessing a horse of the value of five pounds or more.

* In the course of these debates many instances were given of the extremely oppressive character of many of these penal laws. By one of them Roman catholics were compelled to make good the depredations committed by robbers in the county in which they resided. One member said that in the county of Kilkenny, to his knowledge, a number of villains assembled, under the name of whiteboys, and did considerable mischief; the grand jury, from the affidavits of the sufferers (it was sufficient to say that the robbers spoke with an Irish accent), granted a presentment against the Roman catholics of the county. A short time after one of the offenders was apprehended, who proved to be a protestant, and was

the first movement towards the new crisis was made by the officers of the southern battalion of the Armagh regiment of volunteers, commanded by lord Charlemont, who met at Armagh on the 28th of December, 1781, to consult on the state of public affairs. This was considered to be so serious, that it was determined to call a general meeting of the volunteers of the province of Ulster, and a series of resolutions were passed, in which the officers declared, "That, with the utmost concern, we behold the little attention paid to the constitutional rights of this kingdom, by the majority of those whose duty it is to establish and preserve the same. That to avert the impending danger from the nation, and to restore the constitution to its original purity, the most vigorous and effectual methods must be pursued to root out corruption and court influence from the legislative body. That to open a path towards the attaining of this desirable point, it is absolutely requisite that a meeting be held in the most central town of the province of Ulster, which we conceive to be Dungannon, to which said meeting every volunteer association of the said province is most earnestly requested to send delegates, then and there to deliberate on the present alarming situation of public affairs, and to determine on and publish to their country what may be the result of the said meeting. That, as many real and lasting advantages may arise to this kingdom from the said intended meeting being held before the present session of parliament is much farther advanced, Friday, the 15th day of February next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, is hereby appointed for the said meeting, at Dungannon as aforesaid. That as at the said meeting it is highly probable the idea of forming brigades will be agitated and considered, the several corps of volunteers who send delegates to the said meeting, are requested to vest in them a power to associate with some one of such brigades as may be then formed."

When these resolutions appeared in the various newspapers, the government was struck with the utmost alarm, but it had been so long in the habit of looking on passively at the proceedings of the volunteers, that it was no longer in a position to act vigorously. The ministers were afraid to provoke, and they therefore only exerted themselves indirectly to prevent the meeting, and were unsuccessful. Few circum-

stances had caused so much general anxiety as this call to action; for many of the patriots themselves were apprehensive of the result, and some looked upon it as a dangerous step. However, when the day came, the 15th of February, 1782, delegates from a hundred and forty-three corps of the volunteers of Ulster were assembled at Dungannon. The church was selected as the place of meeting, which was distinguished by a calmness of temper that few expected. The chair was taken by colonel William Irvine, and among the more distinguished men who took part in it were the earl of Charlemont, a prominent leader of the patriots, Grattan, and Flood. The result of the meeting was the following series of resolutions, which were immediately printed in the Irish newspapers:—

"Whereas, it has been asserted that volunteers, as such, cannot with propriety debate or publish their opinions on political subjects, or on the conduct of parliament or public men. 1. Resolved, that a citizen, by learning the use of arms, does not abandon any of his civil rights. 2. That a claim of any body of men, other than the king, lords, and commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom, is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance. 3. That the powers exercised by a privy council of both kingdoms, under, or under colour or pretence of the law of Poynings, are unconstitutional and a grievance. 4. That the ports of this country are by right open to all foreign countries not at war with the king; and that any burthen thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the parliament of Ireland, are unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance. 5. That a mutiny bill, not limited in point of duration from session to session, is unconstitutional and a grievance. 6. That the independence of judges is equally essential to the impartial administration of justice in Ireland, as in England; and that the refusal or delay of this right to Ireland, makes a distinction where there should be no distinction, may excite jealousy where perfect union should prevail, and is in itself unconstitutional and a grievance. 7. That it is our decided and unalterable determination, to seek a redress of these grievances; and we pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, as freeholders, fellow-citizens, and men of honour, that we will, at every ensuing election, support those only who have supported and will support us therein; and

that we will use all constitutional means to make such our pursuit of redress speedy and effectual. 8. That the right honourable and honourable the minority in parliament, who have supported these our constitutional rights, are entitled to our most grateful thanks; and that the annexed address be signed by the chairman, and published with these resolutions.* 9. That four members from each county of the province of Ulster, eleven to be a quorum, be and are hereby appointed a committee till next general meeting, to act for the volunteer corps here represented, and as occasion shall require, to call general meetings of province. 10. That the said committee do appoint nine of their members to be a committee in Dublin, in order to communicate with such other volunteer associations in the other provinces as may think proper to come to similar resolutions, and to deliberate with them on the most constitutional means of carrying them into effect. 11. That the committee be and are hereby instructed to call a general meeting of the province, within twelve months from this day, or in fourteen days after the dissolution of the present parliament, should such an event sooner take place. 12. That the court of Portugal have acted towards this kingdom (being a part of the British empire) in such a manner as to call upon us to declare and pledge ourselves to each other that we will not consume any wine of the growth of Portugal; and that we will, to the extent of our influence, prevent the use of the said wine, save and except the wine at present in this kingdom, until such time as our exports shall be received into the kingdom of Portugal, as the manufactures of part of the British empire. 13. That we hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as ourselves. 14. Resolved, therefore, that as men and as Irishmen, as christians and as protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman catholic fellow-subjects; and we conceive the measure to be fraught with the

* The address referred to was as follows:—

"To the Right Honourable and Honourable the Minority of both Houses of Parliament."

"My lords and gentlemen,—We thank you for your noble and spirited, though hitherto ineffectual, efforts in defence of the great constitutional and commercial rights of your country. Go on! the almost unanimous voice of the people is with you; and in a free country, the voice of the people must prevail. We know our duty to our sovereign, and

happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland."†

No sooner had the proceedings of the Dungannon meeting been made public, than a new spirit seemed to have been given to the popular party. The volunteers in other parts of Ireland held meetings, and declared their adherence to the resolutions of their brethren in the north. Committees of correspondence were formed, with a central national committee to regulate the movement. One of the first acts of the Ulster committee was to publish an address to the electors of members of parliament in that province, in the following terms:—

"Delegated by the volunteers assembled at Dungannon, we call on you to support the constitutional and commercial rights of Ireland; to exert the important privileges of freemen at the ensuing election, and to proclaim to the world that you at least deserve to be free. Regard not the threats of landlords or their agents, when they require you to fail in your duty to God, to your country, to yourselves, to your posterity. The first privilege of a man is the right of judging for himself, and now is the time for you to exert that right. It is a time pregnant with circumstances, which revolving ages may not again so favourably combine. The spirit of liberty is gone abroad, it is embraced by the people at large, and every day brings with it an accession of strength. The timid have laid aside their fears, and the virtuous sons of Ireland stand secure in their numbers. Undue influence is now as despised as it has ever been contemptible; and he who would dare to punish an elector for exerting the rights of a freeman, would meet what he would merit—public detestation and abhorrence. Let no individual neglect his duty. The nation is an aggregate of individuals, and the strength of the whole is composed of the exertions of each part; the man, therefore, who omits what is in his power, and will not exert his utmost efforts for the emancipation of his country, because they can at best be the efforts are loyal. We know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be free. We seek for our rights, and no more than our rights; and, in so just a pursuit, we should doubt the being a Providence, if we doubted of success.—Signed by order,

"WILLIAM IRVINE, chairman."

† These resolutions were carried unanimously, with the exception of Nos. 3, 5, and 8, to each of which there was one dissenting voice; No. 7, to which there were eleven dissenting voices; and Nos. 13 and 14, to which there were two dissenting voices.

of but one man, stands accountable to his God and to his country, to himself and to his posterity, for confirming and entailing slavery on the land which gave him birth. An upright house of commons is all that is wanting, and it is in the power of the electors to obtain it. Vote only for men whose past conduct in parliament you and the nation approve, and for such others as will solemnly pledge themselves to support the measures which you and the nation approve. Do your duty to your country, and let no consideration tempt you to sacrifice the public to a private tie, the greater duty to a less. We entreat you, in the name of the great and respectable body we represent; we implore you, by every social and honourable tie; we conjure you as citizens, as freemen, as Irishmen; to raise this long-insulted kingdom, and restore to her her lost rights. One great and united effort will place us among the first nations of the earth, and those who shall have the glory of contributing to that event, will be for ever recorded as the saviours of their country."

This will serve as a specimen of the addresses and other papers which were now scattered over Ireland, and raised the national excitement to the utmost pitch, without leading to any violence, for it was generally observed, that Ireland never was so quiet as at that moment. The public agitation seemed everywhere to find a vent in public meetings and debates. These became alarming to the government by their numbers and by the resolute tone with which they spoke of the proceedings of parliament. Among those at which the strongest language was spoken, was a full meeting of the grand jury, gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of the county of Galway, assembled pursuant to public notice from the high-sheriff, at the county-hall, in Galway, on the 31st of March, when the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to:—

"Resolved, that a seat in parliament was never intended by our constitution as an instrument of emolument to individuals; and that the representative who perverts it to such purpose (particularly at so momentous a period as the present), is guilty of betraying the trust reposed in him by the people for their, not his, benefit.—That the people who could tamely behold their suffrages made the tool of private avarice or ambition, are still more criminal than

the venal representatives, as they become the panders, without even the wages of prostitution.—That when we daily see the mandate of the minister supersede all conviction in debate; when placed and pensioned members of parliament notoriously support in public measures which they condemn in private; when the hirelings of corruption avow, and government have exemplified in recent instances of distinguished public characters,* that to vote according to conscience, amounts to a disqualification to hold any office in the service of our country; it is time for the people to look to themselves, and in great national questions to assert their right to control those who owe their political existence to their birth, and may be annihilated by their displeasure.—That, at an era when everything that can be dear to a nation is at stake, we are called upon by our duty to ourselves, to our country, and to posterity, to stand forth, and by the most unremitting exertions stem the returning torrent of corruption at home, and resist usurpation from abroad, that all mankind may see we are determined to preserve the purity, while we vindicate the rights, of our legislature.—Resolved therefore, that we do hereby solemnly pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, by every tie of honour and religion which can be binding to man, that, as the sacred duty which we owe to the community supersedes all ties and obligations to individuals, we will not suffer private friendship or private virtues to warp our settled determination not to vote for any man, at a future election, either for county, town, or borough, who shall act in opposition to our instructions, and who will not subscribe a test to obey them previous to the election, or who shall absent himself when those questions on which we instruct him are agitated in Parliament.—That the king, lords, and commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make laws to bind this kingdom, and that we will resist the execution of any other laws with our lives and fortunes.—That if force constitutes right, the people of this country have a right to use force against the man who dares to maintain doctrines subversive of their constitution; but as the object is beneath the national resentment, we shall only bid such a man beware how he hereafter trifles with the rights of his

* This alluded more particularly to the case of Flood.

country, and provokes the vengeance of a people determined to be free.—That we highly approve of the resolutions of the volunteer delegates assembled at Dungannon and Ballinasloe.”

This assembly also directed letters to be addressed to the two representatives in parliament for the county of Galway; one of which ran as follows:—“There is a moment in the affairs of nations as well as of individuals, which if seized and happily improved, may lead to prosperity; if neglected, may terminate in the rivetting of its oppressions. Such a moment is the present; the eyes of Europe are upon us, and posterity will read our conduct with applause or execration, according to the use we make of the opportunities which a providential combination of events has afforded us. When the rights of a nation become objects of public question or discussion, not to assert is to relinquish, to hesitate is to betray. The die is cast; if we advance with a manly and determined step, we insure success; if we recede or divide, we sink for ever; in so awful an hour, who is the man that, however unwilling to provoke the question, will not in the day of trial be found at his post? Your private opinion, sir, must give way to the national voice; the assemblage of qualities which formed and elevated your character, raised you to one of the most exalted situations a subject could arrive at—your abilities remain—we have relied on your integrity; yet, we cannot but lament, that at the moment we stood in need of all the influence of such a character, its brightness should have been shaded, and its weight lost to the nation, by being placed in a station in which, however chaste, it may at least be suspected. But waiving at present the consideration of this subject, we now call upon you, as one of our representatives, as you value our future approbation and support, to give your fullest assistance to the following measures, whenever they shall be proposed in parliament; viz.—a declaration of our natural rights; an ademption of the assumed power of the privy council to stop or alter bills; a mutiny bill limited in its duration; a bill rendering the judges independent of the crown; and a bill to reduce the expenses of this nation to a level with its revenues, as we cannot conceive a conduct more insane, than for a people scarce emerging from ruin, like a profligate heir, to antici-

pate its fund, and ground certain extravagance on uncertain prosperity.”

In accordance with the opinions expressed so strongly at these numerous meetings, and within a few days after the Dungannon meeting, Grattan again brought before the house of commons the question of legislative independence. He complained of recent attempts of the English ministers to overthrow, or at least to infringe this independence, and repeated the arguments he had used on former occasions, though with more boldness and confidence. He pointed out the meanness of the late concessions with regard to trade, which he considered as a mere dose administered for the purpose of lulling the Irish people to sleep on the question of their constitutional rights. “But,” said he, “Ireland is in strength; she has acquired that strength by the weakness of Britain; for Ireland was saved when America was lost; when England conquered, Ireland was coerced; when she was defeated, Ireland was relieved; and when Charlestown was taken, the mutiny and sugar bills were altered. Have you not all of you, when you heard of a defeat, at the same instant consoled with England and congratulated Ireland? If England were for a moment awake to her own interests, she would come forward and invite us to her arms, by doing away with every cause of jealousy. How, but by the strictest domestic union, can Great Britain, with only eight millions of people, oppose the dreadful combination of seven millions in Spain, with twenty-four millions in France, and two in Holland? Will she cast off three millions of brave and loyal subjects in Ireland at so critical and eventful a time? An Irish army, the wonder of the world, has now existed for three years, where every soldier is a freeman, determined to shed the last drop of blood to defend his country, to support the execution of its laws, and give vigour to its police. The enemy threaten an invasion, this Irish army comes forward; administration is struck dumb with wonder, their deputies in their military dress go up to the castle, not as a servile crowd of courtiers attending the lord lieutenant’s levee, but as his protectors, while the cringing crowd of sycophants swarm about the treasury, and after having thrown away their arms, offer nothing but naked servitude.” Grattan moved an address to the king, containing a demand of legislative

independence, which was as usual negatived, the numbers being a hundred and thirty-seven against it, to seventy-six in its favour.

While affairs were taking this alarming turn in Ireland, an important change had taken place in England. In the beginning of 1782, lord North's ministry was evidently sinking under the weight of its unpopularity, and harassed by the redoubled attacks of the opposition, the minister was compelled to announce, on the 20th of March, that it had ceased to exist. A new ministry was formed under lord Rockingham, with lord Shelburne and Fox as secretaries of state, and consisting chiefly of men who had repeatedly declared their sympathy with the Irish patriots. The latter gave full rein to their joy, for no one doubted that the change in the English cabinet would be the signal of an altered policy towards Ireland. The case of this country, indeed, seems to have been one of the first subjects which occupied the attention of the new ministers.

On receiving intelligence of the change in the ministry, lord Carlisle resigned the lord lieutenancy. His secretary, Mr. Eden, who was the bearer of his resignation to England, attempted to embarrass the new cabinet by moving in the English house of commons, on the 8th of April, for leave to bring in a bill to repeal so much of the act of the 6th of George I. as asserted a right in the king and parliament of Great Britain to make laws to bind Ireland. As this was evidently a mere design to forestall the new ministers in the road of concession, and as Fox informed the house that the ministers had been incessantly occupied in deliberating on the affairs of Ireland, and that he should probably be able to lay their decision before the house before four-and-twenty hours had passed over, Mr. Eden was with difficulty prevailed upon to withdraw his motion, after a very warm debate. Next day, the 9th of April, a royal message was communicated to both houses, stating, that "his majesty being concerned to find that discontents and jealousies are prevailing among his loyal subjects in Ireland, upon matters of great weight and importance, earnestly recommends to this house to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a final adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms." Fox moved for an address in reply to this message, whereby the house bound itself to take measures

for the settlement of Ireland without delay. He said that it was his wish not to make a temporary patching of Irish affairs, but to pass some final measure which should allay all discontents. The house, he said, would perceive that in the pretensions of the Irish, expressed by the parliament and people, the matter contained no less than the constitution of the kingdom; that it comprehended not only the commercial rights and privileges of the kingdom, but also the legislative powers and royalty. The most important objects were therefore embraced, and both nations were most materially concerned in the discussion and settlement of the matter. They were topics upon which his majesty could not decide without the assistance of his parliament, nor indeed could it be done without the concurrence and operation of both parliaments. They must have full and perfect information, and both parliaments must act deliberately, and assist each other. After a sneer at the hasty step taken by Mr. Eden on the previous day, Fox went on to say that he believed it would be easy enough for the king's ministers to do as their predecessors had done, patch up a temporary cessation of claims, and leave to those who were to come after them all the dangers of an unsettled constitution, for the mean advantage of clearing themselves from difficulties which they had not the courage to meet with fairness. On the contrary, they considered it their duty to come with determined minds to the main question, and settle the nature of the relationship which subsisted between the two countries, so as to establish a union which should endure for ages.

The duke of Portland had been appointed to succeed lord Carlisle in the lord lieutenancy, and the honourable colonel Fitzpatrick accompanied him as secretary. The latter gentleman spoke in the debate in the English commons on the 9th of April, in support of Fox's motion for an address in answer to the king's message; he declared that he had been prevailed upon to accept of the office of secretary to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, in the firm persuasion and confidence that his majesty's present ministers were sincere in their professions, and that they were earnestly disposed to make such concessions to the people of that country as should quiet their jealousies and give satisfaction to their minds. He believed that it was the wise policy of Eng-

land to make those concessions, as from the establishment of a firm and friendly relation, founded upon a clear and known constitution, the most happy consequences would be derived to both countries.

Lord Carlisle had adjourned the Irish parliament from the 14th of March to the 16th of April. Lord Portland was received in Dublin with every demonstration of popular joy, and when the day last-mentioned arrived, the galleries and bar of the house of commons were crowded in an unusual degree, so great was the general anxiety to learn the course which the English legislature intended to pursue. No sooner had the speaker taken the chair, than the Irish secretary of state, Mr. Hutchinson, read a message from the king, similar in tenor to that which had been communicated to the English parliament. Mr. Hutchinson paid a warm compliment to Grattan, and declared his own opinion in favour of legislative independence and a triennial mutiny bill. An address was then proposed by Mr. George Ponsonby, but Mr. Grattan rose to move, as an amendment, an address worded more strongly and explicitly. He spoke of the rapid strides the Irish people had recently made in the road to constitutional independence, declared his entire approbation of the meeting at Dungannon, and compared the proceedings of the volunteers to those of the English barons which led to the attainment of Magna Charta. "Turn to the rest of Europe," he said, "you will find the ancient spirit everywhere expired. Sweden has lost her liberty, England is declining; the other nations support their consequence on the remembrance of a mighty name, but ye are the only people who have recovered your constitution, who have recovered it by steady virtue. Ye not only excel modern Europe, but ye excel what she can boast of old. Whenever great revolutions were made in favour of liberty, they were owing to the quick feeling of an irresistible populace, excited by some strong object presented to their senses. Such an object was the daughter of Virginius sacrificed to virtue; and such, the seven bishops, whose meagre and haggard looks expressed the rigour of their suffering; but no history can produce an instance of men like you, musing for years upon oppression, and then, upon a determination of right, rescuing the land. You will find that the supporters of liberty in the reign of Charles the First

mixed their sentiments of constitution with principles of gloomy bigotry; but amongst us you see the delegates of the north advocate for the catholics of the south; the presbytery of Bangor mixing the milk of humanity with the benignity of the gospel—as christians, tolerant—as Irishmen, united. This house, agreeing with the desires of the nation, passed the popery bill, and by so doing, got more than it gave; yet found advantages from generosity, and grew rich in the very act of charity. Ye gave not, but ye formed an alliance between the protestant and the catholic powers, for the security of Ireland. Fortunately for us, England did not take the lead; her minister did not take the lead in the restoration of our rights; if she had, we should have sunk under the obligation, and given back in sheepish gratitude the whole advantage; but the virtue, the pride of the people, was our resource, and it is right that people should have a lofty conception of themselves; though it is wonderful they should preserve their ancient pride, not having amongst them any of those outward and visible signs of glory, those monuments of their heroic ancestors, such as were wont to animate the ancient Greeks and Romans, and rouse them in their country's cause. They had nothing, such as these, to call forth the greatness of the land, and therefore it is astonishing they should preserve their pride; but more astonishing, that they should proceed with a temper seldom found amongst the injured, and a success never but with the virtuous. They have no trophies; but the liberty they transmit to their posterity is more than a trophy. What sets one nation up above another, but the soul that dwells therein? For it is of no avail that the arm be strong, if the soul be not great. What signifies it that three hundred men in the house of commons—what signifies it that one hundred men in the house of peers—assert their country's liberty, if unsupported by the people? But there is not a man in Ireland—there is not a grand-jury—there is not an association—there is not a corps of volunteers—there is not a meeting of their delegates, which does not maintain the independence of the Irish constitution, and pledge themselves to support the parliament in fixing that constitution on its rightful basis. Gentlemen will perceive that I allude to the transaction at Dungannon; not long ago, the meeting at Dungannon

was considered as a very alarming measure; but I thought otherwise—I approved of it, and considered the meeting of Dunganannon as an *original transaction*—as such, only, it was matter of surprise. What more extraordinary transaction than the attainment of magna charta? It was not attained in parliament; but by the barons, armed and in the field. A great original transaction is not founded in precedent, it contains in itself both reason and precedent; the revolution had no precedent—the Christian religion had no precedent—the apostles had no precedent. In this country, every man has a share in the government, and in order to act or speak, they must confer. Now, did not necessity compel them to act—did not necessity compel them to speak—and will not their resolutions tend to restore the rights of their country. They resolve, ‘that a claim of any body of men, other than the king, lords, and commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom, is unconstitutional, and a grievance.’ Is there any man who will deny it. For what were volunteer associations formed, but for the maintenance of the law? What is Poynings’ law, and the unconstitutional power of the Irish or English privy council, but a grievance? What is a perpetual mutiny bill, but a grievance? Is there any man who will deny it, or say that we have not cause to complain of this execrated statute? And if you feel the injury, the people are ready to support you. They protest against an independent army—against a dependent legislature—against the abomination of a foreign legislature—against the assumed authority of council; they were more constitutional than more formal assemblies—they have protested only against what parliament ought to redress. And pray, sir, have not the constituents a right to inform their representatives? Let other nations basely suppose that the people were made for government; we assert that government was made for the people; great and august as they are, they do but perform their periodical revolutions; even the crown—that great luminary, whose brightness they all reflect—receives its cheering fire from the flame of the constitution, and, therefore, we may seek the sentiment of public meetings; and when we speak, let us speak with effect. Let us speak to the king as to a man who has feelings like ourselves, and like ourselves will speak the claims of

liberty. Did you ever imagine, that the man who used to be laughed at in your streets—did you imagine that they who were the scoff of saucy affectation, should prove the saviours of their country—should proceed with such moderation, as to be dreadful only to the enemies of their country and of their country’s constitution. If England wishes well to Ireland, she has nothing to fear from her strength. The volunteers of Ireland would die in support of England. This nation is connected with England, not by allegiance only, but by liberty—the crown is a great joint of union, but magna charta is a greater—we could get a king anywhere; but England is the only country from which we could get a constitution. We are not united with England, as judge Blackstone has foolishly said, by conquest—but by charter; Ireland has British privileges, and is by them connected with Britain—both countries are united in liberty. This being the decided sense of the nation, the men who endeavoured to make our connection with England quadrate with this sense, are friends to England. We are friends to England, on perfect political equality. This house of parliament knows no superior; the men of Ireland acknowledge no superiors; they have claimed laws under the constitution; and the independence of parliament, under every law of God and man, is now become a matter of policy as well as of right. Will the noblemen, the gentlemen, the armed men of Ireland, stoop to any other people? No; never. The question is put to us by an act lately made. What is it? but that America differing from Ireland, in not having a constitution—in not having a charter; in having less loyalty than Ireland—in having shed much English blood—that America shall be free! And will Ireland sink in a new point, and be the only nation whose liberty England will not acknowledge, and whose affection she cannot subdue? For acknowledging American liberty, England has the plea of necessity; for acknowledging the liberty of Ireland, she has the plea of justice. The British nation, if she consults with the head or with the heart, will not, or cannot, refuse our claims; or were it possible she could refuse, I will not submit. The members of this house cannot submit; we have received honours from the people; can we take the civic crown, and lay it at the feet of the British supremacy? Shall

the colonists of America be free, and the loyal people of Ireland be slaves? No; I know the gentlemen of this country too well. I know they will not submit. The submission would go against the public right. They would not submit to the insult in the face of Europe. I have done with the supremacy of England, and shall now say a word on the appellant jurisdiction of the house of lords. I think that in order to eradicate every cause of jealousy, the final judicature should reside in the peers of Ireland—it is the constitution, and must be restored. The incompetence of the lords to decide in questions of law is no argument: the lay lords in both kingdoms are incompetent, but the law lords are competent, or why are they judges? Nor can we fear any abuse of this power. The lords will exercise with caution a power restored to them by the virtue of their countrymen. Besides, let us recollect that to restore this power is a matter of necessity, for we are this day called upon to settle the constitution; and if we leave things unsettled, if we leave anything unasserted, we are responsible. The people of England are indifferent: I have letters which assure me of it, and that the repeal of the 6th of George I. was opposed, because that repeal was not *in toto*. This is the opinion of lord Mahon, an Englishman, who understands good sense and constitution. I therefore suppose England meets our wishes, and that the new ministry intend to remove every subject of dispute, and throw themselves on the support of the people; then how can we support them, if any cause of dispute be left? and surely this is cause for future opposition. England has said, state your grievances; and shall we neglect to do so? If we do, and if there shall be general meetings of the people and of the volunteers, to complain of grievances after what is intended for a final adjustment, would not England think that there was something insatiable in the Irish people? Let us then restore the appellant jurisdiction, for if that part of the act be not repealed, they leave not only the claim of British supremacy standing against us, but they leave the exercise of the power existing. It must be repealed *in toto*, and if repealed, their original right reverts to the peers of course. Thus you must either restore the lords to their privilege, if you mean to remove the claim and exercise of British supremacy, or you must divest them

of it by Irish acts of parliament. But will the peers submit to this? Will the people submit? Will you expose administration to the odium of such an act? It cannot be the illustrious house of peers, composed of persons of the first learning, talent, and ability—aged men never will rest in the fashionable insignificance to which they have been reduced, or they shall sit in the seat of their ancestors, dispensing justice to their country. England can have no objection to this—she is not so ambitious of the trouble of being an arbiter.”

Mr. Grattan again returned to the mutiny bill and Poynings' law, which he condemned in the most forcible manner. He said that he wished to become the decided friend of the duke of Portland for removing every cause of complaint from Ireland, and that these were the terms on which he was ready to support his government: a repeal of the 6th of George I., including a restoration of the appellant jurisdiction of the lords of Ireland; an abolition of the unconstitutional power of privy councils; and a repeal of the mutiny bill. “I cannot imagine,” continued he “that the present ministers of England will oppose the rights of the Irish nation; they have been for many years advocates for the liberties of England and of the colonies; it was the great rule of their opposition, and it is impossible that men who are ready to grant independence to America can oppose the independence of Ireland. If the ministry lost half the colonies during the course of an unsuccessful war, Ireland in that time from a colony became a nation; and what can be more advantageous to the declining constitution of Britain than that Ireland should have spirit? If ministers have the same power and the same sentiments in office that they had when in opposition, and not merely pacify this country, they will give us ample and unqualified redress; the Irish people then are their friends, the volunteers are their army, and we are their supporters. We will give them a support very different from the canting of moderation, or that sort of pensioned loyalty whose exertions never went beyond these walls; but their redress must be manly, and strictly constitutional; there must be no shuffling, no artful delay. I do not say that ministers should take the lead in this business: if they will but comply, if they will not oppose our rights, I will support their administration. I am very far from saying that under the present government inde-

pendent gentlemen may not accept of places. I think that places are now honourable, and in taking one I should be the friend of the people, and of his majesty's government. I have no personal knowledge of the lord lieutenant. I was not acquainted with those about him; and, if he had sent for me, I am persuaded I should have declined the honour of seeing him. But I believed his government will be virtuous, so far he shall have my *free support*. The way to make ministers economical, is to support them for nothing—upon principles of virtue."

Mr. Grattan's motion, which was voted without opposition, was in the following words:—"That an humble address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this house for his most gracious message to this house, signed by his grace the lord lieutenant. To assure his majesty of our unshaken attachment to his majesty's person and government, and of our lively sense of his paternal care in thus taking the lead to administer content to his majesty's subjects of Ireland. That thus encouraged by his royal interposition, we shall beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before his majesty the cause of our discontents and jealousies. To assure his majesty, as his subjects of Ireland are a *free people*, that the crown of Ireland is an imperial crown, inseparably annexed to the crown of Great Britain, on which connexion the interests and happiness of both nations essentially depend; but that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct kingdom, with a parliament of her own, the sole legislature thereof; that there is no body of men competent to make laws to bind this nation, except the king, lords, and commons of Ireland; nor any other parliament which hath any authority or power, of any sort whatsoever, in this country, save only the parliament of Ireland. To assure his majesty, that we humbly conceive that in this right the very essence of our liberties exist; a right which we, on the part of all the people of Ireland, do claim as their birthright, and which we cannot yield but with our lives. To assure his majesty, that we have seen with concern certain claims advanced by the parliament of Great Britain, in an act entitled an act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland; an act containing matter entirely irreconcilable to the fundamental rights of this nation. That we conceive this act, and

the claims it advances, to be the great and principal cause of the discontents and jealousies in this kingdom. To assure his majesty, that his majesty's commons of Ireland do most sincerely receive that approbation of his majesty under the great seal of Britain; but that yet we do consider the practice of suppressing our bills in the council of Ireland, or altering the same there, to be another just cause of discontent and jealousy. To assure his majesty, that an act entitled an act for the better accommodation of his majesty's force, being unlimited in duration, and defective in other instances of the times, is another just cause of discontent and jealousy in this kingdom. That we have submitted these the principal causes of the present discontent and jealousy of Ireland, and remain in humble expectation of redress. That we have the greatest reliance on his majesty's wisdom, the most sanguine expectation from his virtuous choice of a chief governor, and great confidence in the wise, auspicious, and constitutional councils which we see, with satisfaction, his majesty has adopted. That we have, moreover, a high sense and veneration for the British character, and do therefore conceive that the proceedings of this country, founded as they are in right, and tempered by duty, must have excited the approbation and esteem, instead of wounding the pride of the British nation. And we beg leave to assure his majesty, that we are the more confirmed in this hope, inasmuch as the people of this kingdom have never expressed a desire to share the freedom of England, without declaring a determination to share her fate likewise, standing and falling with the British nation."

The proceedings of the Irish house of commons had been interrupted by the sudden change of the chief governor, and it was now too much occupied with the great questions which were unexpectedly on the point of being decided, to allow minor matters to be entered upon with calmness. So great was the change which had suddenly taken place among the late court party, that many of those who had supported the most objectionable measures of successive governors, now spoke even more loudly on the popular side than the old patriots themselves. A step was made in the Roman catholic relief bills, after which, on the 4th of May, the house adjourned for three weeks, to wait the further proceedings of the British ministers and parliament. On the 17th of

May, the earl of Shelburne, in the house of peers, and Mr. Fox, in the house of commons, moved the consideration of the Irish question, which was entered upon with the greatest calmness and good feeling. A part of what was demanded lay entirely between the Irish parliament and the king, and therefore two motions were made and passed; the first, that the act of the 6th of George I., intituled "An act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland upon the crown of Great Britain," should be repealed; and the second, "that it was the opinion of the house, that it was indispensable to the interests and happiness of both kingdoms, that the connection between

them should be established by mutual consent, upon a solid and permanent footing, and that an humble address should be presented to his majesty, that his majesty would be graciously pleased to take such measures as his majesty in his royal wisdom should think most conducive to that important end." The only opposition these measures met with in the upper house came from lord Loughborough; in the commons it was carried unanimously, and Mr. Fox obtained leave to bring in a bill to repeal the 6th of George I. Thus was this great constitutional question at length settled to the satisfaction of the Irish.

CHAPTER VII.



CONCESSION OF LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE; GREAT DEBATE IN THE IRISH PARLIAMENT ON THAT SUBJECT.

AFTER the adjournment, the Irish parliament met on the 27th of May, full of ardent expectations. The duke of Portland

came in person to the house of lords, and delivered an address from the throne. "It gives me the utmost satisfaction," he said, "that the first time I have occasion to address you, I find myself enabled, by the magnanimity of the king, and the wisdom of the parliament of Great Britain, to assure you that immediate attention has been paid to your representations, and that the British legislature have concurred in a resolution to remove the causes of your discontents and jealousies, and are united in a desire to gratify every wish expressed in your late addresses to the throne. If anything could add to the pleasure I feel in giving you these assurances, it is that I can accompany them with my congratulations on the important and decisive victory gained by the fleets of his majesty over those of our common enemy in the West Indies, and on the signal advantage obtained by his majesty's arms in the island of Ceylon and on the coast of Coromandel. By the

papers which, in obedience to his majesty's commands, I have directed to be laid before you, you will receive the most convincing testimony of the cordial reception which your representations have met with from the legislature of Great Britain; but his majesty, whose first and most anxious wish is to exercise his royal prerogative in such a manner as may be most conducive to the welfare of all his faithful subjects, has declared his disposition to give his royal assent to acts to prevent the suppression of bills in the privy council of this kingdom, and alteration of them anywhere; and to limit the duration of the act for the better regulation and accommodation of his majesty's forces in this kingdom to the term of two years. These benevolent intentions of his majesty, and the willingness of his parliament of Great Britain to second his gracious purposes, are unaccompanied by any stipulation or condition whatever. The good faith, the generosity, the honour of this nation afford them the surest pledge of a corresponding disposition on your part to promote and perpetuate the harmony, the stability, and the glory of the empire. On my own part I entertain not the least doubt but that the same spirit which urged you to share the freedom of Great Britain, will confirm you

in your determination to share her fate also—standing and falling with the British nation.”

This announcement of the unconditional concession of all their demands produced from the Irish of all parties an outburst of gratitude. Yet the debate which ensued let out so many indications of farther views, and the seeds of ulterior divisions, that it deserves to be given at some length, as handed down to us in the records of the time. Mr. Grattan was the first speaker on this occasion, and he expressed unmitigated satisfaction. “I should,” he said, “desert every principle upon which I moved the former address, did I not bear testimony to the candid and unqualified manner in which that address has been answered by the lord lieutenant’s speech of this day. I understand that Great Britain gives up *in toto* every claim to authority over Ireland. I have not the least idea that, in repealing the sixth of George I., Great Britain should be bound to make any declaration that she had formerly usurped a power. No, this would be a foolish caution—a dishonourable condition. The nation that insists upon the humiliation of another is a foolish nation. Ireland is not a foolish nation. Another point of great magnanimity in the conduct of Great Britain is, that everything is given up unconditionally. This must for ever remove suspicion. On former occasions, when little acts of relief were done for Ireland, it was premised, ‘that it was expedient’ to do them; no such word is now made use of. Never did a British minister support such honourable claims on such constitutional arguments. With respect to the writ of error, though not mentioned in our address, he took it up in the most effectual way; and, indeed, the whole tenor of his conduct towards us has been most generous and sincere. We had one advantage; he entertained an opinion that Ireland was not insatiable, though it had been asserted that Ireland was insatiable. But we are bound to prove the falsehood of that assertion; for as the nation was pledged to itself to obtain a restoration of her rights, so now, when her rights are restored, literally and unconditionally, she is pledged to Great Britain, who, by acceding to our claims, has put an end to all future questions. We have now recovered a constitution, and our business is not to advance, but to maintain it. Ireland will manifest as much magnanimity in the moderation by which she maintains her consti-

tution, as by the exertions through which it has been recovered. The unanimity with which the British house of commons acceded to our claims, must for ever do them honour; and the single negative in the lords, whilst it in nowise diminishes their praise, has its use; it serves to discover, and for ever to exclude from trust or confidence, in either nation, the man who could not only oppose the interest and happiness of both, but also the ardent wishes and desires of his sovereign to make his people happy. We ought not to forget the able support given by those persons who composed the late administration of Ireland; it must be highly agreeable to those who compose the present. The things so graciously offered by our sovereign are, the modification of Poynings’ law; and not only the abridgment of the mutiny bill, in point of duration, but the forming of it on the model of the English mutiny bill, and prefacing it with a declaration of rights. As Great Britain and her ministers have unconditionally agreed to the demands of Ireland, I think the spirit of the nation is called upon to make an unconditional grant to England. The sea is the element to which nature points as the scene of British glory; it is there we can most effectually assist her. Twenty thousand seamen would be a noble support; and we, who have been squandering the public money in all the waste of blind extravagance, cannot surely now deem one hundred thousand pounds too large a sum, when applied to the common defence of the empire. The sum is trifling, but the assistance of twenty thousand Irishmen would be great; and gentlemen will now, when they retire to their different counties, have a full opportunity, in assisting to raise those men, of manifesting their zeal for the common cause of Great Britain and Ireland. There are also other means of support in our power to give to Britain, though they cannot immediately be entered upon. This country is most happily situated for the construction of docks, and the rendezvous of shipping. Whatever expense might be incurred by such necessary works, would be repaid by the expenditure of the money amongst ourselves; and might be supported by prudent and economical management of the public revenues, in the savings of the army, and in every different class of extraordinaries. An expense of seventeen pounds per cent. in the collection of the revenue cannot be justified. The commissioners will

now see that money is to be paid for labour, not for prostitution. Therefore let us now enter heart and hand into the great work of reformation; by giving our support to that ministry which has rescued this country from oppression, and will rescue it from corruption. On this principle, I shall move you an address, devoid of all that fulsome panegyric so commonly offered to majesty; for I think that truth will be the highest compliment to him." The address moved by Mr. Grattan was:—"To assure his majesty of our unfeigned affection to his royal person and government; that we feel most sensibly the attention which our representations have received from the magnanimity of his majesty, and the wisdom of the parliament of Great Britain.—To assure his majesty that we conceive the resolution for an unqualified unconditional repeal of the 6th of George I., to be a measure of consummate wisdom and justice, suitable to the dignity and eminence of both nations, exalting the character of both, and furnishing a perpetual pledge of mutual amity.—To assure his majesty that we are sensibly affected by his virtuous determination to accede to the wishes of his faithful people, and to exercise his royal prerogative in a manner most conducive to their welfare; and, accordingly, we shall immediately prepare bills to carry into execution the desires of his majesty's people, and his own most benevolent purposes.—That, gratified in those particulars, we do assure his majesty, that no constitutional question between the two nations will any longer exist, which can interrupt their harmony; and that Great Britain, as she has approved of our firmness, so may she rely on our affection.—That we remember and do repeat our determination, to stand and fall with the British nation.—That we perceive with pleasure the magnanimity of his majesty, to disclaim the little policy of making a bargain with his people; and feeling with pride the confidence he reposes in the good faith, generosity, and honour of the Irish nation, we answer with all humility, that his majesty entertains a just sense of our character. Common interest, perpetual connection, the recent conduct of Great Britain, a native affection to the British name and nation, together with the constitution which we have recovered, and the high reputation which we possess, must ever decide the wishes as well as the interest of Ireland, to perpetuate the harmony,

stability, and glory of the empire. Accordingly, we assure his majesty, that we learn with singular satisfaction, the account of his brilliant successes in the East and West Indies; gratified at one and the same instant in our dearest wishes—the freedom of Ireland and glory of Great Britain.—That we cannot omit expressing our gratitude to his majesty, for appointing the duke of Portland to the government of this kingdom.—That we are convinced his representations were faithful, vigorous, and beneficial. We are acquainted with his character; and relying on his upright and frugal administration, make no doubt, but a free people and uncorrupt parliament will unite to give a constitutional chief governor decided support.—That we have presumed to lay before his majesty our genuine sentiments on the change of our situation; his majesty will receive them as the voluntary unstipulated tribute of a free and grateful people."

This address was seconded by Mr. Brownlow, who said that he could not pass over the opportunity the speech offered him, of expressing his sensations of gratitude at the great event which had taken place. Both nations were now one people, united by every tie, enjoying in common the same liberty, the same constitution, and the same sovereign. He had been long witness to several addresses that never conveyed truth; but the present address spoke the sincere language of the nation; where protestant, Roman catholic—all religions—pressed forward with gratitude at the present moment. He could not but admire England's resignation of those grants, notwithstanding her claim of power was so evidently ill-founded; nor could he less admire the favour conferred on the nation, in sending a lord lieutenant not governing by faction, but pursuing measures for the general good of the people. He hoped, he said, by the moderation of all, at the present time, that they would evince they knew where to stop and when to be satisfied. In respect to the mover of the address (Mr. Grattan), he declared he had too much regard for the modesty of his friend, to speak the warmth of the sentiments he entertained of his abilities and virtue.

The next speaker was the Recorder, who said that he also rose to express his gratitude at the present event. The address did the mover honour, and had his concurrence in every point but one, which

struck him, and indeed gave him an alarm, which was the mentioning that all constitutional questions between both nations were at an end. He did not wish to particularize matters, though several occurred to him. If properly examined, they would find that their very house originated under an English act of parliament; and many other cases could be adduced, by which it would appear dangerous to cut off the future agitation of constitutional questions; and there was nothing in the speech from the throne that could call for the paragraph. The honourable gentleman, he said, had also moved for a sum of money to strengthen the navy of England—he hoped part of that money would be applied to protect the kingdom from the depredations of pirates, and that some care would be taken of our trade.

The question thus raised led to a somewhat warm discussion, in which Mr. Flood took part. That gentleman said, that a great reform must ensue, in consequence of what had been done. It was true, he said, nothing appeared to him, at present, which could disturb the general harmony; but there were many English acts still existing, which operated in this kingdom, and notwithstanding the laudable acquiescence which appeared in the renunciation of English claims, who could engage that the present administration might not, at some future period, change its mind. He begged gentlemen to consider the language held out in the English house of commons. They asserted a right to external legislature; and he that seconded the motion on the Irish business, did not give up that right, but as matter of convenience and compact. Even the secretary asserted this right to external legislation, though he gave up that of internal. “It may therefore be imagined that you imply what they asserted, that they had a right to bind you.” He said that at a former period, he was present in England on the business of sending out foreign troops. They were obliged to get an act of indemnity for such a measure, though the minister afterwards refused the act; and they did not scruple to say that Ireland was not included in that provision. He could not see the necessity of that paragraph. They were only laying the foundation of prosperity for their country, and giving it a sound constitution. The injuries of that country have been much, and they were in the situation of a person

in repairing an old house, who finds that by pulling down a part he must pull down the whole. These were his parliamentary sentiments before and after his dismissal from office, and he held them to be the sentiments of the present ministry. In a sober moment, he would recommend that no expressions should be then made which could be afterwards laid hold of to their prejudice. He thought the paragraph dangerous, and begged to have it withdrawn.

Another member, Mr. Martin, observed, that if the paragraph said, “all constitutional disputes which existed *before* this address, were done away,” it might be adopted with propriety. He thought the address properly applicable, and a production of consummate wisdom. Sir Lucius O’Brien contended the address did not comprehend the meaning annexed to it. The king called upon Ireland to state her discontents. “We stated them,” he said, “and it is our own faults if they are not all redressed. The king, lords, and commons of Ireland, only, have the power to bind us. The power usurped by the English is given up; the king has declared his readiness to co-operate with our wishes. Can we entertain a doubt, when his majesty has led the way, and promised his consent? Though the king has the power of putting a negative on your acts, no cause of discontent can in future exist between the legislature of both nations, for this proof of the wisdom of England is adding the strength of three millions of people to the British standard.” Sir Lucius said he would co-operate in the whole of the address at that time, but would, at another opportunity, give his objections to the mode of the vote of credit, though he would agree to the principle.

Mr. Walsh then rose, and said—“I do not rise for the purpose of giving a peevish opposition. I despise such conduct, because I should think it both mean and unmanly. This should be a duty of unanimity; and it is my wish to contribute to it. But I cannot possibly agree to part of the address which has been moved by my honourable friend, for whom I have the most sincere esteem (Mr. Grattan.) I mean those words in the address, ‘That there will no longer exist any constitutional question between the two nations that can disturb their mutual tranquillity.’ These expressions I think too strong; because, in my opinion, they preclude any future address,

if it should be found that any matter had not been stated in the former address that required amendment or regulation. With respect to the repeal of the 6th of George I., I rely on it, as a lawyer, that it is inadequate to the emancipation of Ireland. The 6th of George I. is merely a declaratory law: that law declares, that England has a power to make laws to bind Ireland. What then does the repeal of the 6th of George I. do with respect to Ireland? Simply this, and not a jot more—it expunges the declaration of the power from the English statute-book; but it does not deny the power hereafter to make laws to bind Ireland, whenever England shall think herself in sufficient force for the purpose. I call upon the king's new attorney-general (Mr. Yelverton), as a lawyer, to rise in his place, and declare whether the assumed and usurped power of England to make laws to bind Ireland will not remain untouched and unrelinquished, though the 6th of George I. should be repealed? Will it be contended, that the assumed power of Great Britain to legislate for us can be taken away by implication? No lawyer will say it can. Then Ireland cannot be said to be completely emancipated, until England, by an act of her own legislature, unequivocally and expressly declares, that she has no power to make laws to bind us in any instance whatever. I say, until that is done, Ireland can never have a sincere affection for, or a confidence in, Great Britain. With respect to the fine-spun distinction of the English minister (Mr. Fox), between internal and external legislation, it seems to me to be the most absurd position, and at this time the most ridiculous one, that could possibly be laid down, when applied to an independent people. Says he, it would be downright tyranny to make laws for the internal government of a people who were not represented in that parliament by which such laws were made. But with respect to external legislation, this right of prerogative or supremacy is clearly annexed to the British legislature. See, then, how pregnant this doctrine of Mr. Fox's is with every mischief, nay, with absolute destruction to this country. The parliament of Ireland may make laws for their internal regulations; that is, he gives us leave to tax ourselves; he permits us to take the money out of our purses for the convenience of England: but as to external legislation, there Great Britain presides. In anything that

relates to commerce, to exportation, there Great Britain can make laws to bind Ireland; the fair construction of which is this—Ireland, you shall not enjoy your natural and constitutional rights—that of making the most of the produce of your land; you shall not send your goods to the best and most profitable markets. No, says Mr. Fox, that may interfere with the interest of England; that may touch the pride of the British legislature. So that, by this doctrine, England may shut or open our ports at pleasure. See, then, the absurdity of our situation. Ireland is said to have a free trade; but the key of it is in Mr. Fox's pocket. Ireland is independent, or she is not: if she is independent, no power on earth can make laws to bind her internally or externally, save the king, lords, and commons of Ireland. I therefore again repeat it, that until England unequivocally declares, by an act of her own legislature, that she has not a power, in any instance, to make laws to bind Ireland, the assumed and usurped power of English legislation over this country is not relinquished. But we want not the assistance of England to vindicate the rights of Ireland, to restore her to the purity of her pristine constitution. We possess the power, we possess the will, and, thank God, we possess the fortitude to carry that will into execution. I thought it a duty I owed to my constituents, I thought it a duty I owed to myself, as an Irishman, to state, in the face of my country, those objections which to me seem decisive against that part of the address which has been moved by my honourable friend (Mr. Grattan), namely, that 'there will no longer exist constitutional questions between the two nations that can disturb their mutual tranquillity.' Whether my objections are well founded or not, I will leave to more able heads than my own, and to time to decide. I shall therefore give my negative to that part of the address."

Sir Henry Cavendish said, he should set the honourable gentleman right, for his newspaper intelligence had led him out of the way in respect to Mr. Fox. He knew Mr. Fox's intentions were to make Ireland flourish, and then England must flourish also. He then read from his notes the sentiments which Mr. Fox expressed in the British house of commons in the year 1774, long before the present disputes existed. In the debate on the application of the Irish linen traders, Mr. Fox said, that since

the restoration, Ireland had been entitled to a free trade, (the first time, Sir Henry added, that ever I heard that expression made use of), and that the act of navigation did not preclude them from it. He also went into the right she had of enjoying the woollen trade equally with England; said that Ireland, in her own situation, could not go on; and if proper encouragement was not given, it would prove an equal injury to England. If they held it, as a maxim, that Ireland should be kept poor, England would in consequence become poor also. Mr. Fox had not then the power of enforcing his argument, but now, when he had the power, he was sure Mr. Fox did his utmost to serve this kingdom. Mr. Conolly expressed similar sentiments. He would not, he said, refrain from testifying his gratitude; but he was sorry to see, so early after the joy of the people, any seeds of future discontents, where none had a right to exist. They had asserted, in what might be deemed their manifesto, that if their discontents were done away, they should share the fate of England. She owed two hundred millions, and Ireland but two millions: their great debt could therefore be considered no more than a mite to her great expense; but he thanked God that Ireland had men; and though England was exhausted, by this shaking hands with Ireland, she would undoubtedly prosper. Gentlemen going down into the provinces, should encourage the idle to enlist, in order to be of some use to the empire.

The provost (J. H. Hutchinson) observed, that the address was not a common one; and if gentlemen had compared the paragraph with the antecedent part, no subject of dispute could arise. "You tell the king," said he, "that no power on earth can make laws to bind us but the king, lords, and commons of Ireland, and that you would not part with your liberties but with your lives. Such were your words in your address to the king. In the answer to that address, you were told that England would gratify you in every wish, and that by the united desires of the parliament of England. An honourable gentleman has said, that the claim and the principle is still held alive by the English legislature; but by the lord lieutenant's speech, we find that principle and claim done away; and you have not only received your estate, but you have also received the title-deeds with it." In respect

to what had been said about Mr. Fox, he said he hoped it would be the last time they should have occasion to advert to what had been said in any other house. It was true, Mr. Fox said he could go into the claims of England; but there remained no need of doing that; and if matters had been left to himself, that he would grant the Irish their rights by an act of parliament. The question for binding Ireland was now for ever at an end. A gentleman, he said, had mentioned Mr. Yelverton's bill; that bill was to be returned to give security to Irish estates. It had been also asked, had they no right in future to agitate constitutional questions? The matter appeared to him in a different light. The address only said, when the present grievances are removed, there will be no occasion for further disputes on the heads of those at present objected to, not by any means precluding the further discussion of constitutional questions. He then expatiated upon the happy situation of the kingdom, and recommended the adoption of moderation and unanimity.

Mr. Walter Burgh said, though he felt the emotions which every Irishman felt on the present occasion, he did not think to have spoken that day. He was certain, he declared, that no panegyric could add to the favours received, nor could the asperity of discontent diminish them; he attributed the opposition on that day to a laudable jealousy for the constitution; but however he might admire the principle, he should still lament the consequence. This opposition arose from a mere misapprehension. It should be remembered that the address was an answer to the speech, and not an answer to the proceedings of the commons of England; and it mentioned, that when the grievances recited should be removed, then all jealousies would cease. The address, he said, went to the entire exclusion of the internal as well as the external legislation of England; and meant that no constitutional questions could be afterwards between the two legislatures of both nations. This did not preclude the discussion of their own constitutional questions. How was it possible that they could be affected by a legislature which could no longer assume any power over them? He that voted against the present address would absolutely assert that England still retained a power to make law for Ireland.

The recorder, sir Samuel Bradstreet, next arose, and observed, that if there could be

no constitutional question between the two kingdoms but what regarded legislation, his right honourable friend's argument would be strong and convincing. But he would beg leave to call his attention, and he would endeavour to satisfy him and the house, that there might be many constitutional questions to interrupt the harmony between the two countries, in which legislation had no part. Had we forgotten the late ruinous embargo? For his part, as the representative of the first city in the kingdom, he had not. Suppose hereafter the parliament of England should, as the great council of the British nation, address the king for an exertion of his prerogative, by laying an embargo on the trade of both his kingdoms, the parliament of Ireland at the same time sitting; would not that parliament, competent to advise his majesty as to the affairs of Ireland, think its dignity invaded by the interference of the British parliament; and would not a constitutional question be debated in this house, and actually exist, which might interrupt the present harmony? Suppose peace should conclude with America, and part of the terms imposed by the British parliament should be, that the products of America should be brought to the British market only, to the exclusion of Ireland, would not that be an injury of the highest nature, and would not the interference of a foreign legislature affecting the trade of Ireland, deserve to be debated within those walls as a constitutional question? And yet the words to be inserted in the address are so general and uncircumscribed, as to preclude such idea. Permit me to state another instance where the kingdom may feel itself injured and affected. The legislatures of the two kingdoms being separate and independent, it will be prudent to assimilate the laws of our country to those of another, that in both there may be the same rule in action. Now, sir, suppose we should pass a law in conformity to one in England, and which we should consider as beneficial to this kingdom, so that we should originate a law which England had not; and that the British parliament not allowing us the merit of invention, should address the king to refuse his assent, would not this interference create a constitutional question? Sir, the confining constitutional questions to acts of legislation only, is too narrow an idea. Every act of state may involve a constitutional question. There are at this hour

many British acts affecting Ireland unrepealed; the act for altering the style, the post-office act, the act of navigation, and a multitude of others. The oaths taken this day by the right honourable secretary, are under an English act. You, sir, sit in that chair under an English law. Are not these objects which constitutionally should be inquired into and reformed? And can any man say that the consideration of them may not interrupt the harmony between the two kingdoms? Sir, I highly approve of the speech this day from the throne; and if the address moved for according to the ancient parliamentary form, applied merely to the speech, it should have my hearty concurrence. I do acknowledge that upon great occasions forms are superseded, and may be disregarded. The present is a great and important moment, and should not be controlled by forms; but, in introducing words in an address, for which there is no foundation in his grace's speech, let us not lose sight of prudence, and in an effusion of gratitude preclude the freedom of debating questions in which we may find the constitution of this country affected. Sir, unanimity this day is the general wish; I sincerely wish for it; but I lament that I cannot, consistent with my duty, agree to the words objected to, though I do to all the rest of the proposed address. I feel the obligations we are under to his majesty and his administration as strong as any gentleman in this house; I am sensible of the great abilities of the honourable mover; but I wish he would not insist on this part, as the consequence of relinquishing it would be perfect unanimity.

Sir Benjamin Chapman, in reply to the recorder, said that he felt equal surprise with the honourable baronet on hearing the address moved by his honourable friend (Mr. Grattan), but it was a surprise of a very different sort; a surprise, that an address, instead of a servile echo to the speech from the throne, should at length be found the genuine unequivocal echo of the unanimous voice of the Irish nation; not the compilation of a venal minister, but the generous sentiment of a grateful country; the language, he said, of thirty-two counties, of all our gallant associated corps addressing their representatives. Did any one of those, he asked, ever entertain a thought that the act regulating the oath of office, or, still more absurdly, the act for changing the style, mentioned by the honourable

baronet, should be enumerated a grievance? Such a sagacity, he said, would be treated with ridicule and contempt, if proposed to them. The answer would be unquestionable, Let us be satisfied in the mutiny bill, in Poynings' and the judges' bill, and, above all, let the 6th of George I. be repealed; thus secure the outlines and barrier of the constitution. Let the principle be avowed and acknowledged, and every minute imperfection must and will of course be done away with. He said, if he agreed with the honourable gentleman (Mr. Flood) that the clause objected to was useless, he should concur with him in opposing it; but was it of no use, he asked, to give repose to the long agitated and anxious public mind of the nation, or to strengthen the hands of a magnanimous administration, that dared to act honestly, by showing the world that Ireland was not ungrateful, was not insatiable?

Mr. Burgh again said that the English legislature having given up all right of binding, a cause of dispute could never exist after. He would only remind gentlemen in what light their opposition would be viewed, when the speech willingly granted all they were willing to ask. And how ignorant must the English think that nation which was so foolish as not to know when to ask and when to be satisfied? He declared that he had authentic intelligence, that the enemies of England plumed themselves on the differences between both kingdoms; and would they accede to the wishes of the common enemy, and decline that support of England which they had promised to seal with their blood? After the English had broken through the fortress of ancient prejudices to set the Irish free, would they refuse to say they were satisfied, and enjoy that freedom in peace; the nation was willing to be happy, and could they refuse to seal that happiness? He was satisfied himself in the upright intentions of the gentlemen who opposed, but was certain a little reflection would convince them that they had no real cause for opposition.

A similar tone characterized the further remarks of Mr. Grattan, who now rose again, and said he thought it necessary that England should be convinced we were satisfied. It should seem as if the honourable baronet was determined to oppose, before he knew a cause for opposition. He could not but lament, he said, when he moved, on a former occasion, for a repeal of those grievances, that he had not the

assistance of the honourable baronet. Why did he not come forward with his objections then? Did he awake now? And when England granted all, was he determined to oppose? He could forbear comparing his pliancy of disposition then, when a minister was to be thanked, to the strongest opposition he gave now. "An honourable gentleman supposes that England will again assume this power when she can find herself able; but that supposition must lose all weight from the solemn surrender England has made of this assuming power. The honourable baronet also supposes, that on a peace with America, England will exclude Ireland. The supposition is equally groundless; but the honourable baronet knows, when all those things are given up, no cause of opposition will any longer exist. He thinks this paragraph fanciful, but not necessary. I would not wish to be accounted volatile or fanciful; I never was so fanciful as to hold any coquetry with administration. After having received liberty, we are to tell England that we are satisfied, and not to tell France that we are displeased."

Mr. Yelverton suggested, that if the gentlemen would withdraw their opposition for the present, so as to let the motion for the address, as moved by Mr. Grattan, pass unanimously upon the general principle stated in the resolution, yet, when the address should be committed, if any particular expression did not accord with their opinions, they would then be at liberty to oppose such expression, without incurring the charge of inconsistency. Upon this, Mr. Fitzpatrick said, that he was sorry to differ from his honourable and learned friend who spoke last; he hoped, and was certain, that it would be the last time that any difference should arise between them. It was not his intention to have taken any part in the debate, on the day when he first had the honour of taking his seat in that house. But he could not but rise to beg of those gentlemen who meant to oppose that address, not to withdraw their opposition, but to persist in giving their negative, and to take the sense of the house upon the answer to the speech. If the speech, worded as it was, and going to the points contained in it, did not give satisfaction, he should regret the day he ever set his foot in that house. If there were gentlemen who were not satisfied, he begged they would not think of concealing that

dissatisfaction, in order to suffer the question of that day to assume an appearance of unanimity; such an unanimity would be false and deceitful, and could only tend to lead the legislature of England into a dangerous and fatal error. The wish of administration was, to collect the sense of the people of Ireland; they had called upon the parliament of Ireland to declare their grievances; on the statement of these grievances, the speech of the lord lieutenant had given the most solemn and authoritative assurances, that not only their representations should be attended to, but that every wish they had expressed in their late addresses should be gratified. He wished, therefore, to know, whether gentlemen were perfectly satisfied with the speech. There must be an ultimatum, to promote and perpetuate the harmony between the two countries; and if the address did not contain that ultimatum, he looked upon the final adjustment between the two countries as beyond his hopes, and in that sense it was, that he should regret ever to have put his foot within that house.

Sir H. Langrishe, the friend of Edmund Burke, and one of the great props of the popular party, next expressed his opinions. He said, "If I did not know and feel that I was actuated by as free and decided sentiments concerning the constitutional rights of Ireland, as any man; if I could not appeal to a conduct conformable to such sentiments—a conduct strictly pursued by myself and my brethren, in the humble but very critical situation in which we are placed, and in very doubtful and dangerous times—if I were not so circumstanced, I should not rise to address you this day, or take a part in the high deliberations of the present occasion. But under such a consciousness, and with such a testimony, I may presume (in common with other gentlemen,) to join my congratulations with my country on the restitution of her rights, and to offer my acknowledgments to the liberality and wisdom which has thus restored them. And indeed, sir, whilst we are enraptured at the acquisition of liberty, as of the greatest blessing of life—endeared by a long absence, and acquired by great virtue, it would be insensibility not to feel, and ingratitude not to commemorate, the manner in which it has been conceded—so entire, so unconditionally, so affectionate, so decisive, as must from this day, during our existence as an empire, put

an end to all jealousies and contentions between the two countries; except that contention only, which will hereafter for ever subsist—a contention in good offices—an emulation in reciprocal support and assistance, alike in peace and in war—in prosperity and adversity; and being convinced, that when this great compact shall be ratified, to use the words of my honourable friend's address, when we shall be gratified in these concessions, 'no constitutional question between the two countries will exist to interrupt the harmony between them,' it is impossible for me to agree in the objection made to this paragraph of the address. The king and the parliament of England agree to comply with every thing you ask: this address says, when every thing we have asked shall be complied with, 'no constitutional question between the two countries will exist to interrupt the harmony between them.' Can any man alive deny that? And if that be true, which it must be, why should we not say so? Is it not our duty to say so? Should we not be imperfect and unpardonable to omit it? It is but common justice to observe, during the course of this great business, that the wise counsels that guided and accomplished it, have not been actuated by the impulse of the occasion or suggestions of the moment; they have not made liberty a measure, or justice an expedient; they have proceeded on the general, enlarged, and decided system—with that perfect principle which respects the rights of mankind, and with that affection which regards the interests of a sister country. We have lived to hear a minister tell the British parliament, 'that it acquired dignity, not degradation, by relinquishing a power which was not founded in justice; and that equal freedom is the only bond that can unite the different parts of the empire.' Magnificent sentiments! And we have seen the British nation reflect these sentiments back on the minister; and the people of England become unanimous in the cause of Ireland. That great and generous people, when once the errors of old and ignorant prejudices were examined and removed, instantly felt their hearts glow with kindred affection towards us: they admired the temperate magnanimity with which we claimed our rights; and we cannot but admire and remember the cordiality with which they restored them. We have lived to see almost the romances of our political wishes realized and accomplished:—a sovereign

founding his dominion in the affections of a free people; an administration, the free advocates of the constitution, maintaining authority by the influence alone of public benefits; and the different parts of the empire uniting and consolidating, not by the hand of power, which is impotence, but by the everlasting bonds of common interest, of common affection, of common constitution, of common liberty."

Sir Hercules then apologized for having taken up the time of the house; and said, that what he had uttered was forced on him by feelings superior to an influence; that this was not a season for influence; the heart of every Irishman was too proud to submit to it; but it was not easy for any gentleman, accustomed to deliver his sentiments, to sit silent on the present occasion, nor for any man to consider the relative situation of Ireland, without feeling something like an enthusiasm of happiness. Such were his feelings, which he hoped would plead his excuse for having trespassed on the patience of the house.

The speech of sir Hercules Langrishe seemed almost to have put an end to the debate; when Mr. Walsh said, that upon hearing such language delivered in such a manner by what was called the Irish minister, he was determined to divide the house; it was not, he said, language fit to be delivered in an Irish senate house. On the other hand, sir Edward Newenham congratulated his country on her glorious and full emancipation from the usurped dominion of any foreign legislature. He would vote, he said, as he always did, agreeable to the instructions and wishes of those whom he had the honour to represent; their wish was a free constitution, and, consequently, thanks of the warmest gratitude were due to the patriotic administration who supported the rights of Ireland. He observed, that three months ago he would, in order to obtain those great national points, have agreed to any address, should it even have been drawn by one of the old hackneyed slaves of quondam administrations; but now the address was offered to their consideration by the Hibernian patriot, and no man could doubt of the purity of his intentions; he could not wish to mislead his grateful countrymen.

Mr. Ponsonby, jun., said, he wished the gentlemen would divide; that there might be seen, perhaps, three men standing against two hundred and fifty. He wished to let the people of Dublin see the difference of

their representatives. Here he was interrupted by the recorder (the other member for Dublin) who said that he did not fear to let his constituents see him acting to the best of his judgment, and watching with anxious jealousy the liberties of his country. Mr. Walsh said that he had ever acted steadily for the interest of his constituents. No man could accuse him of "whisking round" to every administration. He acted upon constitutional principles, as an honest senator ought to do; and though his fortune was not the largest in the house, yet it was sufficient to render him independent of any minister; it was the patrimony of a respectable family, which had enjoyed it seven hundred years; and which was longer by above six hundred years than any property at all had been in the family of the gentleman that had loudly urged him to divide.

After this little heat had subsided, Mr. Fitzpatrick rose to apologise: he said, if he had fallen into an error, or broke through the orders of the house, his being a stranger in this country, though he originated from it, and equally a stranger to that house, perhaps, would plead an excuse if he had transgressed. He rose, he said, with an anxious desire to know the sentiments of the house, and see all matters settled. The warmth he had betrayed, if he had betrayed any warmth, must be ascribed to that motive solely, and he hoped for that motive it would be forgiven. He was anxious to know the ultimatum of their expectations; he was anxious to know the real sense of the house, that wrong information might not be sent to the other side of the water. This was the moment to come to a decision. But as one gentleman had declared that he did not hold himself pledged by the address of that day, perhaps many other gentlemen of that house who had not delivered their sentiments, might consider themselves in the same situation. He therefore requested the honourable gentleman would keep his word; since the expectations of the nation could not be known without a division, that division would reduce the matter to a certainty. Mr. Bagenal said, he was not surprised to see his learned friend (Mr. Walsh) a little alarmed at the manner in which the minister spoke; it was plain speaking, and plain speaking in a minister was a thing so very unusual, that it was really alarming. He had sat in parliament five-and-twenty years, and never heard such plain and honest speaking by a minister; for which reason,

and many others, the address should have his support. Mr. Ogle, after pronouncing an elegant panegyric on the public and private virtues of the lord lieutenant, and paying the like tribute to those of Mr. Grattan, said, that honourable measures should be supported by honourable men, and moved an address of thanks to the lord lieutenant, which passed unanimously. Mr. Gorges Lowther said he had an opportunity of seeing more lord lieutenants' speeches delivered at this table than any other gentleman in this house; he had seen bad lord lieutenants, indifferent lord lieutenants, and but few good; he never expected to have seen such a lord lieutenant sent to them as the present, with full power to do every-

thing for the good of Ireland; "he has saved us from slavery and arbitrary power." He was really surprised to hear one dissenting vote to this motion. Had they not got all they desired? He hoped one or two negatives would be of little signification (if they should persist) in comparison to more than two hundred, and he most heartily concurred with the honourable gentleman who made the motion, in every particular of it, as a sincere friend to his country.

When at length the house divided upon the words objected to by the recorder, the ayes were two hundred and eleven, while the noes consisted only of the two tellers, the recorder, and Mr. Walsh.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEGINNINGS OF NEW DISCONTENT; GRATTAN AND FLOOD; PROCEEDINGS OF PARLIAMENT; AGITATION AMONG THE VOLUNTEERS.



IN the excess of their gratitude for the concessions made by England, the parliament proceeded at once to grant a hundred thousand pounds towards raising twenty thousand sailors for the fleet. They next resolved upon testifying their value of the services which Grattan had done to his country, by voting fifty thousand pounds for purchasing an estate and building a house, to be settled on the patriot and his heirs. Mr. Bagenal, the mover of this grant, compared the services of Grattan with those of Marlborough, and declared that the latter merited a nobler temple than Blenheim. This last measure led to a division among the patriots, and to the formation of two parties, led by the rival orators, Grattan and Flood. The latter had enjoyed, during seven years, one of the most lucrative offices under government, of which he had been deprived for his patriotism, and which had been given to a more pliant courtier, Sir George Yonge. The preference shown to Grattan seems to have excited jealousy in the breast of Flood, and the friends of the latter insisted that his place

should be restored to him, and they even insinuated that Grattan had been bought over to the court. Three days after Mr. Bagenal's motion for a reward for Grattan, Mr. Montgomery, of Donegal, one of the most active of Flood's party, moved the house of commons for an address to require that Flood should be restored to his office. The minister represented that the place was already filled, and that there was no reason for ejecting the present occupier. But Flood's party were not satisfied, and from this moment he placed himself in a sort of opposition, contending against the late measures for securing parliamentary independence as insufficient and insecure, and asserting that Great Britain was acting with insincerity and duplicity. This opposition in parliament, which soon led to wider and more important divisions, was first shown in the debates upon the bill for repealing part of Poynings' law. Flood's minority was small, but resolute, and never lost an opportunity of insisting upon some positive renunciation on the part of Great Britain of all right to legislate for Ireland, internally or externally. It was out of doors that Flood's opinions gained most ground; for the parliament almost unanimously joined with Grattan in

placing their trust in the government of Great Britain.

So strong seemed this feeling of the Irish parliament, that government did not despair of obtaining a formal recognition of English supremacy. The duke of Portland stated to lord Shelburne, in a letter of the 6th of June—"I have the best reason to hope that I shall soon be enabled to transmit to you the sketch or outlines of an act of parliament to be adopted by the legislatures of the respective kingdoms, by which the superintending power and supremacy of Great Britain, in all matters of state and general commerce, will be virtually and effectually acknowledged; that a share of the expense in carrying on a defensive or offensive war, either in support of our own dominions or those of our allies, shall be borne by Ireland in proportion to the actual state of her abilities, and that she will adopt every such regulation as may be judged necessary by Great Britain for the better ordering and securing her trade and commerce with foreign nations, or her own colonies and dependencies, consideration being duly had to the circumstances of Ireland." This communication was received in England with the utmost satisfaction: "no matter who has the merit," lord Shelburne said, in reply, "let the two kingdoms be one, which can only be by Ireland now acknowledging the superintending power and supremacy to be where nature has placed it, in precise and unambiguous terms." In a few days, however, the spirit of discontent had been spread with so much diligence and success, that on the 22nd of June the lord lieutenant informed the minister that such a measure could no longer be attempted with any chance of success.

The duke of Portland's government was of short duration. The death of lord Rockingham had been followed by a division in the British cabinet, and Fox and some of his friends retired, though lord Shelburne had so strongly expressed his liberal feelings towards Ireland, that there seemed no reason for expecting any change of policy from the new ministry formed under him. Lord Portland was succeeded in the government of Ireland by lord Temple, and the business of the Irish parliament was hastened forward in order that the former might close the session.

Among the more important acts of this session was Mr. Eden's bill for establishing a national bank, which, after some oppo-

sition, was opened in the following year, under the title of "The Governor and Company of the Bank of Ireland." Ireland also received, under lord Portland's administration, a habeas corpus act, similar to that in existence in England; the sacramental test, by which protestant dissenters were excluded from offices of trust, and the perpetual mutiny bill, were repealed; and an act was passed for limiting the commission of the judges; and another allowed the king to draw out of Ireland, whenever he should think fit, a force not exceeding five thousand men. But the bill which at this time excited most discussion in parliament was an act for the further relief of his majesty's subjects of Ireland professing the Roman catholic religion, which, however, was carried through, and became the law of the land.

This bill was brought forward by Luke Gardiner, afterwards lord Mountjoy, who urged the extreme confusion of the penal statutes, and the necessity of revising them. Many of these still in force, he said, were considered too severe to be put in execution, and most of them ought to be repealed. The opposition to any relief to the catholics was still strong, and the bill was attempted to be got rid of by a motion that it should be postponed till the 23rd of October, 1788. This amendment was warmly opposed by Mr. Walsh, who described the Irish popery laws as "the most sanguinary, the most persecuting that ever appeared in the statute-books of any free country; a code of laws, the very existence of which at this day is, in my opinion, a reproach to the good sense of parliament." He pointed out the necessity of uniting in one common interest the inhabitants of Ireland of all classes and denominations. "It is an established maxim," he said, "that the riches and consequence of a country consist in the number of its inhabitants. And yet, I am sorry to say, that Ireland at this day proves the truism of the maxim by being an exception to the rule; for the Roman catholics of Ireland, in number about two million, so far from adding either to the riches or to the consequence of this country, are a burden and a dead weight on its industry; and must inevitably continue so, as long as the popery laws remain unrepealed. Ireland, from its situation, should be as flourishing and as happy a country as any under the sun. Ireland is surrounded by fruitful coasts; she possesses the safest harbours; she enjoys a temperate climate,

and is blessed in the fertility of her soil; and yet Ireland is at this day as far behind other nations, as to arts and industry, as she is beyond them in point of natural advantages. It may be asked why Ireland, with all those natural advantages, should be so far behind other nations in arts and industry? The answer is obvious—the popery laws are still alive; those laws which render torpid and useless to this country two million of its inhabitants. The wealth of a country must ever be in proportion to the skill and industry of its inhabitants. The sure way to make men industrious, is to let them enjoy the fruits of their industry. As industry increases, manufactures must necessarily flourish; therefore the great object of the legislature should be to excite industry, by employing the people; not to continue laws which render the bulk of the people a burden to the state. The obvious interest of Ireland, at this hour, is to grant to religious dissenters their civil privileges, which may annex them to the civil government; not to continue persecuting laws, which must necessarily estrange them from it. I would not be understood to say that the popery laws, when made, were not necessary to the protection of its civil constitution; but this I will say, that the motives which then induced the necessity of those laws have long since ceased to exist. These laws have outlived their time, and, in my opinion, a longer continuation of them, circumstanced as this country now particularly stands, must be its inevitable ruin. It will not be denied, I believe, that the conduct of the Roman catholics of this country, for a series of years, has been that of obedience to the laws, and attachment to the established government. Why, then, continue unnecessarily those penal laws, which absolutely involve two-thirds of our fellow-subjects—which deprive them of the rights of men, and cut them off from any benefit of a free constitution? Can any laws be more unwise than those which restrain the Roman catholics, not from evil, but absolutely from doing good—laws which absolutely prohibit industry, by tying up the hands of two millions of men from co-operating with the public in the public service? I will suppose, merely for argument, that the Roman catholics are not so well attached to us, from principle, as could be wished. Will any gentleman then say that a continuation of those popery laws will be a probable mode of winning the affections or

ensuring the attachments of this unfortunate class of people?—unfortunate indeed, when doomed to vassalage in a country of freedom, and treated as aliens in their native land. The wisest man who, I believe, has ever written on the subject of legislation—I mean baron Montesquieu—treating of the very subject now before us, that of penal laws as to religion, says, that penal laws as to religion have never produced any other effect than that of making the objects of them more persevering. Says he: ‘The sure way to win the zealots, in any religion, is to court them by favours—by the conveniences of life—by hopes of fortune. It is an established rule, as to the changing of religion, that the invitations to the change must ever be more strong than the penalties.’ Have not the very laws we are now discussing proved the wisdom of his judgment? Can it be presumed that these popery laws, if unrepealed, can produce other or more salutary effects, for the time to come, than they have produced for near a century past, that of misery to individuals, and impotency to the state? Since, then, the iron hand of penal law has proved ineffectual, why not endeavour to wed the Roman catholic to us from motives of self-interest? The happiness of every state depends upon the common interest of the subject, not on uniformity of opinion as to this or that religion. If Roman catholics are permitted to purchase lands, they must necessarily become sincere supporters of the established government; they then become wedded to it by the strongest of all ties, that of self-interest. The security of self-interest is the support of every government. Will it be argued, that the greater the stake a man has to lose by the subversion of that government under which he lives, the more he is to be suspected as an enemy to it?—or, that the less a man is interested in the welfare of the state, the more he is to be confided in? Surely this is too absurd a doctrine to be entertained for an instant. A Roman catholic, by purchasing lands, enters into security for his good conduct; he, if I may use the expression, enters into a kind of recognizance for his loyalty to the state. By permitting Roman catholics to purchase, you annex their loyalty to the soil; by that means it becomes stable and permanent; whereas, at present, the property of Roman catholics is totally personal—it is a kind of fugitive property, which may almost instantly be transferred

from one country to another. If sound policy and good sense have not heretofore told us to repeal those laws, the present times, the very critical situation of the British empire, furnish a decisive reason for repealing them at this day. England has wisely repealed her popery laws."

On this question, Grattan, as he had always done, continued to advocate the claims of the catholic portion of his countrymen; while Flood, who went furthest in his notions of political freedom, opposed the advocates of religious liberty. The latter affected to feel alarm at the emancipation of the catholics, lest it should prove the way only to political power, and wished to delay the measure before the house, to give time for further consideration, objecting especially to the part of the bill giving the catholics the right of property, by allowing them to hold land in fee. To this, Grattan replied—"I object to any delay which can be given to this clause; we have already considered the subject on a larger scale, and this is but a part of what the clause originally contained. We have before us the example of England, who, four years ago, granted catholics a right of taking land in fee. The question is merely whether we shall give this right or not, and if we give it, whether it shall be accompanied by all its natural advantages. Three years ago, when this question was debated in this house, there was a majority of three against granting catholics estates in fee, and they were only allowed to take leases of nine hundred and ninety-nine years; the argument then used against granting them the fee was, that they might influence elections. It has this day been shown, that they may have as effectual an influence by possessing leases of nine hundred and ninety-nine years, as they can have by possessing the fee; at that time, I do declare I was somewhat prejudiced against granting Roman catholics estates in fee, but their conduct since that period has fully convinced me of their true attachment to this country. When this country had resolved no longer to crouch beneath the burden of oppression that England had laid upon her—when she armed in defence of her right, and a high-spirited people demanded a free trade, did the Roman catholics desert their countrymen? No: they were found amongst the foremost. When it was afterwards thought necessary to assert a free constitution, the Roman catholics displayed their public virtue; they

did not endeavour to take advantage of your situation; they did not endeavour to make terms for themselves; but they entered frankly and heartily into the cause of their country, judging by their own virtue that they might depend upon your generosity for their reward. But now, after you have obtained a free trade—after the voice of the nation has asserted her independence, they approach this house as humble suppliants, and beg to be admitted to the common right of men. Upon the occasions I have mentioned, I did carefully observe their actions, and did then determine to support their cause whenever it came before this house, and to bear a strong testimony of the constitutional principles of the catholic body. Nor should it be mentioned as a reproach to them that they fought under the banner of king James, when we recollect that before they entered the field, they extorted from him a magna charta—a British constitution. In the reign of Charles I. a committee, consisting of papists, protestants, and presbyterians, were sent from this country to prosecute lord Strafford, and we find them perfectly agreeing in the object of their mission; and indeed, when men begin to differ upon principles of religion, it is because they have no other great object to engage their attention. We cannot give the people of Ireland a common faith, but we can give them a common interest. In 1779, when the fleets of Bourbon hovered on our coasts, and the Irish nation roused herself to arms, did the Roman catholics stand aloof? or did they, as might be expected from their oppressed situation, offer assistance to the enemy? No: they poured in subscriptions for the service of their country, or they pressed into the ranks of her glorious volunteers. It has been shown that this clause grants the Roman catholics no new power in the state; every argument, therefore, which goes against this clause, goes against their having leases for nine hundred and ninety-nine years; every argument which goes against their having leases of nine hundred and ninety-nine years, goes against their having any leases at all; and every argument which goes against their having property, goes against their having existence in this land. The question is now, whether we shall grant Roman catholics a power of enjoying estates, or whether we shall be a protestant settlement or an Irish nation?—whether we will throw open the gates of the temple of

liberty to all our countrymen, or whether we will confine them in bondage by penal laws? So long as the penal code remains, we never can be a great nation; the penal code is the shell in which the protestant power has been hatched; and now it is become a bird, it must burst the shell asunder, or perish in it. In Holland, where the number of Roman catholics is comparatively small, the toleration of their religion is an act of mercy to them; but in this country, where they form the great bulk of the inhabitants, it is an act of policy—an act of necessity—an act of incorporation. The question is not, whether we shall show mercy to the Roman catholics, but whether we shall mould the inhabitants of Ireland into a people; for so long as we exclude catholics from natural liberty and the common right of men, we are not a people; we may triumph over them, but other nations will triumph over us. If you love the Roman catholic, you may be sure of a return from him; but if you treat him with cruelty, you must always live in fear, conscious that you merit his just resentment. Will you then go down the stream of time, the Roman catholic sitting by your side, un blessing and un blessed, blasting and blasted? Or will you take off his chain, that he may take off yours? Will you give him freedom, that he may guard your liberty? In Ireland, as connected with England, the indulgence we wish to give to catholics can never be injurious to the protestant religion; that religion is the religion of the state, and will become the religion of catholics, if severity does not prevent them. Bigotry may survive persecution; but it never can survive toleration. But gentlemen who speak of the enormities committed by catholics groaning under a system of penal laws, do not take into account the enlightening and the softening of men's minds by toleration, nor do they consider that, as they increase in wealth, they will increase in learning and politeness. I give my consent to the clause in its principle, extent, and boldness; I give my consent to it, as the most likely means of obtaining a victory over the prejudices of catholics, and over our own; I give my consent to it, because I would not keep two millions of my fellow-subjects in a state of slavery; and because, as the mover of the declaration of rights, I should be ashamed of giving freedom to but six hundred thousand of my countrymen, when I could extend it to two

millions more." Grattan's liberal principles on this occasion prevailed.

After all these bills had been disposed of, the session was closed on the 27th of July, and the parliament prorogued to the 24th of the following September. The duke of Portland's speech at the end of a session which had produced acts of such importance in Irish history, was itself so characteristic, that it deserves to be given entire. He said—

*"My lords and gentlemen—*The great and constitutional advantages you have secured to your country, and the wise and magnanimous conduct of Great Britain, in contributing to the success of your steady and temperate exertions, call for my congratulations on the close of a session which must ever reflect the highest honour on the national character of both kingdoms. It must be a most pleasing consideration to you, to recollect, that in the advances you made towards the settlement of your constitution, no acts of violence or impatience have marked their progress. A religious adherence to the laws confined your endeavours within the strictest bounds of loyalty and good order; your claims were directed by the same spirit that gave rise and stability to the liberty of Great Britain, and could not fail of success, as soon as the councils of that kingdom were influenced by the avowed friends of the constitution. Such a spirit of constitutional liberty communicating itself from one kingdom to the other, must naturally produce that reciprocal confidence and mutual affection, of which we already begin to feel the most salutary effects. A grateful zeal and generous ardour have united this whole kingdom in the most cordial and vigorous exertions, which promise effectually to frustrate the designs of our common enemy, and to re-establish and secure the glory of the whole empire.

*"Gentlemen of the house of commons—*When I consider the very active and liberal part you have taken in contributing to these great and glorious events, I must as distinctly express to you his Majesty's sense of the last effusion of your generosity for the defence of the empire, as I must return you his most gracious thanks for the supplies which you so cheerfully voted at the beginning of this session. His majesty's royal example not only secures to you a most just and economical application of the aids you have granted him, but affords you a most

solemn pledge of attentive investigation into every means which the circumstances of this country will afford to alleviate the burdens of his loyal and grateful people. To co-operate with you in carrying into effect this most benevolent disposition of his majesty, will afford me the highest gratification; and manifest to you the sentiments I shall ever entertain, in return for the confidence you have reposed in the sincerity of my professions for your welfare.

*“My lords and gentlemen—*In contemplating the services which your unremitting assiduity has rendered to the public, I must indulge myself in the satisfaction of specifying some very important acts, which will most materially strengthen the great constitutional reform you have completed, and which will for ever distinguish the period of this memorable session. You have provided for the impartial and unbiassed administration of justice, by the act for securing the independency of judges. You have adopted one of the most effectual securities of British freedom, by limiting the mutiny act in point of duration. You have secured that most invaluable of all human blessings, the personal liberty of the subject, by passing the habeas corpus act. You have cherished and enlarged the wise principles of toleration, and made considerable advances in abolishing those distinctions which have too long impeded the progress of industry, and divided the nation. The diligence and ardour with which you have persevered in the accomplishment of these great objects, must ever bear the most honourable testimony of your zeal and industry in the service of your country, and manifest your knowledge of its true interests. Many and great national objects must present themselves to your consideration during the recess from parliamentary business; but what I would most earnestly press upon you, as that on which your domestic peace and happiness and the prosperity of the empire at this moment most immediately depend, is to cultivate and diffuse those sentiments of affection and confidence which are now happily restored between the two kingdoms. Convince the people in your several districts, as you are yourselves convinced, that every cause of past jealousies and discontents is finally removed; that both countries have pledged their good faith to each other, and that their best security will be an inviolable adherence to that compact; that the implicit reliance which Great

Britain has reposed on the honour, generosity, and candour of Ireland, engages your national character to a return of sentiments equally liberal and enlarged: convince them that the two kingdoms are now one, indissolubly connected in unity of constitution and unity of interests; that the danger and security, the prosperity and calamity, of the one, must equally affect the other—that they stand or fall together.”

The agitation which now prevailed throughout Ireland was kept alive chiefly by the volunteers. These men, who had suddenly obtained an extraordinary power, and who exulted in the conviction that the concessions of the English government had been obtained alone by their influence, were unwilling to lay it aside. Many of their leaders had already formed ulterior designs, and it was no part of their plans that the Irish people should be satisfied. Yet at first they joined heartily in the national joy, and addresses of thankfulness to the king and the lord lieutenant poured in from every quarter. On the 28th of May, the committees of Ulster and Connaught published the following address to the volunteers of these provinces, which will serve to show the spirit which at this moment seemed to actuate them:—

*“Friends, freemen, and fellow-soldiers—*We have suspended all observations on public affairs until we should receive that authentic information from our legislature on which we should ground our proceedings. Appointed by the volunteers of our respective provinces to superintend the great cause in which we were engaged, we have been watchful spectators of its progress, and have waited, in silent expectation, for the fate of those demands of justice, which our parliament, echoing the voice of the nation, had carried to the foot of the throne. We can now congratulate our fellow-soldiers on the full completion of their wishes. The all-bountiful Providence, whose omnipotent hand guides the fate of nations, has led this country on to glory; the people of Ireland, with the steady dignified moderation of conscious rectitude, have boldly vindicated their rights; and the magnanimity of Britain, forgetting all ancient prejudices, has obliterated every source of jealousy by an act of ample and unequivocal justice. Let us bow with gratitude to that Providence whose divine protection has led us through the paths of peace to the summit of success; let us

cherish that spirit in ourselves which has been the instrument of our deliverance; let us embrace our sister-kingdom with renovated affection, and evince that freedom is the strongest cement of union, and liberality is the firmest basis of power. The distinction between Englishmen and Irishmen is no more; we are now one people; we have but one interest, one cause, one enemy, one friend, and we trust that the conduct of the Irish nation will demonstrate to all mankind, that the same spirit which grasps at liberty and spurns at usurpation, is equally alive to the impressions of friendship, of kindness, and of generosity. Let this auspicious era, which at once restores us to the possession of our constitution, and to the arms of our magnanimous sister, be ever recorded in the annals of this country; and let the glory which surrounds it diffuse its light to illuminate succeeding ages; let structures arise to commemorate the transactions of this eventful period, and to hold up an example to stimulate posterity to an emulation of the virtues of their ancestors, and religiously to preserve the sacred trust transmitted to them inviolate and uncontaminated; let the whole nation pour in the voluntary tribute of its feelings, that every man who assisted in the attainment of the object may have the gratification of contributing to the measure which is to record it, and that, as the cause is national, so should the monument be. Amidst these effusions of public exultation; amidst these records of the glorious events of this memorable era; while we pay every testimony of heart-felt gratitude to those ever-to-be honoured senators, who, superior to all temptation, have boldly stood forth in vindicating the rights of their country, while we offer every tribute of particular veneration to the illustrious leader of the volunteers of Ireland, the earl of Charlemont, we should be wanting to our own feelings, to our sense of justice, and to what we are convinced is the unanimous sense of the nation, did we not hold up that great and exalted character, Henry Grattan, as the object of peculiar commemoration and distinguished national reward. It was the capacious genius of that honour to his country and mankind, which first conceived the practicability of rescuing his native land from oppression; it was the power of his splendid abilities which roused the public mind, and called forth all the talents

and all the virtue in the nation to his aid; it was his perseverance which, with such an aid, irresistibly bore down all opposition to the parliamentary declaration and the British recognition of our constitution. Services like these are so blended with, and form so leading a feature in the history of the times, that one cannot be commemorated without the other, nor can any monument record the effect without distinguishing the cause. But we should not stop here; the duke of Marlborough received Blenheim from the British nation, as a tribute of gratitude for his military success; but as much as liberty is more valuable than conquest, so are the services of a Grattan superior to those of a Marlborough; and we trust the characteristic generosity of the Irish will not be inferior to that of Britain, in proportion to her ability. The reward to the individual is united to the political encouragement held out to public virtue, and if a nation should err in its retribution for distinguished services, its error should ever be on the side of liberality. Impressed with these opinions, we did intend to recommend it to your consideration, to apply in your capacity as freeholders to the sheriffs of your respective counties, to convene public meetings, for the purpose of instructing your representatives in parliament to confer an adequate national reward on that truly deserving character; but finding the subject was last night mentioned in the house of commons by a very respectable member, and is soon to be taken under parliamentary consideration, we have only to express our wish, that every county in the kingdom may be convened to sanction, by their approbation, the conduct of their representatives on the occasion, and evince that it is equally the desire of the people and the legislature. While we felicitate you on the glorious prospects which now begin to open in this country; while we view with wonder and exultation the tide of good fortune which poured in at once upon the Irish nation and the empire at large, we cannot but particularly entreat you not to relax your military discipline; we have now a constitution as well as property to defend against the common enemy; let us remember, too, that there is a public spirit and a high sense of honour annexed to the volunteer institution, which we have found the great support and incentive to national virtue, and which, having already made corruption sink before it, can alone prevent its rising again

into existence. The late happy change in his majesty's measures and ministers in Ireland, as well as Great Britain, seems the harbinger of prosperity and indissoluble union to both kingdoms; and we trust, that gratified in all those particulars mentioned in the late addresses of our parliament, the people of this country will (as well as the legislature) assure his majesty, that while England adheres to the principle manifested in her present conduct, no constitutional question between the two nations will any longer exist which can interrupt their harmony; and that we will shew our sister-kingdom and the world that a government founded on the broad basis of liberty, of purity, and public opinion, will stand unshaken upon the support of the nation, and rise superior to all the arts of corruption."

Within three weeks of the date of this declaration, dissatisfaction showed itself among the various volunteer corps, fermented by the violent language of the radical press, which talked of nothing but English perfidy and of the insufficiency of the late concessions. On the 18th of June, the national committee of the volunteers, which held its meetings in Dublin, declared its satisfaction with the measure already obtained; and on the 21st of June, at a meeting of the Ulster volunteers at Dungannon, similar satisfaction was expressed in a warm address of thanks to the king, and the other provinces followed in the same track. The first public declaration of contrary feelings came from two volunteer corps in Belfast, and all at once the more violent newspapers were filled with attacks on the men who had been sent over to England with the Ulster address, and on Grattan, who was now represented almost as the enemy of his country. The Belfast review, the most considerable in Ireland, was to take place on the 31st of July, and it was determined that this opportunity should be taken for a strong demonstration. The first Belfast company, which took the lead in this movement, published on the 18th of July an address to the different corps that were to be present at the review, in which they made a declaration of their causes of discontent. They put forward as the grounds of their proceeding, "that the rights of this kingdom are not yet secured, nor even acknowledged by Britain, partly owing to

the delusions of many sincere friends, to the perfidy of pretended ones, and to an error committed through precipitancy by our representatives in the senate." "Unless," said this address, "a spark of that sacred flame which but a few days ago glowed in every breast in Ulster be again excited, the glorious attempt of this country to procure its emancipation, instead of producing any real permanent good, will too probably be the means of depriving us of our rights for ever." The address proceeded to trace the growth and progress of the spirit of resistance since the grand meeting at Dungannon, the intentions of which it pretended had not been carried out. It talked of the Irish parliament as being "forced into the temporary practice of virtue by the demands of an armed people," and represented Fox as having acted as a British minister rather than as a real friend to Ireland. It gave unbounded praise to Flood, who had become the hero of the volunteers; and it proposed that another grand meeting should be held at Dungannon, to examine what demands of the February meeting had not been complied with, and determine what steps should be pursued in order to secure compliance.

A counter-address was published by major Dobbs, who had moved the Ulster address of thanks to the king on the 21st of June. When the last day of July arrived, about four thousand volunteers, well armed and accoutred, were assembled at Belfast, to be reviewed by lord Charlemont. Political papers were spread through the camp in great numbers, and not only every officer, but every private, considered himself there as a political agent, called upon to pronounce on the affairs of the nation. The delegates assembled on the 3rd of August, and proceeded to make a declaration of their sentiments in the form of an address to lord Charlemont, as their reviewing-general. Major Dobbs, as exercising officer, moved the address, and inserted in it a clause expressing their full satisfaction with the concessions granted by Great Britain. This clause was opposed by the discontented party, who moved as an amendment that it should be expunged; and after a warm debate of eleven hours, the amendment was carried by a majority of thirty-one against twenty-nine.

CHAPTER IX.

LORD TEMPLE'S ADMINISTRATION : PROCEEDINGS IN THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT ; NEW ORDER OF KNIGHTHOOD, AND PROPOSAL TO TRANSPLANT INTO IRELAND A COLONY OF GENEVESE ;
CONTINUANCE OF THE VOLUNTEER AGITATION.



THE change in the English ministry which followed the death of the marquis of Rockingham, seemed to threaten no alteration in the friendly policy now followed towards Ireland, and lord Temple assumed the lord lieutenancy with warm professions of his intentions to introduce reforms in all departments of the government. He directed his attention especially to the establishment of a strict system of economy, which exposed him to the hostility of the government officials.

The agitation on the pretended insufficiency of the late concessions was kept up with great activity in the recess of parliament, and every little circumstance was eagerly seized upon that could be distorted into an attack upon Irish rights. An Irish cause had been for eighteen months in the English court of king's bench, and was there decided by lord Mansfield in the December of 1782. This was interpreted into an invasion of the newly-granted independence of the Irish judicature, and was held forth as an example of the manner in which England would eventually keep its faith with the Irish nation. This matter was brought before the English house of commons on the 19th of December by colonel Fitzpatrick, and was fully explained by the ministers. Mr. Fox took that occasion of declaring that the late measure was intended as a complete, absolute, and perpetual surrender of the British legislative and judicial supremacy over Ireland, and that he believed it was understood and cordially received as such by the best and truest friends of Ireland. Next day another conversation took place on the same subject, and it was proposed to bring in a law which should take away the jealousies that had arisen from the recent decision in the court of king's bench.

Accordingly, on the 22nd of January, 1783, one of the secretaries of state, Mr. Townsend, who had succeeded to the office held by Fox, introduced again the Irish

question with a declaration on the part of ministers, that the principle on which parliament had acted in the previous session was to give Ireland every satisfaction that could justly be demanded, and which was not inconsistent with the dignity of Great Britain. He said that the mode adopted to convey that satisfaction might not have been such as to take away every pretext of agitation from those who wished rather to embroil than to settle public affairs. Ireland neither desired nor would accept a grant of rights from Great Britain, and she had too much good sense and regard for the latter country to propose or demand a declaration on the part of England that she had usurped the rights of Ireland for centuries. With regard to the proceeding of the late administration on this question, he believed that sincerity and wisdom had guided their steps, but some untoward circumstances had intervened to prevent their measures from producing at once all the good effect which might have been expected from them, and among these circumstances was the late decision in the court of king's bench in England, which had alarmed some of the best-intentioned men in Ireland. Ireland claimed a sole and exclusive exercise of judicature as well as of legislation; having given up the legislation, the judicature was certainly not worth contending for, and he thought England ought to meet the declared wish of Ireland on this subject cheerfully and readily. He wished that the motion he was going to propose might pass unanimously, that the people of Ireland might see that England meant fairly when she set out to remove the causes of jealousy and discontent. He then moved for leave to bring in a bill "for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or may arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the parliament and courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and judicature, and for preventing any writ of error or appeal from any of his majesty's courts in that kingdom from being received, heard, and adjudged in any of his majesty's courts in the kingdom of Great Britain."

The debate on this motion turned principally on the question whether there were any doubts and jealousies in Ireland, and whether there were any grounds for them; but leave was given to bring in the bill without a division. During the subsequent struggles of the government, which ended in the formation of the celebrated coalition ministry, the Irish judicature bill, which had reached the house of lords, was retarded in its progress, but when those struggles were ended, it became the subject of warmer debate than before. On the 14th of April, 1783, when the second reading was moved in the house of lords, lord Aberdeen made a long speech, in which he said that he had seen with infinite pleasure, that what Ireland had required of England had been fully acquiesced in by his majesty's ministers. He said he had seen an act of parliament, no less offensive to the constitution of this country than subversive of the right of Ireland, repealed and expunged from our statute-books. But he had also seen that although this had been done at the instance and requisition of both houses of parliament in Ireland, still Ireland was not satisfied with it. He then proceeded to state his own opinions with regard to the relative positions of the two countries. In considering this subject, he said, two things occurred to his observation: one, the right which this country had exercised of internal legislation over Ireland; the other, the right which this country possessed of external legislation over Ireland, so far as that legislation regarded the navigation and commerce of that kingdom. With respect to the first, the right of internal legislation, it was clear to him, that no right so manifestly in the teeth of the constitution of this country, however it could be exercised, could on principle be maintained; for, as it was a fundamental principle of the constitution that legislation and representation were inseparable, therefore, inasmuch as Ireland was not represented in the British parliament, Ireland could not be subject to the legislature of the British parliament. But of the right of external legislation, so far as it respected the navigation and commerce of that kingdom, his opinion and judgment were the very reverse, that right, being founded on the right to the dominion of the sea, was a common-law right, a fundamental right coequal with the constitution of this country; he found it so laid down *passim* in all our common-law books, as well as ex-

pressly declared in the statute of the 20th of Henry VI., c. 9, in the following words: "The parliament of England cannot bind Ireland as to their lands, for they have a parliament there; but they may bind them as to things transitory, as the shipping of wool, or merchandize, to the intent to carry it to another place beyond sea." This authority, maintaining the rights of external relation as regarded the commerce of Ireland, defeated the right of internal legislation by the reason "for they have a parliament there." Did the people of Ireland, he asked, wish to remain subjects of the crown of England? If they did, the moment that bill passed, they were no longer so. For the subjects of the crown of England must be, and are of continual necessity, under the legislative authority of this country. The crown itself is under the legislative authority of this country, and of course those who are dependent upon this crown, so far as the constitution admits of it, must be so too. That they may be subjects of the king of England, is true, and so they will be; and so are the people of Hanover subjects of the king of England; but does Ireland wish to be upon the footing of Hanover with this country? And yet the case must and will be so. Suppose an act of parliament were to pass, restraining the prerogative of the crown in any given instance with respect to Ireland, would not Ireland be bounden by that act of parliament? Must not Ireland submit to that act of parliament? For how could Ireland oppose or resist it but by an act of rebellion, if the people of Ireland be the subjects of the crown of England, and the crown of England be subject to the legislation of England? Do the people of Ireland wish to have seats in the British parliament? This bill incapacitates them from being members of the British legislature. It was by acts of parliament that the right of sitting in the two houses of parliament was regulated; and the people of Ireland not being to be bounden by acts of parliament, they are in so much aliens as regards their claim to this right. From the moment that act did pass, the Irish were no longer our fellow-subjects. If that right be in us, that right is delegated to us, and no delegated right is or can be in its nature transferable. This is sound constitutional doctrine, and not to be opposed; besides, at best this is but an act of parliament, and all acts of parliament are repealable; and then the

right reverts to its fundamental source. Let the Irish, he said, remember that the 6th of George I. has been repealed.

The duke of Richmond and lord Thurlow opposed the bill with similar arguments, but the opposition was not sufficient to bring the house to a division, and, while the debates only furnished materials for further discussion in Ireland, the bill itself passed the house of lords, and became the law of the land.

The English government attempted at this time to call off the attention of the people of Ireland from the political agitation in which they were absorbed, by a measure calculated to flatter their national pride. This was the establishment of a new order of knighthood, peculiarly Irish in spirit and form, under the title of knights of the illustrious order of St. Patrick. The king and the lord lieutenant for the time being were to hold the offices of sovereigns and grand masters. The first knights companions of the order were prince Edward, the duke of Leinster, and the earls of Clanrickard, Antrim, Westmeath, Inchiquin, Drogheda, Tyrone, Shannon, Clanbrassil, Mornington, Courtown, Charlemont, Bective, and Ely. The archbishop of Dublin for the time being, was to be chancellor; the dean of St. Patrick's, registrar; and lord Delvin, secretary. The knights were invested with great solemnity in the castle of Dublin, on the eleventh of March, and were installed on the seventeenth, St. Patrick's day. This grand pageant offered but a slight and temporary interruption to the agitation of the public mind.

Another circumstance occupied the public mind soon afterward, an attempt to introduce into Ireland a colony of Genevese. In consequence of a political revolution in the republic of Geneva, in which the democratic power was overthrown by the aristocracy, a considerable number of the defeated democratic party resolved to quit their country, and to seek an asylum in Ireland. They sent commissioners to Dublin to treat with the Irish government for their reception in that country, and these commissioners were received with so much favour by all classes, that as a mark of particular respect, they were immediately elected into the volunteer army of Leinster. The privy council encouraged the immigration, and a considerable tract of land at Passage, in the county of Waterford, near the confluence of the rivers Barrow and Suir,

which was shortly to revert to the crown, was chosen to be granted to these Genevese settlers, and was to receive the name of New Geneva. But the project failed, in consequence of disagreement on the terms of settlement. The Genevese insisted that they should be represented in parliament, and that they should be governed by their own laws, the latter demand being totally incompatible with the constitution of the country. Some of the Genevese did transport themselves into Ireland, but they soon found that they had not bettered their condition, and most of them returned.

After retaining the government of Ireland but a few months, during which he seemed to have gained universal respect, lord Temple was superseded in the April of 1783, by the appointment of the earl of Northington to the lord lieutenantcy. Lord Temple did not quit his government till the 3rd of June, and then he left the country in a state of feverish excitement, caused by the report of an intended dissolution of parliament. The grand subject of agitation at this moment was parliamentary reform, which seemed necessary to complete the triumph of liberal opinions in Ireland, and it was taken up by the volunteers with great zeal and warmth. But these armed proclaimers of liberty, flushed with their recent success, had become so violent in their demonstrations, that people began to reflect on the dangers that were likely to arise from the continuance of such a power assuming to itself to overawe the government, and a spirit of resistance to their demands was rising among those who had hitherto approved of their conduct. The power of the volunteers was, however, as yet, unbroken, and they now formed committees in different parts of the kingdom, which corresponded with the advocates of parliamentary reform in England, and published their opinions in every shape calculated to extend the agitation on this question. On the 1st of July, 1783, delegates from forty-five companies of volunteers in the province of Ulster met at Lisburne, in pursuance of a public requisition, and determined upon calling a general meeting of the volunteer delegates in that province, to be held at Dungannon on the 8th of September, for the purpose of taking into consideration the question of a reform in parliament. The resolutions of this meeting at Lisburne were published in the newspapers; they

contained a vindication of the character of the volunteers, and a declaration of the pressing necessity of parliamentary reform, with a sanguine estimate of the consequences that were to result from this measure. These were, "The destruction of that party spirit whose baneful influence has at all times been injurious to the public weal; a revival of the native dignity of the crown, by imparting to each branch of the legislature its distinct and proportional weight; and the abolition of that train of courtly mercenaries, who must ever continue to prey on the vitals of public virtue, till, the balance of the constitution being restored, the necessity for governing by regular systems of seduction shall no longer exist." "Then," says this address, "would the constituent body regain its constitutional control over its trustees, and venal majorities would not be found to support the most dishonourable and pernicious measures, in opposition to the sense of the unpolluted part of the legislature, as well contrary to the universal wishes of the public, as to the true intent of the institution of parliaments. With due deference for the august body which we have presumed to address, we therefore beg leave to express our own wishes, that the volunteer delegates of Ulster would assemble with the same spirit of loyalty, patriotism, and firmness, which actuated them on the memorable 15th of February, 1782, to deliberate on the most constitutional means of procuring a more equal representation of the people in the parliament of Ireland, as the only measure which can give permanency to the late renovation of our constitution, or restore that virtue to the representative body, without which, though the mere forms of a free government may be preserved, its spirit must inevitably perish."

The call thus made was eagerly responded to, and printed addresses and declarations again flew about the country. The public agitation was increased by the dissolution of the parliament on the 15th of July, and the election of a new one, which was to meet on the 14th of October. On the 8th of September, in obedience to the summons from Lisburne, the delegates of two hundred and seventy-two companies of the volunteer army of Munster met at Dunganon, and they agreed upon the following series of resolutions, which had eventually an important influence on the fate of the

volunteers themselves. These resolutions were—"1. That freedom is the indefeasible right of Irishmen and of Britons, derived from the Author of their being, and of which no power on earth, much less a delegated power, hath a right to deprive them. 2. That they only are free who are governed by no laws but those to which they assent, either by themselves in person, or by their representatives freely chosen, subject to the control, and frequently returning into the common mass, of constituents. 3. That the majority of our house of commons is not chosen by the people, but returned by the mandate of peers or commoners, either for indigent boroughs where scarce any inhabitants exist, or considerable cities and towns where the elective franchise is vested in a few, who are thus suffered to place the highest trusts of society against the interest and will of the many, in the hands of men who seldom act as if they considered themselves accountable for their conduct to the people. 4. That by the ancient constitution of parliaments, elections for representatives were for centuries annual, and in many instances more frequent, and the exercise of suffrage among freemen universal. 5. That every approach to those fundamental principles tends to a renovation of, not an innovation in, the constitution. 6. That the elective franchise ought or right to extend to all those, and those only, who are likely to exercise it for the public good. 7. That the present inadequate representation, and the long duration of Parliaments, destroy that balance which, by our constitution, should subsist between the three estates of the legislature, render the commons' house independent of the people, procure certain majorities in favour of every administration, and threaten either an absolute monarchy, or that still more odious government, a tyrannical aristocracy. 8. That therefore the present imperfect representation, and the long duration of parliaments, are unconstitutional and intolerable grievances. 9. That as the voice of the commons of Ireland is no less necessary for every legislative purpose than that of either the king or lords, the people have a just and inherent right to correct the abuses of representation whenever such abuses shall have so increased as to rob them of their constitutional share in their own government. 10. That it is the interest of parliament itself to effect a substantial reform, as the very existence of that assembly

must become precarious when it shall lose the confidence of the people, to whom it originally owed its creation, and from whom alone its powers are derived. 11. That we solemnly pledge ourselves to each other and to our country to seek a speedy and effectual redress of these our grievances, and to co-operate with our fellow-subjects in every exertion necessary to obtain it. We call for the aid of every upright senator, of every man, whether in Ireland or Great Britain, who bears or wishes to acquire the title of a freeman. 12. That we have attended with admiration to the noble, though hitherto ineffectual efforts of those illustrious characters and virtuous citizens, who in England and Scotland strenuously labour to procure redress of similar grievances. May the examples of the sister nations mutually animate the inhabitants of each to persevere with unremitting ardour until the glorious labour be finally completed. 13. That a committee (of five persons from each county) be now chosen (by ballot) to represent this province in a grand national convention, to be held at noon in the Royal Exchange at Dublin, on the 10th day of November next, to which we trust each of the other provinces will send delegates to digest and publish a plan of parliamentary reform, to pursue such measures as may appear to them most likely to render it effectual, to adjourn from time to time, and to convene provincial meetings if found necessary. 14. That it be an instruction to the said committee, that the delegates from each county do prepare and carry with them to the national convention an account of all the cities, towns, and boroughs in this province; the mode of election at present in such as return members to parliament, as near as may be the proportionate number of protestant and Roman catholic inhabitants in each, and a conjecture of their comparative properties. 15. That we are decided in opinion, that the representatives of the people ought not in future to consent to any bill of supply a longer term than twelve months, nor more than six months, until a complete redress of the aforesaid grievances be obtained."

An address to the volunteer armies of the provinces of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught was likewise agreed to, in which they were told, that "The transcendent events which our united efforts have produced, present an eminent instance of the protecting hand of heaven, whilst the pro-

gressive virtue and general union of the people naturally prompt them to revive the spirit of an unrivalled constitution, and to vindicate the inherent rights of men. The most important work yet remains, which neglected, our past attainments are transitory, unsubstantial, insecure! an extension to thousands of our fellow-citizens of a franchise, comprehending the very essence of liberty, and drawing the line which precisely separates the freeman from the slave. Suffer us, therefore, to conjure you, by every endearing tie that connects man with man, with unceasing zeal to pursue one of the most glorious objects that ever agitated the human mind—a restoration of virtue to a senate long unaccustomed to speak the voice of the people; a renovation of the ancient balance of our government; and a firm establishment of the first gifts of nature on the ruins of an avowed corruption, at once the bane of morals and of liberty. From a grand national convention, distinguished by integrity and inspired with the courageous spirit of the constitution, every blessing must result. With one voice, then, the voice of united millions, let Ireland assert her claim to freedom. Through her four principal assemblies let her temperate declarations flow to one common centre, and there matured into an extensive plan of reform, be produced as the solemn act of the volunteer army of Ireland; as a demand or rights, robbed of which the unanimated forms of a free government would be a curse, and existence itself cease to be a blessing." "The eyes of an enlightened world," continues the address, "are this instant upon us; Munster has in part already led the way; and millions of our fellow-subjects in Britain, in whom the flame of liberty still burns with lustre, behold with delight our exertions in the common cause, and in our success see the certain harbinger of their own. Let the reflection, that Greece, the seat of liberty and of science—that Rome, the mistress of the world—and that innumerable states, once flourishing and free, now laid prostrate by the hand of tyranny, teach Ireland wisdom. To our deliberative assemblies they convey awful warning to be spirited, unanimous, and firm, lest the present wretched condition of other countries be soon the fate of our own."

This notion of a national convention in Dublin was alarming to government in more senses than one. It was a daring attempt to create a rival body, which should over-

awe the legitimate parliament, and keep a continual watch upon its proceedings. A feeling of uneasiness, therefore, gained ground as the time for the meeting of the latter approached. In his speech, at the opening of the session, on the 14th of October, the lord lieutenant spoke with a cautious wariness. He alluded to the recent concessions, and recommended the parliament to turn its attention to the commercial interests of the country. "It is with more than ordinary satisfaction," he said, "that, in obedience to his majesty's commands, I meet you in the full possession and enjoyment of those constitutional and commercial advantages which have been so firmly established by your last parliament. The sacred regard, on the part of Great Britain, to the adjustment made with Ireland at that period, has been abundantly testified by the most unequivocal proofs of sincerity and good faith. It will ever be my wish, as it is my duty, to promote the mutual confidence of both kingdoms, and the uniting them in sentiments, as they are in interest. Such an union must produce the most solid advantages to both, and will add vigour and strength to the empire. I sincerely congratulate you on the happy completion of his majesty's anxious endeavours to restore the blessings of peace to his faithful people. The establishment of the public tranquillity is peculiarly favourable at this period, and will naturally give spirit and effect to your commercial pursuits. Both kingdoms are now enabled to deliberate with undivided attention on the surest means of increasing their prosperity, and reaping the certain fruits of reciprocal affection." On the first day of the session, a rather cautiously worded vote of thanks to the volunteers was passed, "for their spirited endeavours to provide for the protection of their country, and for their ready and frequent assistance of the civil magistrate in enforcing the due execution of the laws." A vote of thanks to lord Temple was voted on the second day of the session.

It was evident, however, that the moment was approaching when the parliament must try its strength against the volunteers. Flood had taken the lead in a regularly-organized opposition to government, which now sought every occasion for an attack. At first they mooted the question of financial economy, which it appeared was a cover for an attack on the regular army in favour

of the volunteers. Flood seems to have entered into all the sentiments and all the feelings of the volunteers, and when, on the 28th of October, Sir Henry Cavendish moved a resolution recommending retrenchment in the national expenses, he moved as an amendment the diminution of the army. This debate and those which followed gave rise to personal recriminations of the most violent kind between Flood and Grattan, which were carried to such a length that both those gentlemen were ordered into custody. The numbers on the first division were eighty-four for government, and twenty-seven against it. On the 3rd of November Flood again attacked the military establishment, alleging that retrenchment in that department was the only solid ground of economy. In the debate on this occasion, the recorder made a direct allusion to the volunteers, who, according to the wishes of the opposition, were to replace the army. Was garrison duty and other military service, he said, to be for ever thrown upon the volunteers? Were agriculture, the shuttle, and the loom, for ever to remain neglected? No: let the volunteers have rest, and return to their occupations. They had used their arms in their country's service, and, he had no doubt, would keep them bright and ready to support the law and constitution of their country when attacked. The votes on this occasion were, for the government a hundred and thirty-two, against it fifty-eight. On the 10th of November, Sir Henry Cavendish repeated his motion recommending retrenchment, which, now that the estimates had passed, was supported by the government. Flood again moved as an amendment a diminution of the military establishment. After a violent debate, which degenerated into a dispute as to the comparative merits of the army and the volunteers, Flood's amendment was rejected by a hundred and forty-three against sixty-five, and the original motion was carried unanimously. During these and some subsequent debates of a similar kind, the avenues and gallery of the house were crowded with a violent mob, brought together by the opposition for the purpose of intimidating their opponents; but their improper conduct served rather to irritate the house than to awe it, and created in the minds of men of judgment and reflection a distrust of the volunteers and of their real objects.

CHAPTER X.

THE VOLUNTEER NATIONAL CONVENTION; DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT ON THE QUESTION OF PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.



ON Monday, the 10th of November, 1783, the day looked forward to with such general feelings of apprehension, the so-named national convention assembled in Dublin. Provincial assemblies had been held in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, and the three provinces had resolved to unite with Munster, so that one hundred and sixty delegates of the volunteers of Ireland met at the royal exchange in Dublin on the day just mentioned. They began by electing lord Charlemont to be their chairman, and chose John Talbot Ashenhurst and captain Dawson as their secretaries, and then they adjourned to the Rotunda. They marched in procession through the streets, escorted by the city and county volunteers, with drums beating and colours flying, amidst the loud acclamations of thousands of spectators. The largest room of the Rotunda was arranged for their reception, with a semicircle of seats arranged round the chair in the form of an amphitheatre. The orchestra was filled with ladies. Everything bespoke the most intense excitement. The first step of the convention was to affirm the principle declared at Dungannon, that the right of political discussion was not lost by the assumption of arms; but they excluded the participation of the catholics by restricting the right of assuming arms to protestants. This narrow feeling is said to have originated in the religious prejudices of lord Charlemont and Flood.

The Irish ministers had been watching the progress of the volunteer delegates, and they are accused of having fermented divisions among them by their secret intrigues. They are said to have profited especially by the anti-catholic feeling exhibited at the commencement, and to have instigated sir Boyle Roche to carry a pretended message to the Rotunda, declaring that lord Kenmare and the most influential portion of the Irish catholics were satisfied with what had been done by the English government, and

would take no part in the present agitation. One of the most active members of the convention was Frederick Augustus Hervey, earl of Bristol, in the English peerage, and bishop of Derry, in Ireland. An ambitious and not over-scrupulous man, this noble prelate united in himself the two characters of the violent demagogue and the ostentatious prince. He was always escorted to the convention at the Rotunda by a troop of light dragoons, commanded by his nephew, George R. Fitzgerald. In the afternoon of the same day on which sir Boyle Roche delivered the foregoing message to the convention, the bishop of Derry submitted to them what he described as "a paper of consequence, which referred to a class of men who were deserving of every privilege in common with their fellow-countrymen;" this paper came from the catholic committee, which still continued to sit in Dublin, and it was dated on the same day (the 14th of November), and was procured expressly to counteract the effect of the message of sir Boyle Roche. It stated, that "at a meeting of the general committee of the Roman catholics of Ireland, sir Patrick Bellew, baronet, in the chair, it was unanimously resolved, that the message relating to us delivered this morning to the national convention, was totally unknown to and unauthorised by us; that we do not so widely differ from the rest of mankind, as, by our own act, to prevent the removal of our shackles; that we shall receive with gratitude every indulgence that may be extended to us by the legislature, and are thankful to our benevolent countrymen for their generous efforts on our behalf; that sir P. Bellew be requested to present the foregoing resolutions to the earl of Bristol, as the act of the Roman catholics of Ireland, and entreat that his lordship will be pleased to communicate them to the national convention." In spite of this act of the catholic committee, distrust had been raised between the catholics and the volunteers, and the latter seized upon sir Boyle Roche's message as a ground or excuse for excluding the catho-

lies from participation in the advantages which they sought for themselves.

The next step of the convention was to resolve itself into committees and sub-committees to prepare plans of parliamentary reform for the consideration of the general body. Flood and the bishop of Derry took the lead in these deliberations, and the plan of parliamentary reform drawn up and approved by them was the one eventually adopted. Flood was appointed to introduce a bill embodying this plan into parliament, and it was vainly imagined that the convention was sufficiently powerful to terrify the legislature and force it to accept the proposition. When Flood left the Rotunda on the 29th of November, 1783, to carry the bill of the convention to the house of commons, he requested the delegates not to adjourn until its fate was ascertained.

There was nothing unreasonable in Flood's plan of parliamentary reform, which contained principles far less advanced than those which have since been established by law; but it was regarded as a measure of intimidation, a bill to be forced upon the house at the point of the bayonet; and on this ground only it was resisted. The debate was unusually stormy and bitter. The opposition to the bill was led by the attorney-general (Yelverton), himself a known advocate of liberal opinions. "I do not mean," he said, "to go into the discussion of the bill; but I would wish the honourable member would now state the necessity there is for bringing it in at all, and also who those persons are who are discontented with the present constitution, and with whom it originates; for I will say, if it originates with an armed body, it is inconsistent with the freedom of debate for this house to receive it. We sit not here to register the edicts of another assembly, or to receive propositions at the point of the bayonet. I admire the volunteers, so long as they confine themselves to their first line of conduct—it was their glory to preserve the domestic peace of their country, and to render it formidable to foreign enemies—it was their glory to aid the civil magistrate, and to support their parliament; but when they turn aside from this honourable conduct—when they form themselves into a debating society, and with that rude instrument the bayonet probe and explore a constitution which requires the nicest hand to touch, I own my respect and veneration for them is destroyed. If it will be avowed

that this bill originated with them, I will reject it at once; because I consider that it decides the question, whether this house or the convention are the representatives of the people, and whether parliament or the volunteers are to be obeyed. I consider it as a question involving the existence of the constitution; and it is in vain, whatever may be avowed or pretended, to shut our ears and eyes to what every one has seen and heard—armed men walking bareheaded through the streets, under a military escort, courting the smiles and applauses of the multitude, and meeting in the pantheon of divinities, the Rotunda—for we are told it is blasphemy to utter a word against them—forming committees and sub-committees, receiving reports and petitions, and going through all the mockery of parliament. It is in vain, then, to pretend that this bill is not their mandate. And can any man, who has the least regard for that constitution which our ancestors purchased with their blood, bear to see government forced from its centre by these reformers? I think the time is now arrived, things are come to such a crisis, that even our self-preservation, as a parliament, depends on the vote we shall now give. This is the spot to make our stand; here we must draw our line; for we have retired, step by step, as they have advanced; we are now on a precipice; and to recede one step more, plunges us into inevitable ruin. Sir, I lament, for the honour of my countrymen, that they should have chosen this period for introducing innovation, or exciting discontent. What is the occasion that calls forth their displeasure against the constitution?—and what is our present situation? Blessed with a free trade and a free constitution, our peers restored to their rights and to their lawful authority, our judges rendered independent, the manacles fallen from our commons, all foreign control abolished, we take our rank among nations as a free state. And is this a time to alter that constitution which has endured so many storms, and risen superior to all oppressions? Will the armed associations, wise as they may be, be able to form a better, though they reject this? Before they have for a single session entered into the enjoyment of it, like children, they throw away the bauble, for which, with all the eagerness of an infantine caprice, they have struggled; or, like spendthrifts, they would make away with their inheritance before they enter into

possession of it. But I will say to the volunteers, you shall not throw from you the blessings you may possess under your happy constitution; cultivate your own prosperity, and enjoy the fruits of your virtue; beat your swords into ploughshares; return to your different occupations; leave the business of legislation in those hands where the laws have placed it, and where you have had ample proof it will be used for the advantage of the country. But, sir, it is in vain, on the part of the convention, to disclaim their intent of overawing the parliament; nay, I am told their session is not yet prorogued; and perhaps they may meet on Monday, to reverse the opinion which this house may give this night. Sir, I call upon the house to exert their spirit, and vindicate their rights; I shall call upon them in the words of a great man—*Expergiscimini aliquando, et capessite rem*. I appeal to the candour of gentlemen. Are they sure they come into parliament to deliver their sentiments as freely as they would do if they were not members of the convention? Or, will gentlemen who are not, vote as free? Is it decent, while the convention are watching to control our actions, to enter into any subject that they can propose? I have the highest respect for the volunteers as men, and for their former actions; but if the question appears to the house, as it does to me, the result of any resolution formed at that meeting, it is our duty to reject it with indignation."

After this energetic address, little was said on the subject of parliamentary reform, but the debate turned entirely on the volunteers, on whom and their conduct much was said for and against. Flood, as their special representative in the house, rose to reply to the attorney-general. He said, "I have not mentioned the bill as being the bill of any set of men, or any body of men whatsoever. I am as free to enter into the discussion of this bill as any gentleman in this house, and with as little prepossession in favour of what I shall propose; I prefer it to the house as the bill of my right honourable friend who seconds me—will you receive it from us? In the last parliament it was ordered that leave be given to bring in a bill for the more equal representation of the people in parliament; this was in the duke of Portland's administration, an administration which the right honourable gentleman professes to admire, and which he will not suspect of overturn-

ing the constitution. I own, from the turn which has been given to the question, I enter on it with the deepest anxiety; armed with the authority of this precedent, I did not think any one would be so desperate as to give such a violent opposition to the simple introduction of a bill. I now rise, sir, for the first time, to speak upon that subject, and I call upon every man, auditor or spectator, in the house or in the galleries, to remember this truth—that if the volunteers are introduced into this debate, it is not I who have done it. The right honourable gentleman says, if the volunteers have approved it, he will oppose it—but I say I bring it in as a member of this house; supported with the powerful aid of the right honourable gentleman who sits behind me (Mr. Brownlow), we bring it in as members of parliament, never mentioning the volunteers. I ask you, will you receive it from us, from us your members, neither intending by anything within doors, or without, to intimidate or overawe you? I ask, will you receive it as our bill, or will you conjure up a military phantom of interposition to affright yourselves? I have not introduced the volunteers, but if the volunteers are aspersed, I will defend their conduct against all the world. By whom were the commerce and the constitution of this country recovered?—by the volunteers. Why did not the right honourable gentleman make a declaration against them when they lined our streets, when parliament passed through ranks of those virtuous armed citizens, to demand the rights of an insulted nation? Are they different men at this day, or is the right honourable gentleman different? He was then one of their body—he is now their accuser. He who saw the streets lined, who rejoiced, who partook in their glory, is now their accuser. What has changed them since that time? Are they less wise, less brave, less ardent in their country's cause? or has their admirable conduct made him their enemy? May they not say, We have not changed, but you have changed? He cannot now bear to hear of volunteers—but I will ask him, and I will have a starling taught to holla it in his ear, Who got you the free trade? who got you the constitution? who made you a nation?—the volunteers. If they were the men you now describe them, why did you accept of their service? Why did you not then accuse them? If they were so dangerous, why did you pass through

their ranks with your speaker at your head, to demand a constitution? Why did you not then fear the ills you now apprehend? Have your lord lieutenants refused the service of those men? Look back to their offers in lord Carlisle's administration; have not such of them as could obtain that honour been proud to be escorted by them to the sea? And has not parliament returned repeated thanks to this body of men who are now so degenerated that rectitude becomes depravity in them? Were not resolutions sought from them to give a sanction to the inadequate security of simple repeal? When betrayed into wrong they were cherished, but now, when right, opposed. What do some of the greatest men in England say, speaking of the volunteers? 'That the history of mankind, the annals of the world do not furnish such another glorious example of patriotism and moderation;' and now will any man condemn them if they wish to crown themselves with never-fading glory, and finishing their labours by rendering perfect that constitution that their labours have acquired? Should you comply, it would for ever render unnecessary the interference of such bodies of men as they are. I am conscious that I have not done justice to that much honoured and much injured body of men; but be it remembered, that it was not I who introduced their name; it was not I who wished to inflame your passions, when I had not arguments to support me; it was not I who wished to debauch them on the side of fear—such a proceeding shews the rottenness of the cause. If the volunteers and parliament shall ever be committed, which God Almighty forbid, no great thanks will be due to those men who represent the volunteers as endeavouring to dragoon parliament—men who endeavour to exasperate them, and if their moderation was not greater than the wisdom of their accusers, great and miserable would be the confusion indeed; but they have too much wisdom not to despise their accusers, though I will tell the man who accuses them, that there was a time when he was proud to join in their ranks, and share the glory of their conduct. I am called on for an explanation of my plan of reform, in order that exceptions may be taken to it; but I am ready to explain it, and to refute all exceptions on the ground of reason and argument. As in this house votes go by tale, and not by weight, and as the vote of the meanest wretch that

ever disgraced the walls of parliament, though representing the most venal borough, tells for as much as the most illustrious character, representing the first county in the kingdom, the people wish to correct the ill effects of this by opening the boroughs, and giving them an opportunity of being virtuous. This is the voice of the people, and it is opposed because it is the demand of the volunteers; but the volunteers and the people are the same; they have been made constitutional by every act but that of being placed on your establishment, which they despise. Does any man say that there is not a positive act of parliament directing every protestant to bear arms? And will you say that because one man fulfils more of his duty as a citizen than another, that he should less enjoy a citizen's privilege? Or will any man say that because the volunteers, in obedience to the laws, bear arms, therefore that obedience should strip them of their franchise? But who will deny that the representation of cities and boroughs demands reform? And are plans of reform to be rejected because agreeable to the volunteers? If so, how came the duke of Portland to send volunteer delegates to the throne, with letters to deliver into the sacred hand of majesty? And if the duke of Portland acted thus, will any man say that the volunteers have since done anything to transform them into the gorgons and hydras they have been represented? No, they are not changed, they are seen through the medium of borough interest; it is this that has given them this terrible aspect, it is the sordid interest of a prostituted government to say they have strength, though it be the strength of borough-mongers; but it is the strength of a virtuous government to be supported by the public good opinion; and it is no credit to any government to depend rather on a venal parliament than on the honest voice of an ingenuous nation. The bill sets at defiance all objection; for is there a man who will say, however political declamation may attempt to mislead, that the constitution wants no reform? Will any man be found to say, that that constitution is perfect, when he knows that the honour of the peerage may be obtained by any ruffian who possesses borough interest?"

Mr. Flood then proceeded to trace the general outline of the plan of reform agreed to at the convention, and concluded with saying—"I shall neither endeavour to in-

timidate nor overawe the house, but on the contrary I shall most humbly hope, that in the infancy of your liberty, and because a body of men who are determined to treat with respect that constitution which they have recovered by fortitude, bear arms for their country's service; I hope, I say, you will not go to fish for objections until these people shall do something derogatory of that authority which they have established; no body of men can make me affirm to be right what I know to be wrong; neither will I be so absurd as to deny that which I know to be right, because other men think so too."

Flood's eulogy of the volunteers was evidently an evasion of the question which had been raised rather than a direct reply. He was supported by Mr. Molyneux, who said—"This is one of the most important questions ever agitated in this house, and I lament the ill-treatment the motion has received from the other side, in the course of which such illiberal reflections have been thrown on the saviours of their country, for their interference to reform a vicious representation of the people. The question is, whether Ireland is truly represented or not? The sentiments of all are, that we are not truly represented, and this opinion has coincided with the volunteer army, who have proved themselves the saviours of their country. We have been told that no reform is necessary; but I deny it; reform is necessary—I am an instance of that necessity of reform. Are not boroughs sold at market like an ass or an ox? Who are they that propose it? Some of the most respectable persons in this kingdom, with one of the greatest characters in this, or perhaps in any other kingdom, at their head; it is the voice of the people—it should not be slighted; I therefore give my hearty concurrence to the motion."

Sir Hercules Langrishe then rose and said, that it would be paying a great compliment to the requisition of the honourable member, notwithstanding any partiality he might entertain toward him, if he were to surrender every faculty of his understanding—to shut his eyes at what every man sees—to shut his ears against what every man hears; and this he must do, if he were persuaded to treat this as a simple proposition for leave to bring a bill into parliament. "The honourable member has stated his plan, and it is unnecessary to tell you it is literally the plan shaped and fashioned in

another assembly, and sent here through the means of two respectable members just to receive the form of law. Can any man, without making a surrender, as far as in him lies, of the rights and existence of parliament, consent to the reception of it under those circumstances? We all know whence it cometh, and whither it goeth—we have read it in every newspaper, paragraph by paragraph, as it came out printed by authority; and we are now called upon to give up ourselves, and take it as the plan and proposition of two honourable members. I will never thus impose upon myself. I will never agree to the proposition, because I know where it originates. I will never agree to the plan, because I know, and think, it would be subversive of the constitution. I have a great respect for the authority of the honourable member who made the motion; but where is the authority that could justify a member of parliament in an attempt to demolish ancient charters that have taken root in the constitution, and are the growth of so many centuries? Where is the authority that could justify us in extinguishing or transferring to others the rights and franchises of those who sent us here? Where is the authority that could justify an attempt to alter the essential principles of a constitution which has been the admiration and envy of all nations and all ages, and which perhaps is the only one in the world that has preserved political liberty to this day? And is there common sense in your attempts to alter it at the very moment you have acquired it? To reject it, before you have tried it? I have considered this subject with all its consequences. I have studied the deliberations of society in your own country. I have travelled over every page that has been written and transmitted to you from another country, by personages who were appointed arbiters of the constitutional destiny of Ireland; and I conclude in the words of one of them—I mean a noble duke of great abilities, of great extent of thought, and great learning, on this subject, considering those plans of partial reform (and one would think the present plan was particularly in his thought), who says—"It proceeds on the same principle as the abuse it pretends to rectify; it is still partial and unequal; there is no leading principle; all is at sea, without any compass to distinguish the safe from the dangerous course." Sir Hercules then recited the various plans and inconsistencies proposed by different per-

sons, and continued—"On what a precipice you stand! How the faculties of the mind are lost in apprehension, when you look down from the eminence of your venerable constitution, on the perplexities, the difficulties, the dangers, that are presented to you by those sages of reform! When you see each casuist differing from his brother, and almost every one differing from himself, if the subject were not too serious, it would be laughable enough to see how those doctors differ; they differ, because they do not know the disease—there is no disease; the constitution is restored. I must do them the justice to say, they differ from the generality of advertising doctors in this city; they do not declare their medicines equally good for all constitutions; for scarcely one recommends them as suited to Ireland. It was lately your ambition to contend for, it is now your glory to have acquired, the British constitution. Now you have obtained it, consider it well before you change it. There are some things too important for experiment, too sacred for change; and if there be one thing more sacred, more inimitable than all others, it is your form of government. If the people of this country would enjoy contentment, when they have so much called for it—if they would accept the felicity that is before them—if they would repose under the constitution they have acquired, and cultivate the country they have defended by their arms, we should be the happiest people on earth; or if they would condescend to rest on their arms, and take a review, with their own eyes, of the magnificent objects that employ their representatives, they would behold them with admiration; they would not interrupt their great deliberations; they would depart, not only in peace, but in pride. They would see them arranging supplies, so as to insure annual meetings of your parliament; framing a mutiny bill, to assert your constitution and govern the army; framing an Irish post-office, alike favourable to the revenue and to liberty; establishing an Irish admiralty court, with final appeal—the last pledge of external legislation giving new authority to the laws, and new restrictions to prerogative, by an act of indemnity for a late embargo; deliberating on a wide system of commerce between this country and America, with the great conception of making, if possible, Ireland the mart of communication between the old world and the new. They would see them

anxiously and honestly considering how best to relieve the distresses, and promote the manufactures of this country. I will now tell you what they would not see them employed about. They are not asserting the supreme and exclusive authority of your parliament; they are not restoring to your lords their judicature, or to your nation its commerce; they are not rescuing your parliament from the bondage of sir Edward Poyning's, or framing an habeas corpus act, or a bill to make the judges independent; they are not overturning religious prejudices by acts of toleration, or inviting the wealth of talents and the world by a naturalization act. No: these are done already—these are the immortal trophies of the last parliament. Good God! is the mind of man never to be satisfied? If a recollection of what you have acquired—if a contemplation of what we enjoy—if the prospect of national improvement which lies before you—if these will not satisfy you, I can only say, happiness is not the lot of man! One consolation, however, he may insure to himself, in every public or private calamity; that is, the reflection that he had no share in producing it."

Mr. George Ponsonby said—"It is so extremely natural to think favourably of this constitution, under which we enjoy, in security, our lives, our liberties, our fortunes, and the honour of sitting in this house, that the honourable member need not be surprised at finding his innovation so generally opposed. A gentleman, indeed, pretends that we should receive this motion as originating in the house, because nobody else could make it; but does not every one know that the honourable gentleman is the mouth-piece of the convention, and that this is their voice? Every one knows what has been doing at the Rotunda these three weeks; if there was no intention to overawe us, why was it thought necessary to bring to the metropolis an assembly of armed men, bearding parliament? But I will not be overawed. I will support, with my life and with my fortune, that constitution under which I enjoy every blessing. If we were to enquire very curiously into the frame of our constitution, perhaps some trifling imperfections might be found; but are we, on that account, to go round the world begging opinions? And because a gentleman in Yorkshire thinks our constitution defective, shall we therefore overturn the whole? Parliament are adequate to the reformation

of national grievances, and they have proved it. The restraint of our trade was a grievance; the dependence of our judges was a grievance; the control under which our constitution laboured was a grievance; the deprivation of the privilege of our peers was a grievance; Poyning's law was a grievance: but which of these grievances now exists? Has not parliament reformed them all? Some gentlemen are so very nervous as to imagine the constitution is sick. Why? Because it is sick: but their state is so hopeless, no man can attempt a cure; for it is impossible to administer to the maladies of a perturbed spirit. The object of the honourable gentleman is to make our government more popular, and in that point he admits the counties and the cities are tolerable enough. Ungrateful counties!—ungrateful cities!—ye have not, any of you, called upon this friend of liberty to represent you; but suffer him to sit here for a venal borough. No man enjoys in any higher degree the talent of close reasoning than the honourable gentleman who made the motion; and as the instance of Shoreham has been given, I will submit to him, whether that instance, and its consequences, if authorities are to have any weight, do not decide in favour of letting our constitution stand as it is. The borough of Shoreham had so long and so often been guilty of such shameful bribery, that parliament, though with infinite reluctance, was obliged to interfere with that sacred, though abused trust—a charter, and disfranchising the corporation, established a new one. Soon after this, a general reformation was proposed in parliament; but did parliament approve it, though supported by the greatest ability? or did the noble lord who moved the disfranchisement of Shoreham, approve of tampering with the constitution of the realm? There seems to have been propagated an opinion, that some radical defect exists in our constitution, and political reformers have heated their imaginations with many projects of cure. They have had from a neighbouring kingdom several letters; some of the answers have been shown, though not all: it is not the part of honest men to conceal the truth; but what have they at stake? Yet this is not all; for after applying to all the system-mongers in Europe, we cannot find any two of them agree in their plans of reformation. There are in this country two sets of men, who are interested in promoting a change—the

catholics of the south, the known friends to monarchy; the presbyterians of the north, the votaries of republicanism. These latter have set on the others to make it a common cause; and between them both the established church is blockaded. But if the people who have established the constitution shall be overpowered by those who often attempted to destroy it, we shall have them quarrelling amongst themselves for votes, for seats in parliament, for authority, and for supremacy. Sir, I oppose the introduction of this bill, because it comes from an armed body; because I and my ancestors have lived happy under the present constitution; because that constitution every day gives us new proofs of its excellence; and because I do not think it the part of a man to throw away a possession of experienced value, to run after wild speculation."

Mr. Fitzgibbon spoke with still more warmth, "I thought," he said, "that some proof of the necessity of a reform would have been urged, and that we should not be entertained with the flights of visionary speculations into the regions of theory and hypothesis; but we endure all this, because the wise men of 1783 cannot reconcile certain abstract ideas of certain system-mongers in England, to the free and happy constitution of this country. I do not oppose the introduction of this bill, because it is replete with absurdities, and directly contrary to the first response of the Dunganon oracle; no, I will oppose it because it comes under the mandate of a military congress. I shall take no notice of the manner in which the motion is attempted to be stolen upon us by surprise; we were to have had ten days' previous notice of it. The honourable member who adopts and fathers the bill, tells us it is the favourite measure of the people; now I will undertake to trace it to its source, and shew that it is the production of a military congress assembled in the capital, appearing in military parade, and assuming all the mock order of a legislative assembly. This plan of a parliamentary reform was first taken up by the society called the Constitutional Society, in England, for the purpose of shaking lord North's government, when other engines had failed. Now, whether this society corresponded with certain persons in Belfast, is not well known, but this is certain, that in the month of July, forty-five corps assembled at Belfast, and

there did resolve to hold a provincial congress at Dungannon, in the course of the last summer, in order to reform the constitution of this realm. In the mean time, Mr. Henry Joy, jun., of Belfast, printer of the Belfast paper, and secretary to the volunteers of that town, writes circular letters to sundry persons in England and elsewhere, describing what he was pleased to call the defects of our parliament, in the commons house, of which he asserts there are but sixty-four persons freely returned—the others, the offspring of venality. Under this very flattering description of the assembly which I have now the honour to address, he writes to a number of persons in England; whether he got answers from them all I will not say, but that he did get answers from several doctors and several majors, is pretty notorious; and it is equally notorious, that with these answers, garbled and mutilated to his purpose, Mr. Henry Joy, of Belfast, printer and secretary, proceeded to Dungannon; there they enter into sundry resolutions, and vote that a grand national convention shall sit in Dublin, in November, to carry these resolutions into effect. These determinations they published, and transmitted to every county in Ireland; the convention is now assembled in consequence of those determinations—they have sat three weeks—they have had their committees and their sub-committees—they have printed their resolutions, every man has read them, and I have heard they are the most moderate that ever were entered into by fifty thousand men in arms, with fifty thousand more ready to join them; and will gentlemen tell me that the constitution is not invaded, when any man shall dare to make a proposition from fifty thousand armed men, with fifty thousand more ready to join them? Gentlemen say it is dangerous to commit the parliament and the volunteers; I know it is dangerous; I know the man that does it should answer the crime with his head; but I know the force of the laws is sufficient to crush them to atoms, and for one, I say, that I do not think life worth holding at the will of an armed demagogue. If ever there was an occasion that called upon every man possessing one sentiment of liberty, to exert it in the defence of the constitution, it is this, it is the present occasion which demands to spurn this bill away. The bill of last session has been quoted; the motion for

that bill was brought forward with due regard to the constitution, and proper parliamentary order; and what I would readily concede to an individual approaching our bar with proper respect, I would scorn to concede to men who presume to demand; and let not, therefore, the honourable member suppose I fear to meet the bill upon its own merits, though supported by the united wisdom of Mr. Henry Joy, jun., and all his learned and unlearned correspondents. There is another circumstance of idle babble gone forth, which only could have issued from the cells of Bedlam—that if this bill be rejected, some wretched fools will refuse to pay taxes; this cannot be the language of men of sense—I only mention it to let it be despised. I have also heard that a house of parliament is to be built at Dungannon, and that we are to have annual sessions of convention to regulate the business of the nation in church and state. Gentlemen may call this liberty, if they please; but I call it the worst kind of tyranny. To put an end to it at once, I am for rejecting this motion for leave to introduce a bill, and then the men with whom it originates will return to their homes, ashamed of having been so much misled."

Such was the spirit of this important debate, in which few members who were in the habit of speaking kept silence, and which was continued with great warmth till past three o'clock on the following (Sunday) morning. It was evident to all, whatever attempt might be made to evade the acknowledgment of this fact, that it was a struggle between the parliament and the volunteers, and as such it was discussed. It was a question not without its difficulties, for the opposition might say with some reason, that greater concessions than this had already been made to the volunteers, and ask why this should be denied; while their opponents might retort, that this was the first time they had made so daring an attack on the constitution, as to hold a rival parliament, and keep a permanent watch upon the legitimate parliament with arms in their hands. The firmness of the latter carried the day, and when at last the house did come to a division, Flood's motion was rejected by a majority of a hundred and fifty-eight to forty-five.

In the course of this debate, many members acknowledged that the votes they were

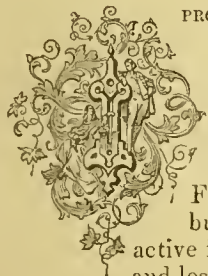
on this occasion giving, were contrary to their opinions; some were in favour of the bill itself, but rejected it when backed by an armed intimidation; others voted for Flood's motion, merely because they had received instructions to do so from their constituents. Grattan, who spoke briefly towards the close of the debate, declared himself the uniform advocate of parliamentary reform, said that in whatever form it came, he would vote for it, and gave a feeble support to the motion.

As soon as the result of the division was made known, the attorney-general moved a resolution, "that it is now become necessary to declare, that this house will maintain its just rights and privileges against all encroachments whatsoever," which was carried by a majority of a hundred and

fifty against sixty-eight. Another resolution, moved by Mr. Conolly, was carried unanimously, "that an humble address be presented to his majesty, to declare the perfect satisfaction which we feel in the many blessings we enjoy under his majesty's most auspicious government, and our present happy constitution; and that at this time we find it peculiarly incumbent upon us to express our determined resolution to support the same with our lives and fortunes." When it was moved in the house of lords to join in this address, the motion met with considerable opposition, and when it was carried, four lords, Charlemont, Aldborough, Powerscourt, and Mountmorres, signed a protest against it, on the ground that it was not called for by the occasion.

CHAPTER XI.

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT; APPOINTMENT OF THE DUKE OF RUTLAND TO THE LORD LIEUTENANCY.



IMMEDIATELY after the Irish parliament had thus rejected the volunteer reform bill, Flood went to England; but his party continued active in the house of commons, and lost no opportunity of showing their hostility to government. Early in December Mr. Molyneux was defeated by a large majority, in an attempt to revive the question of an absentee tax. On the 9th Mr. D. Brown gave a melancholy description of the state of the country, and moved an address to the king for retrenchment in the expenses of government, which was also defeated. The struggle between the commons and the crown in England, which ended in the establishment of Pitt's administration, embarrassed the Irish government, and rendered necessary an adjournment of the Irish parliament. In the meanwhile lord Northington sent in his resignation of the lord lieutenancy, which was accepted on the 7th of January. Nevertheless it was not till the latter part of February that the duke of Rutland was

appointed lord lieutenant. After two adjournments of the house of commons, parliament met on the 9th of February, when it was proposed to adjourn again to the 18th. This was opposed by sir Lucius O'Brien, who "saw no reason why they should adjourn on account of the squabble of some gentlemen in England for place, at a time when the distressful situation of that country called so urgently upon their attention." On the 18th of February, a debate arose upon the motion of Mr. John Ponsonby to grant three thousand pounds to be distributed among the poor of Dublin, in the course of which sir Henry Cavendish suggested that money should be given to set people to work, not to promote idleness. There might now be seen, he said, twenty or thirty sturdy beggars in a knot, and they were grown so outrageous as to offer force in some measure; he should not be surprised if, in a short time, they forced people's doors, and took their property whether they would or not.

The house was again adjourned to the 23rd, when, it being known that lord Northington was to be succeeded by the duke

of Rutland, an address was voted to the former nobleman, which was followed by a further adjournment to the 26th. On the latter day, after a vote of congratulation to the duke of Rutland, whose appointment had now been officially communicated, parliament was finally adjourned to the 1st of March, when it proceeded to business. The duke of Rutland had arrived in Dublin on the 20th of February.

Meanwhile the agitation on the question of parliamentary reform had been kept up, and petitions on the subject had been prepared in different counties. In some parts the popular excitement broke out in open acts of turbulence and outrage, and there were instances where the volunteers refused to act against the mob. It was therefore found necessary to call out the military, and their resolute conduct, added to a jealousy which had been diligently spread abroad against them by the volunteers, tended to make the soldiery obnoxious to the people, and the mob revenged themselves by ill-treating them whenever they caught them straggling or off their guard. The Dublin mob was especially distinguished by its turbulence, and the barbarous practice of houghing, which had on former occasions been used to cattle, was now applied to the unfortunate soldiers who chanced to fall into their hands. This had been carried to such an alarming extent, that when the parliament resumed its labours at the beginning of the March of 1784, general Luttrell obtained leave to bring in a bill for the protection of the soldiery. He prefaced it by stating that he had a motion to make for the prevention of a robbery of the worst nature, the robbery of life and limb, by a cruelty practised there in the eighteenth century, that would have astonished the barbarians of the fourteenth; it was the inhuman practice of houghing men for no reason but their being soldiers, by the people of the trade and mystery of butchers, whose qualifications were a strong arm, a sharp knife, and a hard heart. He said that such acts were sufficient to exasperate men against the civil authority, if the officers of the army had not been watchful to prevent any evil consequences; and he gave instances of the moderation which the officers of the army had shewn under considerable provocation. As a proof that individuals might be urged to retaliation, he alluded to a commanding officer of a regiment of dragoons, who declared to them aloud *in ter-*

rorem, that if a man of them were houghed in Dublin, and they did not the next morning bring him a butcher's head, he would flog them all.

While the reformers were thus, in some parts, defeating their object by acts of violence, in others the agitation was carried on more peaceably in public meetings. Petitions from these meetings crowded into the house of commons at the beginning of March, about which time Flood returned to Ireland to renew his motion for a reform of the representation. Flood brought in this new measure, or rather the repetition of his former measure, on the 13th of March, by moving for leave to bring in a bill to rectify certain defects in the representation of the people. He repeated much the same arguments as those he had used on the former occasion; and, while he deprecated the notion that he had ever wished to awe the house by an unconstitutional influence, he desired it to be understood that the wish for reform came from the people, and expressed his opinion that the people had a right to dictate even to parliament. "Much argument," Flood said, "had been drawn against the measure from the people's over-awing this house; but he asked gentlemen if they had not known many benefits to have resulted from the people's interference with their representatives? Let them go back to lord Carlisle's and some other administrations before him; was not parliament in direct opposition to the sentiments of the people, and had not they reason to change their opinions in subsequent administrations, when the sentiments of people without doors overturned those of people within. They recovered your authority; do you restore them their privileges. You state, and state it truly, that it is the nation which has begun this measure; and you also state, that you are now in the recent possession of a free constitution, and that you will not find fault with the constitution. But is not this to tell England, that every thing that has been done by this country proceeded from the same channel, and was liable to the same objections? A body of men had been mentioned as having vitiated the principle by their interference—a body of men that ought always to be mentioned with respect in that house, while it continued to enjoy the consequence it had acquired from their exertions. But would any man say that the principle is to be contemned, because a particular set of men

had, agreeing with the whole world, approved of the measure? If this were once admitted, it would also vitiate the resolutions of the convention at Dungannon, in which that house, and the nation afterwards, concurred; because they were unanimous in voting that such resolutions were agreeable to the whole body of the people. The root was at Dungannon; and if this was to vitiate, that root was vitiated, and every thing founded on it must be also vitiated. This appeared to him to be an argument of absurdity mixed with ingratitude, little becoming this nation at any time, and much less so at this particular period. He had now endeavoured to shew that no novelty was intended—that nothing was intended but to restore the constitution to a reasonable degree of perfection—and that a reform could be the only adequate measure. He begged leave to observe, that the administration of England, which must always maintain an influence here, was in the highest degree convinced of its necessity. One of the most considerable members of that administration had declared to the world that he was the advocate of a greater equality of representation. Were he of that country, he would have made a permanent effort there; but as he was of this country, he would make an effort to restore the constitution to a just balance, and not to forego those rights we had so lately obtained."

Flood was seconded by Mr. Brownlow, and violently opposed by the attorney-general and the prime sergeant. The latter attacked Flood for his warm advocacy of the volunteers; and, alluding to a boast he had made of their antiquity, as the legitimate armed force of the nation, he said—"I congratulate the honourable gentleman on his recent discovery of the antiquity of the volunteers; but I own I am surprised that, knowing their early origin so well, he should so long have treated them with coldness and neglect, and even declined to mix amongst them. I believe the first volunteer coat which he sported, was not put on until almost every body else had worn out their last suit. If he was so well acquainted with their constitutional antiquity, and had not doubted of the propriety even of their existence, why did he not grace any of their corps with his early appearance, and enter much sooner into the service, as one of them? Because it was not sooner necessary to his own purposes. The honourable gentleman says that, in England, both the leaders

of ministry and of opposition entirely approve of a reform. If so, why did he not condescend to lend them his illustrious assistance, and try his hand there in the first instance, where he had so much power to support him, being, as he is, an independent member of the British parliament, freely returned to represent the people of that kingdom? Why did he not seize the opportunity, which he so lately has had, to display his talents there, upon his favourite topic? Because he knew from his heart that the body and the wisdom of that great people were decidedly against it; he knew that no union of talents, or of interest, could conciliate or cram down such a crude and impracticable scheme of wild and fanciful speculation. I have often heard, and the account has struck me with some force and horror, that it is a practice amongst other empirics, when they wish to try the success of any dangerous or desperate operation, to petition the crown for a convict. Do not let us debase ourselves to become that worthless condemned convict, nor offer ourselves and our healthy constitution as a subject only fit for amputation and dissection to political empirics, to make their merciless and wild experiments upon. Let England, if the thing is right, or necessary, or desirable—let England just try this experiment herself. We may then, perhaps, follow her, at a safe and cautious distance; but, if she has rejected the scheme, which was found impracticable by the ablest and wisest statesmen, let us disdain to adopt the exploded project, nor suffer ourselves to become the victims of an experiment, in very inferior and forlorn hands indeed, which may prove the certain ruin of our state, and the sure destruction of our constitution."

Leave was now given to bring in the bill, in order, as it was said, that it should have a fair discussion, and it was carried through the house of commons as far as the second reading, which came on on the 20th of March, and became the signal for the grand debate on parliamentary reform. Mr. Monk Mason then opened the debate with an attack upon the bill, the principles of which he combated in a long and argumentative speech. The whole scheme, he said, was the result of the spirit of innovation then abroad. "The wanton and innovating spirit of the times has given rise to another new doctrine in this country, which was diligently propagated at the last general

election, and seems to have been intended to pave the way for this pretended reformation. The doctrine I mean is this, that the representatives are bound to pay implicit obedience to the commands of their constituents; a doctrine repugnant to the first principle of the constitution, which is, that a member, when elected, becomes the representative of the nation at large, not merely of that particular place that returned him to parliament; a doctrine which tends to destroy the unity of the state, and to degrade the dignity of the house; for if this doctrine be established, you are no longer the free, independent representatives of a great and powerful kingdom, but the fettered deputies of a parcel of petty communities; united, indeed, under one common sovereign, but as distinct from each other as the cantons of Switzerland, or the provinces of America. If this doctrine is to prevail; if we are to be divided into these petty communities, it is just that each district should have its particular representatives; but if we adhere to the liberal and truly constitutional principle, that each member is the representative of the nation at large, every part of the kingdom is equally represented, and every county of the kingdom has not two only, but three hundred representatives."

Mr. Mason was supported in his opposition to the measure by sir Hercules Langrishe, who criticised Flood's plan, and showed how disastrously it would act on many of the larger boroughs. "I lament the destiny," he said, "though I admire the virtue of the town of Newry, who petitioned for this reform. With their twelve thousand inhabitants, all entitled, if they were protestants, to vote for members, yet they are all disfranchised, unless they also contain within their precincts a hundred of another sort of voters, qualified according to this bill." He next applied the principle and effects to Drogheda, Waterford, Kilkenny, Limerick, Cork, &c., and concluded with the borough of Dungannon. "And here let me lament the fate of poor Dungannon, at once the pride and the reproach of her sons. Dungannon, so late the centre of government, the head of legislation, the seat of empire! unless you have within your precincts (which I am sure you have not,) a hundred voters qualified according to this bill, you are decayed, depopulated, and extinct. Will

you not spare this town, on account of the righteous people that were found therein? I know not whether you have a redemption in store; but I know your redemption is not to be found in the bill on your table. What, then, can the friends of this bill—if any such there be—what can they say of it? They cannot say it is a bill for an equal representation of the people; a bill for a more equal representation of the people; a bill for the more equal representation of property; a bill to widen the basis of legislation, to increase the number of electors, to increase the number of representatives. No such thing! quite the reverse! In the name of Heaven—what is its tendency? Is it a reform on any one settled principle? Does it, or would it, correct any one abuse? No, sir; it is nothing but alteration; a transfer of election influences from one set of men to another, which would produce two or three years of contest and confusion, and then, by corruption or compromise, the dominion would settle with the most powerful of the neighbourhood. The power would change hands, but the exercise of it would be the same. And is it for this mighty benefit that the ancient habits of the constitution are to be changed? For this your country is to be visited by a jubilee of licentiousness, a saturnalia of anarchy for a few years, before it reposes again in the abuses you now complain of. Yet this is the great arcanum—the sacred mystery sent abroad, like the miracles of Mahomet, assisted by the sword, from the north to the south, from the east to the west—to subdue the obdurate, and multiply subscribers to the true faith. I do not mean the least disrespect to any man in what I say of this plan of reform; I speak of it as I think of it. I think it all confusion and danger, and nothing else. And it shews me into what inconsistencies even wise men will fall, when they attempt a reform where reformation is unnecessary. What insupportable difficulties they encounter in an attempt to new-model a constitution which has stood for centuries the admiration and envy of the world, and distinguished from all others by having preserved civil liberty on the earth at this day."

After a very long discussion, mixed with not a few personalities, which was not closed till nearly four o'clock on the Sunday morning, Flood's plan of reform, coldly

and only partially supported by Grattan, was thrown out by a majority of a hundred and fifty-nine against eighty-five.

The question of parliamentary reform was thus set at rest for the present session, to the great discontent of the populace, who had been excited by political papers and mob orators till they became unusually turbulent and unruly. On the 5th of April, before the sitting of the house of commons, it was invaded in a riotous manner by the mob of Dublin, and several of the members who happened to be there were violently abused. Two of the rioters were seized by the serjeant-at-arms, and committed to custody, but the others escaped. As soon as the house met, it was resolved, on a motion by Mr. Foster, that a committee should be appointed, "to inquire into the conduct of the magistrates of the city of Dublin, respecting an outrageous mob which broke into this house this day, and behaved riotously and abusively to several of the members;" and an address was voted to the lord lieutenant, desiring him to issue a proclamation offering a reward for the discovery and arrest of the persons chiefly concerned in this outrage. A complaint was then made against certain seditious paragraphs in the *Volunteers' Journal, or Irish Herald* of that morning, which were adjudged by the house to be "a daring, false, scandalous, and seditious libel on the proceedings of this house," and the printer and publisher were ordered to be taken into custody. The next day a similar order was made to take into custody the publishers and printers of other journals which had repeated the obnoxious paragraphs; after which Mr. Foster read the resolutions of the committee appointed on the preceding day, which were—"That it appears to this committee, that the right honourable Thomas Greene, the lord mayor, received notice on Monday morning last, at nine o'clock, from Mr. secretary Orde, that he had information of an intended tumult in the city on that day; and that the lord mayor had seen, on Sunday evening last, one of the seditious handbills which were dispersed throughout this city on that day; that it appears to this committee, that notwithstanding such information the said lord mayor did not take any step to prevent the tumultuous rising of the people which happened in this city on Monday last; that it appears to this committee, that the said lord mayor has not acted with that caution and prudence which

becomes the chief magistrate of this city." An attempt was made by some of his friends to defend the lord mayor; but after a short debate, the censure of the lord mayor was carried by a very large majority of the members present.

The riotous temper of the populace of Dublin was not abated by these proceedings, but on the contrary every new incident was eagerly seized upon to increase their irritation. Members were attacked on their way to the house, and attempts were made to exact promises from them that they would vote for or against certain measures. The streets of Dublin, and the roads in the outskirts of the town, appear to have been at this time in a very bad condition, and several bills were brought into parliament to improve them. The citizens were told that this was an infringement of their rights and liberties, and that they ought to resist. A bill for paving, cleansing, and repairing the streets of Dublin, brought into the commons by sir John Blaquiere, was particularly obnoxious to the mob, and was made the excuse for continual rioting. When this bill was committed, on the 7th of April, and it was moved to hear counsel for the city, in accordance with some petitions which had been presented on the day preceding, sir Boyle Roche rose and said, he thought it was repugnant to the dignity of the house to pay attention to the solicitations of an unruly people. He wished to know if it were not an insult to the house to receive petitions from the ringleaders of mobs. He then informed the house that he had been surrounded by a riotous mob near the tholsel, and challenged by them to know if he was not an abettor of sir John Blaquiere's bill; that as a guiltless man that could never be intimidated, he declared he was; upon which he found himself "ingulphed in a vortex," whence he could not extricate himself; and on demanding who they were, he received for answer that they were "the aggregate body." Thus he perceived, he said, that if Napper Tandy thought proper to go into the remotest recesses of the city, and excite the inhabitants to acts of desperation, these meetings were to be legalized by the specious appellation of aggregate bodies.

This turbulent spirit of the populace was nourished by the extreme violence of the newspapers, which were filled with attacks on government and individuals, of the most calumnious description, and which openly

urged people to deeds of violence. The necessity of putting some restraint upon the press in Ireland, where it was far more licentious than in England, was felt by most people, and a bill for this purpose was brought into parliament by Mr. Foster, who had himself been a marked object of its attacks. Though this bill was violently opposed by a few members of the house, it received the support of some of the opposition leaders, and was passed by large majorities. Its principal effect was to compel the printers and publishers of newspapers to put their names to them, and to make them responsible for their effects. In one of the debates in committee, Grattan spoke in support of this bill. The necessity of the first clause, he said, that for making known the real name of the printer or proprietor of every newspaper was apparent, and, if carried with unanimity, would produce the most salutary consequence. "There is one paper which teems with exhortations and incitements to assassination, which daily publishes such atrocious matter as would not be suffered in any country existing. Parliament is called upon to check such proceedings, and to guard the liberty of the press from the injury it may receive through the scandalous and licentious conduct of the newspapers. I have no idea of wounding the liberty of the press, but if it be suffered to go on in the way it is at present, one of these two things must ensue—it will either excite the unthinking to acts of desperation, or it will itself fall into utter contempt, after having disgraced the nation. To prevent either of which consequences, I think parliament is called upon to interfere consonant to the spirit of the constitution, not by imposing any new penalty, nor by compelling printers to have their public actions licensed, but merely to oblige them to put their names to their newspapers." "No country," said general Luttrell, "was ever disgraced in the manner this has lately been; nothing less than essays in praise of murder, investigating the different means by which it may be perpetrated, and giving preference to the poignard as the most certain and least dangerous to the assassin. There is no place in the world where excitements to murder would be permitted; and if the mobs here commit murders, they must be attributed to the news-printers, who, not content with assassinating characters, now proceed to the shedding of blood." The journal particu-

larly alluded to was, it appears, that published under the title of the *Volunteers' Journal*. The effect of exhortations like those mentioned, upon a population already suffering severely from the consequences of a stagnation in trade and a general scarcity, may be easily imagined. On one hand, people, driven to desperation, entered into dangerous projects, and even plotted to assassinate members of the house of commons who voted against measures which they imagined were for their relief; while, on the other, numbers of honest and industrious people left the land where they were starving, to seek an asylum in America.

The state of the labouring population was brought before parliament on more than one occasion during the session, but the subject was found to be beset with difficulties which it was not easy to overcome. On the second of April Mr. Gardiner made a very able speech on this question, and proposed to relieve manufactures by the old favourite measure of prohibiting importation. "The dependency and distress of this country," he said, "together with the justice and expediency of the measure itself, must make every gentleman its friend. Who can behold so many thousands of his fellow-creatures struggling with calamities almost insupportable by humanity, and not incline to give relief? The misfortune is not particular, it is universal; not confined to Dublin, it extends to Cork, Limerick, Waterford, the Queen's County, and every part of the kingdom where the woollen manufacture is carried on; not limited to even the woollen, but affecting every infant manufacture in this country." He proceeded to trace the history of their manufactures, and to compare the condition of Ireland with that of England. After picturing somewhat warmly the happy condition of Englishmen, he continued, "Let us now for a moment view the wretched condition of the miserable Irishman. The Irishman, sir, feeds the cattle whose flesh he is debarred from tasting. As to clothes, he has scarcely any. As for habitation, he has, perhaps, some miserable hovel, whither an Englishman would not venture to turn his beast. Here he, with an unhappy wife and wretched offspring, must endeavour to drag out existence, half-starved, and half-famished with cold. What a distinction, alas! between beings of the same species! When, sir, we thus view the different conditions of two people, it is natural to inquire into the cause of this dif-

ference. Are Irishmen less fitted by nature to earn a livelihood than Englishmen? Is there any difference in their frames to produce these very different effects? Are their constitutions worse, or appetites greater? Is there any disadvantage in the nature of our climate, soil, or situation of our country, to prevent our prosperity? No! the climate of this country is delightful, the soil as rich and vegetating, in general, as any in the world, and our situation adapted for intercourse with both worlds. Thus, those who render our people idle are the first to ridicule them for that idleness, and to ridicule them without cause. National characteristics are always unjust, as there never was a country that has not produced both good and bad. Though one man may be idle, another will be industrious, and though that man may be a drunkard, this may be sober. I am grieved, sir, to hear those uncandid reflections thrown on Irishmen. They are, generally, assertions false as they are illiberal. Irishmen have shewn spirit and genius in whatever they have undertaken. They have shewn that they can make great exertions when they are encouraged. The difference of the cultivation of this country from what it was before the laws for promoting agriculture, will evince the truth of my assertion. A great proportion of the inhabitants of this country, previous to those laws, lived on imported corn, but no sooner was encouragement held forth to the plough than the national industry broke forth, and instead of importing, a great quantity of corn was annually exported. This will ever remain a positive contradiction to the vague and ill-founded reflections on Irishmen. I will even go farther, and call on gentlemen to specify one instance where the people were indolent, where the laws of their country protected them in their endeavours. Let us consider what has been done in respect to our linens. Though we were compelled to yield an established manufacture, and to apply ourselves to it under the disadvantage of contending with a country that has arrived at great perfection, yet we prospered. And why? because we were not interfered with. If this be not a proof of industry I know not what may be called so. Whenever this country has been encouraged it shewed great industry. Witness our linens, our broad stuffs, our tabinets, and poplins. How groundless, therefore, is the charge of indolence! Even admitting the people of this

country were indolent, instead of contributing to keep them in it, by continuing their oppressions, this house ought to remove that indolence." After speaking of the advantages which had arisen from the non-importation agreement, as far as it could be carried into force, and the manner in which it had been evaded by the merchants of the north, Mr. Gardner moved four resolutions, to the effect, "That it appears to this house that the working manufacturers of this kingdom are in the greatest poverty and distress; that the importation of foreign manufactures into this kingdom has of late years considerably increased, and still continues to do so; that this great importation, by impeding our manufactures, is the cause of this poverty and distress; that the interference of parliament is necessary to remove these evils." After a short debate an amendment was carried, referring the question to the consideration of the committee of ways and means, in which the condition of the labouring classes was debated with some warmth, but without any very beneficial result.

Towards the close of the session several days were occupied with angry debates on the motions for an address of thanks and confidence to the lord lieutenant, and for an address to the king on the subject of the distresses of the country. On the 14th of May parliament was prorogued, with a speech from the duke of Rutland, who met an Irish parliament for the first time. He congratulated them on the success of their efforts to avert the evils of a famine which had threatened the land, for their resistance to the licentious attacks on the constitution, and for their efforts to improve agriculture and trade. Thus did the parliament break up in the midst of a great degree of popular excitement, for the repression of which no very efficient measure had been adopted.

The mob of Dublin had now taken into its hands the support of the non-importation agreement, and proceeded to acts of daring outrage against all who were accused or suspected of acting contrary to it. The populace had borrowed from the Americans a mode of punishment which appears not previously to have been used in Ireland, that of tarring and feathering. An instance of popular revenge occurred on the 14th of July. Mr. Plowman, a woollen-draper at the corner of John's-lane, in Dublin, was reported to have made a considerable im-

portation of English goods. On the morning of the day above-mentioned a number of armed men proceeded to his house, dragged him out, and hurried him to Weaver's-square, where in a few minutes they stripped and tarred him. Mr. Kirkpatrick, one of the sheriffs of Dublin, having been informed of what was going on, hastened alone to the spot, and imprudently threw himself among the crowd. He succeeded in rescuing the unhappy victim of their resentment, but, attempting to seize some of the ringleaders, swords were drawn, and the sheriff, after receiving two very severe cuts on the head, was knocked down, and lay in the utmost danger of his life, when, fortunately, one of the aldermen, with a strong military force, arrived to his assistance.

The jealousy of the military also led to frequent riots and outrages, which were not unfrequently provoked by the soldiers, but were embittered by the language of the newspapers and the popular orators. About a fortnight after the fray just described, a party of officers entered the house of a publican of Dublin, near Essex bridge, and quarrelled with a party of volunteers there. The publican himself, a man named Flatery, was a volunteer, and was personally insulted. The result was a desperate engagement, in which several persons on both sides were wounded. A meeting of the corps to which the volunteers belonged was called immediately, and entered into some violent resolutions, in which they attributed this and other riots to "the unnecessary augmentation of the military establishment."

During four years the volunteers had kept the provinces in a tolerable—in fact in an unusual—state of tranquillity, disturbed only now and then by a solitary white-boy outrage. But all at once, in the summer of 1784, these popular insurrections broke out with great violence, almost as though they had been raised up for the purpose of showing government the necessity of the self-appointed police which it was now discarding. Nightly outrages were perpetrated under the name of the white-boys in different parts of Munster and Leinster, especially in the county of Kilkenny. These nocturnal visits were chiefly directed against protestants, who were robbed of their arms, stripped naked, and in this condition dragged over the country on horseback, and finally buried in the earth up to the chin, with dreadful threats against anybody who should relieve

them before the noon of the next day. Sometimes they had their ears cut off, and were otherwise mutilated. The popish clergy in general showed their loyalty on this occasion by discouraging in every way in their power this riotous spirit. Dr. Butler, the Roman catholic archbishop of Cashel, and Dr. Troy, the Roman catholic bishop of Ossory, distinguished themselves especially by their zeal in the cause of order; and the latter drew up a pastoral letter, which was read in the chapels throughout his diocese, and which merited the special thanks of the government. "Dear Christians," said this forcible appeal to the people, "at this particular time, when the blessings of peace, and a plentiful harvest, should warm the hearts of Christians with becoming gratitude to the Father of mercies, and excite a spirit of industry amongst all ranks of people, we are much concerned to observe riot and disorder pervading many of our communion in several parts of this county and diocese. Unmindful of the untimely and ignominious death of their relations and acquaintances formerly distinguished by the execrable appellation of white-boys, and deaf to the dictates of reason and religion constantly enforced by our exhortations from the altars, they are endeavouring to renew the horrid scenes of confusion and bloodshed which disgraced this part of the kingdom not many years ago. They again seem to glory in the opprobrious name of white-boys, and have lately assembled at unseasonable hours, and in different parties, sounding their riotous horn. They have presumed to administer oaths of combination, and proceeded to barbarous acts of violence against the persons and property of several individuals. In a word, they notoriously violate the most sacred laws, and equally despise the injunctions of their spiritual and temporal rulers. Such accumulated enormities call to heaven for vengeance, which will most assuredly fall on the deluded offenders, if they do not speedily expiate their crimes by sincere and exemplary repentance. As our silence upon this occasion might be misunderstood by ignorant, or sinistrously interpreted by malevolent persons, we think it highly incumbent on us to declare, as we do hereby solemnly, in the name and by the authority of our holy mother, the church—first, that the association-oaths, usually taken by the misguided and unhappy wretches called white-boys, are bonds

of iniquity, and consequently unlawful, wicked, and damnable. They are not, therefore, binding in any manner whatsoever. Secondly, we in like manner declare, that we condemn, abhor, and detest the above-mentioned outrages, as contrary to the maxims and canons of our holy religion, destructive of the public peace, injurious to private property, and subversive of every law. Finally, we condemn these deluded offenders, who call themselves Roman catholics, as scandalous and rotten members of our holy church, from which they have been already cut off by the sentence of excommunication solemnly fulminated against them on the seventeenth of October, 1779, in all the chapels of this diocese. We cannot conclude without beseeching you, dearest Christians, to join us in fervent and constant prayer for the speedy conversion of these unthinking creatures. Their condition is truly deplorable; in this life exposed by their nocturnal excursions and wanton depredation to sickness, loathsome imprisonment, and an infamous death; whilst in the next, their obstinacy will be punished with endless torture. May our gracious God, by his efficacious grace, avert this greatest of evils, and thereby prevent the bitter recollection of their having disregarded our timely and pastoral admonitions. We shudder at the very apprehension of the manifold evils which must necessarily ensue to themselves, to their families, and to their country, from a continuation of their unwarrantable proceedings. It being equally our wish and duty to promote the happiness of mankind in general, and that of our country and flock in particular, we shall invariably conduct ourselves in a manner becoming ministers of the gospel and members of society. Uninfluenced by fear or any worldly consideration, we are determined to adopt such further means as shall be found conducive to the above-mentioned and other great objects of our vocation."

The northern province was not more tranquil during the summer and autumn of this year than the south, but while in the latter part of the island it was the catholic population that perpetrated and encouraged the disturbances, the insurgents of the north were at first presbyterians, who had joined together in hostility to the catholics, and the latter banding together in self-defence, a continual warfare was carried on between the two parties. According to the account

given by a contemporary, sir Richard Musgrave, these hostilities sprung from a very trifling origin. On the fourth of July, 1784, he tells us, two protestants had a quarrel, and fought near Market-hill, a small town in the county of Armagh, when one of the combatants became victorious by the advice and assistance of a Roman catholic peasant and his brother, who happened to be present, which gave great offence to the one who was vanquished, and a second challenge was given. The two catholics on this second occasion would not attend the combat, having been informed that the presbyterians resolved to be revenged of them and their party. The vanquished presbyterian then announced, that a horse-race would take place on a certain day at Hamilton's bawn, where the combatants met and fought, and the victory was gained again by the assistance of some catholics, who fought on the side of the victor. Both parties now began to raise recruits, and to collect arms; but presbyterians and papists mixed indiscriminately, and were marked for some time by the district to which they belonged, and not by any religious distinction. Each body assumed the singular appellation of "fleet," and was denominated from the parish or townland where the persons who composed it resided. The Nappagh fleet was at first headed by a Roman catholic; and the people in the neighbourhood of Bunker's-hill (in the road from Newry to Armagh), entered into an association to defend themselves against the Nappagh fleet, chose a dissenting minister for their leader, assumed for the first time, the title of defenders, and were joined soon after by the Bawn fleet, in order to protect themselves against the Nappagh fleet. On Whitsun-Monday, in the year 1785, the two parties met, and were to have had a desperate engagement. The Nappagh fleet, seven hundred in number, were all armed with guns, swords, and pistols. The Bunker's-hill defenders, and the Bawn fleet, though much more numerous, were not so well armed. When they were on the point of engaging, Mr. Richardson, of Rich-hill, member for the county of Armagh, and two more gentlemen, interposed, and induced them to separate, which prevented a great effusion of blood. From the inveterate hatred which has ever existed between the two sects, they soon began to separate, and to enlist under the banners of religion; and as the Roman catholics

showed uncommon eagerness to collect arms, the presbyterians began to disarm them. The former assumed the appellation of "defenders," and the latter were known by the title of "peep-of-day boys," because they visited the houses of their antagonists at a very early hour in the morning, to search for arms; and in doing so, they often committed the most wanton outrages, insulting their persons, and breaking their furniture. The passions of both parties being thus inflamed, they never missed an opportunity of exercising hostilities against each other, which frequently terminated in the commission of murder. Various means were adopted by the different parties to

exasperate their followers and friends. The defenders were alarmed with pretended prophecies, that the Scotch (meaning the presbyterians) would rise on a certain night, and massacre the catholics, who being credulous and timorous, posted watches all night to give the alarm. These disturbances are said to have been fomented by the improper interference of country gentlemen, who espoused one party or the other, for electioneering purposes; and it often happened, that one person, who had popish tenants, was partial to the defenders, and another, whose estate was chiefly occupied by presbyterians, protected the peep-of-day boys.

CHAPTER XII.

DECLINE OF THE VOLUNTEERS; NATIONAL CONGRESS; HOSTILITY OF PARLIAMENT.



Y its resistance the parliament had triumphed over the volunteers; they had shrunk from the perilous responsibility of having recourse to violence, when they found their threats were disregarded. On the night of the great debate, Saturday, the 29th of November, 1783, the convention continued their sitting at the Rotunda, waiting for Flood's message that was to assure them of their triumph, but no message came, and at length, wearied and uneasy, they agreed to adjourn till Monday. The intervening Sunday was a busy day with all parties, who held private meetings to consult on the course which was to be pursued. A large number of the more moderate of the volunteer delegates were assembled at lord Charlemont's; they were now alarmed at the storm which they had conjured up, and trembled at the consequences of a collision with the government; and it was unanimously agreed that the public peace was the first object to be considered. The demand of the volunteers had been indignantly, they said, insultingly, rejected; there was but one alternative, open war or submission, and it was resolved to adopt the latter. On Monday the convention again met in the Rotunda, when

Flood gave the delegates a detailed account of the reception of their bill by the house of commons, and, aware of the submissive temper of some of the most influential members of the convention, he counselled moderation. His counsel was adopted, and the convention separated without any other sign of its displeasure than an angry declamation of major Moore. "Is it thus," he exclaimed, "our defence of the country against foreign foe and domestic insurgent was to be rewarded? My feelings were almost too strong for utterance, but they were the feelings of insulted worth, not of bitterness. The volunteers would disappoint the malice of their enemies, and smile at every attempt to violate a character too sacred for detraction. They would show, by moderation, the wisdom of their minds; by perseverance the efficacy of their resolves. Let the castle spy, or prerogative lawyer, hunt for confiscations, our doors are open, the volunteers stand entrenched in conscious virtue. I consider the real enemies of their country to be the mock representatives of the people, who have prevented the voice of the people from being heard in parliament. I insist that the borough-mongers are equally dangerous to the prerogatives of the sovereign as to the liberties of the people, and

that our viceroys are obliged to purchase their support by an adoption of their principles. I say, that any minister who attempted to alienate the mind of his majesty from his faithful subjects of Ireland merited impeachment; and I hope that the several counties will address the lord lieutenant to remove from his counsels all men who dare to give advice tending to so calamitous an issue."

Some vain discussion followed, and an angry resolution that it was indispensable for the people to declare that they would defend their rights and privileges, was allowed to fall to the ground. The convention met again for the last time on Tuesday, when Flood proposed an address to the crown in the following words. "That his majesty's most loyal subjects, the delegates of all the volunteers of Ireland, beg leave to approach his majesty's throne with all humility; to express their zeal for his majesty's person, family, and government, and their inviolable attachment to the perpetual connection of his majesty's crown of this kingdom with that of Great Britain; to offer to his majesty their lives and fortunes in support of his majesty's rights, and of the glory and prosperity of the British empire; to assert with a humble, but an honest confidence, that the volunteers of Ireland did, without expense to the public, protect his majesty's kingdom of Ireland against his foreign enemies, at a time when the remains of his majesty's forces in this country were not adequate to that service; to state that through their means the laws and police of this kingdom had been better executed and maintained than at any former period within the memory of men; and to implore his majesty, that their humble wish to have certain manifest perversions of the parliamentary representation of this kingdom remedied by the legislature in some reasonable degree, might not be imputed to any spirit of innovation in them, but to a sober and laudable desire to uphold the constitution, to confirm the satisfaction of their fellow-subjects, and to perpetuate the cordial union of both kingdoms." After agreeing to this address, the convention adjourned *sine die*; in fact it was at an end, and the fate of the volunteers was virtually sealed. Their delegates separated to carry into their different provinces and counties the news of their discomfiture, which was everywhere received with astonishment, and with loud cries of indignation. The volunteers as-

sembled in arms, held meetings, and expressed their anger in high sounding language, but it was no longer listened to with the same confidence. While Flood was in England, they made their idol of the bishop of Derry, who gave them bad advice, and addressed them in seditious language. The efforts of their enemies to spread division of opinion amongst them were attended with success, and these divisions afforded an excuse for many of the more moderate officers and leaders to desert their ranks, and they drew with them others, till they diminished rapidly in numbers. At a meeting of the representatives of thirty-one corps at Belfast, for the purpose of making preparations for a review, a resolution was adopted, that they would not associate with any regiment which should continue under officers who opposed parliamentary reform. This ill-advised act widened the breach, and gave rise to new defections.

A still greater ground of division now rose on the question of the admission of catholics into the volunteer ranks. The old volunteers had in general been stanch protestants, and had on many occasions exhibited their hostility to popery. As their numbers fell off, their ranks were recruited with men who were less scrupulous, and whose views were not so pure. The new volunteers were often taken from the lowest ranks of the people; some were admitted as officers who secretly held revolutionary doctrines of the most extravagant kind, and they proclaimed the principle of a union between protestant and catholic for the purpose of carrying them out. On the fifteenth of May, 1784, the Belfast first volunteer company resolved and agreed to instruct in the use of arms persons of all ranks and religious persuasions who should present themselves for that purpose, and they offered them the use of their own arms. On the sixteenth of the same month, the builders' corps in Dublin resolved that their drill serjeant should attend at Marlborough-green three days in the week, to teach persons of all ranks and religious persuasions the use of arms. And on the twentieth of May, delegates from all the volunteer corps in the city and county of Dublin resolved unanimously, that the training to the use of arms every honest and industrious Irishman, however moderate his property or depressed his situation, was a measure of the utmost utility to this kingdom, and would produce a valuable acquisition to the volun-

teer arms and interest. Similar resolutions were entered into in different parts of the kingdom, and many of the corps entered into resolutions engaging themselves not to lay down their arms but with their lives.

After the close of the session and Flood's failure to carry a measure of parliamentary reform through parliament, this question was still made a subject of agitation throughout the country. County meetings were called, and resolutions, some of them breathing the most violent spirit, were passed. At a meeting at Dublin, over which the high sheriffs presided, a committee was appointed to draw up an address to the people of Ireland; in which they were told that, "In vain did the noble asserters of liberty, composing the volunteer army of Ireland (arrayed and embodied at their own expense, the unexampled protectors of their country against foreign foes and domestic usurpation) adjust by their delegates, agreeable to the desire of this nation, a more equal representation, solemnly and deliberately agreed upon. In vain did the united voice of the electors of this kingdom, through every free county, city, and borough, declare itself in favour of such plan of reform, and instruct their several representatives to support the same. In vain was an attempt made by the real friends of their country to introduce such plan into parliament, and obtain for it the sanction of a law. The baneful influence of corruption and venality prevented any success; and with equal folly and audacity were the justifiable demands of the people treated with ignominy and contempt. Had the persons obtruded into the parliament of this kingdom considered it with a due degree of justice and moderation, possibly the legality of their title to a share in its legislation might have remained unexamined or at least uncontroverted. But when usurpation is followed by injury and insult, that nation must be composed of slaves indeed, which can tamely submit without any exertion in its defence. Convinced," the address goes on to say, "of the necessity, we cannot, however, presume to point out any specific mode for a parliamentary reform in the representation of the people; that in which all are equally concerned, must receive from all their approbation and support. We call upon you, therefore, and thus conjure you, that in this important work you join with us as fellow-subjects, countrymen, and friends, as men embarked in the general

cause, to remove a general calamity; and for this purpose, that five persons be elected from each county, city, and great town in this kingdom, to meet in national congress at some convenient place in this city, on Monday the 25th day of October next, there to deliberate, digest, and determine on such measures as may seem to them most conducive to re-establish the constitution on a pure and permanent basis, and secure to the inhabitants of this kingdom peace, liberty, and safety. And whilst we thus contend, as far as in us lies, for our constitutional rights and privileges, we recommend to your consideration the state of our suffering fellow-subjects, the Roman catholics of this kingdom, whose emancipation from the restraints under which they still labour, we consider not only as equitable, but essentially conducive to the general union and prosperity of the kingdom."

This plan of a national congress, the title of which was borrowed from America, is said to have originated with Flood, Napper Tandy, and some other leaders of the volunteers, though it was attempted as a matter of policy to avoid all appearance of any connection with that body. It was a measure that gave alarm to the Irish government, which had recovered its courage on seeing parliament assume a spirit of resistance. Requisitions had been addressed to the sheriffs of the counties, calling upon them to summon their bailiwicks for the purpose of electing representatives, an assumption of authority which was altogether contrary to the constitution of the country. A few of the sheriffs complied with the requisition, but the greater number took the alarm and refused. The attorney-general (Fitzgibbon, afterwards earl of Clare) threatened to proceed by attachment against those who had obeyed, and most of them were terrified by his menace, though strong resolutions condemnatory of his conduct were passed at many of the meetings. The high-sheriff of the county of Dublin, Mr. Reily, had, on the 19th of August, called and presided over an assembly of freeholders for the purpose of electing delegates to the congress, and he was selected for the first object of prosecution. The attorney-general proceeded against him by attachment from the court of king's bench, a rather unusual course of proceeding, and the high sheriff was sentenced to pay a fine of five marks (£3 6s. 8d.) and to be imprisoned for one week. Attachments were also granted

against the different magistrates who had called the meetings and signed the respective resolutions of the freeholders in the counties of Roscommon and Leitrim; and prosecutions were also commenced against the newspapers which had published these resolutions.

Nevertheless, on the appointed day, the 25th of October, a part of the delegates who were to form the national congress, assembled in William-street, in Dublin. They were not numerous, and their great champion, the bishop of Derry, was absent. Yet they proceeded, with doors closed, to debate on the subjects for which they were met. Flood was there, to detail the plan of reform which he intended to lay before parliament in its approaching session. It excluded the catholics, a circumstance which gave great offence to the congress, and Flood left it in anger at the little real sympathy which he found in it. The congress sat three days, in vain discussed on impracticable projects, and then adjourned without even providing for another meeting, although it did meet again early in 1785. It has been well described as a mere empty shadow of the convention.

At length, when the excitement caused by these events was gradually abating, the Irish parliament reassembled on the 20th of January, 1785, and in his speech from the throne the lord lieutenant made the following allusion to the whiteboy turbulence and the circumstances connected with the meeting of the national congress. "Whilst," he said, "I lamented the lawless outrages and unconstitutional proceedings which had taken place since your last prorogation, I had the satisfaction to perceive that these excesses were confined to a few places, and even there condemned; and I have now the pleasure to observe that, by the salutary interposition of the laws, the general tranquillity is re-established." The debate on the address was a long and warm one, and turned chiefly on the conduct of the volunteers and on the proceedings instituted by government against the sheriffs. The subject of parliamentary reform was still uppermost in men's minds, and the attachments were stigmatized as illegal attempts on the part of the ministry to stifle the voice of the people. The ministers on the other hand asserted that their proceedings had been throughout legal and constitutional, and that the power of attachment in the court of king's bench was the best security for the liberties of the country; for, said

the attorney-general, "if that was taken away, our liberties would be at the mercy of any monarch who should be base and tyrannical enough to employ the sheriffs, the executive officers of justice, to subvert the constitution." Flood boldly defended the county meetings and the congress. "I do not know," he said, "what the speech means by unconstitutional risings, and moderation in suppressing them. It cannot be the county meetings, they are not few—neither have the most salutary exertions of the law suppressed them! So far from that, they have multiplied in consequence of the ill-timed exertions of the law—scarce a town or city but has elected delegates from east to west, from north to south, so that the county meetings could not have been alluded to. . . . I cannot suppose those county meetings were called unconstitutional, as there is not a man who has a vestige of the constitution in his composition, or who has a particle of liberty in his heart, who will say they were unconstitutional." The attorney-general replied to Flood's philippic. "I have in my hand, sir," he said, "the writ by which the national congress was elected; the resolutions of those virtuous projectors of reform, the aggregate body, which resolutions are the most infamous, false, and daring libels that ever were published in any country. After vilifying and abusing parliament in the most gross and contemptuous manner, they very modestly appeal from the parliament to the people at large, and call upon the people at large to subvert and overturn the parliament. This virtuous assembly appeal to the people, and request them to elect delegates to meet the national congress, to reform the parliamentary representation of the people. To this great work they invite men of all descriptions—tinkers and tailors, hackney coachmen and chimney-sweepers: 'Come unto us all ye that labour, and are heavy laden with the burthen of the present constitution; come to us, ye virtuous reformers of every denomination, your plans cannot be too wild, your intentions cannot be too seditious; come to us, we will receive you with open arms.' Further to promote this good work, thirteen select men were chosen, and as it may not be unentertaining I shall read their names:—James Napper Tandy, esq., John Talbot Ashenhurst, John Peree, William Wentworth Seward, George Joseph Brown, Ignatius Weldon, William Smith, William

Arnold, William Burke, John Ball, John Hodson, M. Charles Walker, Arthur Nevill. And from this committee of thirteen select men, were issued writs to the sheriffs of the different counties, commanding them to return representatives for their bailiwicks, to meet in national congress, to be holden in Dublin on the 25th of October, 1784, which writs were returnable into the hanaper of James Napper Tandy, esq.; witness our trusty and well-beloved William Wentworth Seward, who, in my course of practice, I know to be an attorney's clerk. But grievous to relate, very few of the sheriffs in this kingdom were actuated by the spirit of James Napper Tandy, esq., and consequently very few counties returned members to his parliament. The sheriff, indeed, of the county of Dublin took upon him to prostitute that power to the purposes of faction, with which the crown had invested him for the benefit and protection of the subject; but I have taught him, as I will every other man who presumes to act illegally, that the law is too strong for him. In prosecuting the sheriff of the county of Dublin, I took the mode of attachment, because it is the mode pointed out by law to prevent the abuse of authority delegated from the king to his officer for the maintenance of law. I did not appeal to juries, because, before the decision of juries could be obtained, much mischief might have been done. A vile example in sedition might have misled other sheriffs; and therefore the king's attorney-general wished to show the sheriffs of the kingdom what they were to expect if they abused their trust; and I say the government that would suffer the king's officers, the sheriffs, to put themselves at the head of a pitiful faction, and, under colour of their authority, promote the seditious designs of a congress, composed of James Napper Tandy and his associates, ought to be made answerable to this house for their pusillanimity."

These and other remarks made in the heat of this long debate, called up Grattan, who made a memorable speech on the character of the volunteers. "I will not," he said, "give this part of the address a silent vote: we are called upon to defend the authority of parliament, and the majesty of the people, the first against encroachment, the latter against misrepresentation. I approve of this part of the address, because it directly strikes at the violent and unconstitutional measures which

have disgraced this country since the last session. One would naturally enquire the great call or necessity for all those extraordinary proceedings. One would suppose some great and fundamental principle of the constitution violated; that the principles of the revolution were invaded, that the petition of right had been infringed, that the great charter itself had been broken, or that the principles of the Irish revolution of 1782 had been invaded, that the parliament of Great Britain had attempted to make laws for us, that the judicature of the Irish lords had been encroached upon, that the power of the council had been revived, or that an army had been perpetuated upon us without consent of parliament. One would not have imagined what is the fact, that this country is in the full, free, and uninterrupted possession of the benefits of two revolutions—the English and the Irish—of the fruits of every exertion of both nations; that she is more free than ever she was before 1782, and as free as England at any period. Notwithstanding this, we have seen a declaration that the parliament of Ireland is incompetent. When? When it became independent. We have seen another declaration, that it is an intolerable grievance, when it became free. We have also seen an engagement to support, with life and fortune, whatever plan a body called a national congress might choose to adopt. Did these men know, that a pledge of life and fortune, to support the plan of a congress, was an engagement to rise in arms, and a transfer of allegiance? Did they recollect that they had before asserted the contrary? had asserted the sole and exclusive authority of the Irish parliament—had pledged their lives and fortunes to support it? That they had obtained a high character for that exertion, and that they were treading upon the memory of their own merit, as well as the laws of their country, when they thus addressed themselves to his majesty and the public, in such empty strains of vanity and presumption? But some had gone much further; they had petitioned the king to dissolve the parliament, and to call another; not according to the laws, but according to that plan which a congress should frame. What! that his majesty should break the charter of the land by his own prerogative! They had advised him to do more than James II. did, when he abdicated the crown

of both countries. Did those men know that they were petitioning the king to exercise more than a dispensing authority? That if the king had followed their advice, he might have lost his crown, and they might have lost their heads if they had attempted to support him in following their criminal suggestions? But I do these men the justice to suppose, that they were not aware of the nature of their deliberations; that they had too much principle to do what they had folly enough to publish; that they were resorting to high-sounding declarations, without any meaning whatever. Pity that a noble spirit should so degenerate and expose itself! That men should become too fond of an overweening interference; and, deviating from the spirit of freedom, should insensibly contract the lust of power, and should call upon the sovereign to commit the excesses of despotism, whilst they thought they were only committing the excesses of liberty."

"I would now," Grattan continued, "wish to draw the attention of the house to the alarming measure of drilling the lowest classes of the populace, by which a stain had been put on the character of the volunteers. The old, the original volunteers, had become respectable, because they represented the property of the nation; but attempts had been made to arm the poverty of the kingdom. They had originally been the armed property of Ireland; were they to become the armed beggary? Will any man defend this? These measures I lament and condemn, because they have been called the measures of the people of Ireland; but the people have not been guilty, and are incapable of being guilty of such vanities. The nation has been solicited to rise, but she stands unshaken and unseduced; and it is an additional charge against those proceedings, that they assume the name of the people, without their authority. When men say the majority of the people, they mean constitutionally, that they are the origin of power; but the populace differ much, and should be clearly distinguished, from the people. I must condemn the appeal made to every class of the people without distinction, and the injury done to the constitutional electors of Ireland; for an attempt hath been made to bind the majesty of the people, and sacrifice her as a victim to the rage of the populace. An appeal to the latent and summary powers of the people should be

reserved for extraordinary exigencies; but the rejection of a popular bill was no just cause for their exertion; they should be preserved sacred in the storehouse of the people, and husbanded for great occasions. They should not vulgarize popular exertions. I most sincerely lament the injuries which were done to the popular cause, as of a more lasting nature than those committed against the state. Government soon recovers from the alarm, and is compensated by increasing its advocates. Then, when we see any description of his majesty's subjects denying the powers of parliament, pledging themselves to unknown plans of a body unknown to the constitution, they then, I say, forget the object of reform, tremble for their existence, and seek for shelter under the throne; but the people have no compensation. Who will restore to their country her union, her tranquillity, and her credit? What compensation can be made for the capital which has been drained, for the manufacturers which have been deterred, and the character of the nation which has been sunk? We have seen the great instruments of popular power, the popular resources of the country, wasted in idleness; the majesty of the people become a pageant, her thunder the plaything of petty show and public mummery; and the sacred language of grievance assumed by the cant of lunacy, hypocrisy, and sedition. In regard to the national congress, it has been declared by some law authorities in this house illegal. This I will say, that I do not think establishments of that kind reconcileable to a house of commons. Two sets of representatives, one *de jure*, and another supposing itself a representative *de facto*, cannot well co-exist. I condemn this meeting, and all other excess, because they prejudice the reform of parliament, at the same time that they insult its authority. They give the business of reform the caste and appearance of innovation or violence. The enemies of reform insist that it is an innovation, and that the people are too much inflamed to exercise with discretion an accession of power. I am a friend to the principle of reform, and deny both their positions, and lament that any description of men, however few, should give a pretence to such an argument; I dare say, some of these men whose measures I condemn, may mean well; I am sure they cannot mean all that their peti-

tions and declarations proclaim. I think it fair and friendly to expostulate with them, by assuring them that they have been guilty of the wildest indiscretions, that they have gone much too far, and that if they go on, they will overturn the laws of their country."

A more direct attack was soon afterwards made on the volunteers by the revival of the militia, the real constitutional force of the kingdom. During the volunteer period, the militia had been allowed quietly to die away, owing chiefly to the want of money to equip it; but now, after having taken into consideration various plans for the indirect suppression of the armed association which had given them so much alarm and trouble, government determined to revive the former institution as a counterbalance to the latter. On the 14th of February, Mr. Gardiner rose in his place in the house of commons, and said that he had discovered that the militia bill had expired. A right honourable friend of his had brought forward that measure, but the bill had lain dormant for want of the necessary grant of money; and he then pointed to the turbulent state of the kingdom, as showing the necessity of some force to keep up order, and give vigour, energy, and force to the laws, which were relaxed, from some such co-operative assistance. He moved that a sum of twenty thousand pounds should be granted for the purpose of clothing the militia.

This proposal raised a storm of anger among the more violent opponents of government. They declared openly that the only constitutional force of the kingdom was the armed volunteers; and they said that the revival of the militia was a direct attack on that body, which the government feared, on account of its liberal principles. On the other hand, the militia bill was supported even by a considerable portion of that fraction of the house which ordinarily composed the opposition, who considered the militia a constitutional army, and thought that the revival of it ought to give offence to no one. The advocates of the measure represented that the volunteers were a force raised only for an extraordinary occasion; most of the original body, they said, had returned to their own social occupations; while their places had been assumed by men without principles, and with evil designs. The most direct attack upon the volunteers was made by the attorney-general, who

spoke as follows:—"Sir," he said, "I shall ever respect and love the volunteers for their conduct during the last war. When the sagacious Mr. Heron told that government had no power wherewith to afford them protection, they armed themselves, and by their spirit and their numbers intimidated the enemy from our coasts; and I say that the gentlemen who then took up arms, who defended their country from foreign invaders, and preserved its internal peace, by supporting government, and enforcing the laws, were the wonder and admiration of the world; and if they had remained in the honourable line in which they first set out, if the same men had continued volunteers, if they had not suffered their glory to be sullied, if they had not allowed their name to be blasphemed, by admitting into their ranks all the armed beggary of the soil, they would have still remained the ornament of their country. But of the original volunteers, the great majority have hung up their arms, and are retired to cultivate the arts of peace; their station has been assumed by men who disgrace the name; and there is scarcely a dishonourable action which such men have not committed. I have seen resolutions inviting the French into this country. On the 26th of April, 1784, the Sons of the Shamrock voted Mr. Perrin, a native of France, and every Frenchman of character, honorary members of their corps. I have seen publications inviting catholics, contrary to the laws of the land, to arm themselves, to reform the constitution in church and state. I have seen encomiums of Louis XVI., the friend of mankind, and the asserter of American liberty. Though the gentlemen of Ireland (and gentleman and original volunteer I hold to be synonymous) reprobate such sedition, they may invite the French, under the false idea of support, to invade our country, which only an army can defend. I have seen invitations to the dregs of the people to go to drills, and form into corps: we should therefore distinguish between the gentlemen, the original volunteers, and those sons of sedition. I have a summons from a major something [somebody whispered, Canier]—aye, a major Canier—ordering his corps to attend with nine rounds of ball cartridge, as there might be occasion for actual service; and at the same time intimating a threat to government: and will any man tell me, that we should be overawed by such people as these? or that the

commons of Ireland should be afraid to grant a sum of money to array a militia, until these people should lay down their arms? Are the commons of Ireland to be told, that they shall not have a militia until the dregs of the people, who blast and disgrace the name of volunteers, shall choose to permit them? Let no one threaten the commons of Ireland with the displeasure of any body of men out of doors. No body of men out of doors ever shall intimidate me. I reprobate and I spurn the idea. I desire again to distinguish between the gentlemen of Ireland, the original volunteers, and the dregs of the people, who, led on by vile incendiaries, blast and dishonour the volunteer name; and I say, that had I no other reason than to shew those sons of sedition that government has a power sufficient to crush them to atoms, I would vote for the establishment of a militia."

The same view of the gradual degeneracy of the volunteers was taken by sir Hercules Langrishe and others. "There are two great points," said Arthur Wolfe, "gained by the establishment of a militia—first, it trains to arms men of a proper description; and secondly, so far as it goes, it counteracts the danger of a standing army. These points have always been relied on in England; and if we obtain a militia such as theirs, I shall always think it so much acquired in support of the liberty of the country. Gentlemen have said a great deal about the volunteers which, I think, had as well been left unsaid; but let the consequence of my speech be what it will, I shall now speak plainly out. The volunteers, I say, ought never to be distinguished from the body of the citizens; even if they had existed to this hour uncontaminated by the dregs of the people; they never ought to be distinguished from their fellow-citizens; if they were, they would grow to think themselves a separate body in the state, and imagine they had some authority. I know there are many thousands of loyal and honourable men still amongst the volunteers, but I am not afraid to say, that if all the corps of this city were under arms, I should tremble for my property and my religion; for I have seen men amongst them that ought not to be entrusted with arms, and who are a disgrace to the volunteer name. But suppose the volunteers were still uncontaminated—suppose they were, as at the first, loyal, brave, and honourable; lovers of their country, maintainers of its

legislature, and supporters of its laws; what certainty could we have of their continuance? How could we be sure that if the enemy was upon our coasts, and the volunteers had retired to their ploughs, that they could be immediately assembled so as to protect the kingdom? If they could not, we should in vain regret our improvidence in not taking this opportunity to establish a militia." Another active debater in the commons' house, sir Boyle Roche, expressed his opinion thus:—"At the first raising of the volunteers," said he, "they were surrounded with honour and glory; in that manner they went on for some time, adored by their countrymen, and respected by the neighbouring nations. At this time they stood upon the high ground of patriotism and public virtue, as armed citizens, supporting the laws and constitution of their country; at this particular period they had at their head, or in their ranks, all the gentlemen of consequence in this kingdom; but, alas! they proved that there is no human institution that is not subject to corruption and decay. Incendiaries and declaimers got among them, and by their sophistry deluded them from the high ground of armed citizens to become legislators. It was here that the volunteers sunk into contempt, and every man who had the laws and constitution of his country at heart, considered them as dangerous to the very existence of the people of this country. The name of congress originated amongst the rebels of America; the volunteers adopted it on the 10th of November, 1783, and I declare from my place, that from that moment every man who had anything to lose, had everything to fear for his life and property. The cleaveboys of Oimond market are armed, and are the volunteers of this day. I now declare that there is an absolute necessity for a national militia, as I think the salvation of this country depends upon that measure, and the respectability of the royal army."

Grattan repeated the sentiments which he had so strongly expressed in the debate on the address.

These debates, and their result—the motion for the revival of the militia, was carried at four o'clock on Tuesday morning, the 16th of February, by a majority of a hundred and thirty-nine against sixty-three—sealed the fate of the volunteers. They were abandoned by their old leaders and by most men of property who had pre-

viously appeared in their ranks, and their places were supplied by men with dangerous views, who were skilful and daring, and not without high public spirit. The volunteers lingered on under that name for some years, holding the pageantry of their annual reviews, and still passing addresses and resolutions, but they were no longer looked upon as a national institution of any

importance. When they threatened to give umbrage to government, the regular army was ordered to disperse them, and the last remnant of the famous volunteers of Ireland expired. Their old chief, lord Charlemont, formed some of their old leaders into the whig club; their new leaders became the founders of the far more daring and dangerous association of the united Irishmen.

CHAPTER XIII.

BILL FOR THE REGULATION OF COMMERCIAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN.



NEW question had now arisen to take off public attention gradually from the violently agitated questions of parliamentary reform and the character of the volunteers. The duke of Rutland had said in his speech, "I am to recommend, in the king's name, to your earnest investigation those objects of trade and commerce between this kingdom and Great Britain, which have not yet received their complete adjustment. In framing a plan with a view to a final settlement, you will be sensible that the interest of Great Britain and Ireland ought to be for ever united and inseparable. And his majesty relies on your liberality and wisdom for adopting such an equitable system for the joint benefit of both countries, and the support of the common interest, as will secure mutual satisfaction and permanency."

* The propositions as laid originally before the Irish parliament were as follows:—

"I. That it is highly important to the general interest of the British empire, that the trade between Great Britain and Ireland be encouraged and extended as much as possible; and for that purpose, that the intercourse and commerce be finally settled and regulated on permanent and equitable principles for the mutual benefit of both countries.

"II. That towards carrying into full effect so desirable a settlement, it is fit and proper that all articles, not the growth or manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland, should be imported into each kingdom from the other reciprocally, under the same regulation, and at the same duties, if subject to duties, to which they are liable when imported directly from

In the parliament of Great Britain, which was opened about the same time, the king said in his speech—"Amongst the objects which now require consideration, I must particularly recommend to your earnest attention the adjustment of such points in the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland as are not yet finally arranged; the system which will unite both kingdoms the most closely on principles of reciprocal advantage, will, I am persuaded, best ensure the general prosperity of my dominions."

It appears that previous to the meeting of parliament, the British cabinet, in concert with commissioners appointed on the part of Ireland, had formed a plan for the final adjustment of the commercial intercourse between the two countries. Mr. Orde, the secretary of state, laid their plan before the Irish house of commons in a series of resolutions.* He stated, that these resolutions had been founded on the words

the place of their growth, product, or manufacture; and that all duties originally paid on importation into either country respectively, shall be fully drawn back on exportation to the other.

"III. That for the same purpose, it is proper that no prohibition should exist, in either country, against the importation, use, or sale of any article, the growth, product, or manufacture of the other; and that the duty on the importation of every such article, if subject to duty, in either country, should be precisely the same in the one country as the other, except where an addition may be necessary in either country, in consequence of an internal duty on any such article of its own consumption.

"IV. That in all cases where the duties on articles of the growth, product, or manufacture of either

of an address of the Irish house of commons in the preceding session, which recommended "a plan for a liberal arrangement of commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, formed upon the broad basis of reciprocal advantage, as the most effectual means of strengthening the empire at large, and cherishing the common interest and brotherly affection of both kingdoms;" and he said it was in this spirit that the propositions had been framed.

The reading of these propositions gave rise to what at first promised to be a very angry debate, and one characteristic of the hasty temper of many of the Irish legislators. The last resolution provided that a portion of the hereditary revenue of Ireland should be "appropriated towards the support of the naval force of the empire, in such manner as the parliament of this kingdom shall direct." It was scarcely read, when Mr. Brownlow rose abruptly, and ex-

pressed himself as follows:—"I confess, sir, I could hardly suppress my indignation whilst the right honourable gentleman was speaking. I am really astonished that any man should be bold enough to move such a proposition in this house, and I should deem myself a slave if I could tamely hear it made. Does the right honourable gentleman mean that we should become a tributary nation? Is this the boasted extension of our commerce? Is this the reciprocal advantage we were to enjoy? Sir, I reject the gift, and I hurl it back with scorn. I never will consent to be a slave, nor to pay tribute. I am ready to die rather than be a slave. Such propositions were formerly made to America, and we have seen their effect. Sir, it is well for the right honourable gentleman that he is in a civilized country; had he made such a proposition in a Polish diet, he would not have lived to carry back an answer to his master. I will

country, are different on the importation into the other, it would be expedient that they should be reduced in the kingdom where they are the highest, to the amount payable in the other; and that all such articles should be exportable from the kingdom into which they shall be imported, as free from duty as the similar commodities or home manufactures of the same kingdom.

"V. That for the same purpose, it is also proper that in all cases where either kingdom shall charge articles of its own consumption with an internal duty on the manufacture, or a duty on the material, the same manufacture, when imported from the other, may be charged with a further duty on importation, to the same amount as the internal duty on the manufacture, or to an amount adequate to countervail the duty on the material, and shall be entitled to such drawbacks or bounties on exportation as may leave the same subject to no heavier burden than the home-made manufacture; such further duty to continue so long only as the internal consumption shall be charged with the duty or duties, to balance which it shall be imposed; or, until the manufacture coming from the other kingdom, shall be subjected there to an equal burden, not drawn back or compensated on exportation.

"VI. That in order to give permanency to the settlement now intended to be established, it is necessary that no prohibition, or new or additional duties, should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom, on the importation of any article of the growth, product, or manufacture of the other, except such additional duties as may be requisite to balance duties on internal consumption, pursuant to the foregoing resolution.

"VII. That for the same purpose, it is necessary further, that no prohibition, or new or additional duties, should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom, on the exportation of any article of native growth, product, or manufacture, from thence to the other, except such as either kingdom may deem expedient, from time to time, upon corn, meal, malt, flour, and biscuits; and also except where there now

exists any prohibition which is not reciprocal, or any duty which is not equal in both kingdoms, in every which case the prohibition may be made reciprocal, or the duties raised so as to make them equal.

"VIII. That for the same purpose, it is necessary that no bounties whatsoever should be paid, or payable, in either kingdom, on the exportation of any article to the other, except such as relate to corn, meal, malt, flour, and biscuits, and such as are in the nature of drawbacks, or compensation for duties paid; and that no duty should be granted in this kingdom on the exportation of any article imported from the British plantations, or any manufacture made of such article, unless in cases where a similar bounty is payable in Britain, on exportation from thence, or where such bounty is merely in the nature of a drawback or compensation of, or for duties paid over and above, any duties paid thereon in Britain.

"IX. That it is expedient, for the general benefit of the British empire, that the importation of articles from foreign states should be regulated, from time to time, in each kingdom, on such terms, as may afford an effectual preference to the importation of similar articles of the growth, product, or manufacture of the other.

"X. That it is essential to the commercial interests of this country to prevent, as much as possible, an accumulation of national debt, and therefore it is highly expedient that the annual revenues of this kingdom should be made equal to its annual expenses.

"XI. That, for the better protection of trade, whatever sum the gross hereditary revenue of this kingdom (after deducting all drawbacks, repayments, or bounties granted in the nature of drawbacks) shall produce, over and above the sum of six hundred and fifty-six thousand pounds in each year of peace, wherein the annual revenues shall be equal to the annual expenses; and in each year of war, without regard to such equality, should be appropriated toward the support of the naval force of the empire, in such manner as the parliament of this kingdom shall direct."

not say *timeo Danaos*; I am afraid of no man; I was born a freeman; and, by the blessing of God, I will deliver the same freedom unimpaired to my children. I will not, and I trust no Irishman will reduce himself, and become a tributary slave; for you may call it by what name you please, it will still be a tribute. I am willing to acknowledge the liberality of Great Britain, but never will consent to such terms as these."

"After what the right honourable gentleman has said," replied secretary Orde, "knowing, as I do, that he must have misapprehended my words, I hope I shall not be deemed presumptuous in rising again, to express my astonishment at his calling the appropriation of part of the hereditary revenue to the common defence of the empire, under the control of the Irish parliament, *paying tribute*. Is it not just that we should contribute towards the expense of our protection? Is Yorkshire tributary, because that county pays something towards the general expenses of the empire? Would it be proper Yorkshire should complain, and refuse money to the revenue, because a part of it may be spent in London? Good God, sir, he might as well say that we pay tribute in maintaining a part of the army! Nay, it is not the first time that the navy of the empire has been the object of your attention; it is not the first time that Ireland has thought proper to assist Great Britain by strengthening her navy; and now, when the parliament of Ireland feels and acknowledges the liberality of Great Britain—now, when we are admitted into full participation of all she has to impart, and it is proposed that a very little aid shall be contributed to the common defence, and that under the control of the Irish parliament, shall this be called a tribute? Or shall it be supposed that I should dare to rise up in this house, and propound such a disgraceful measure, after I had declared that I had a zealous anxiety for the welfare and happiness of this country, and that, while I had the honour to stand in the station I now do, my most earnest wish would be to promote its honour and advantage; and by cultivating the most perfect reciprocity with England, endeavour for ever to unite the two countries in affection, as they are in interest? I own, though I have a high respect for the right honourable gentleman, that I cannot suppress my astonishment at such a suggestion."

In spite of this outburst of violence, the opposition were not unanimous in their wish to reject the propositions; but some only demanded time, and that they should undergo careful deliberation. And this was not denied; for they occupied the consideration of the parliaments of Ireland and Great Britain during several months. On the 11th and 12th of February, when the resolutions were in committee, they were again discussed with considerable warmth, and violently opposed by some. Flood was foremost in the opposition. Grattan, at this stage of the business, approved of the resolutions, though eventually he opposed them. "I am anxious," he said, "to say a few words, both on the new resolutions and the plan. The resolutions I think absolutely indispensable. They have a threefold principle. The first is, after the expenses of the nation are paid, to contribute to the general expense of the empire. The second is, that, by making the surplus not applicable to the general expense till all expenses are paid, it interests both the British and the Irish ministers in Irish economy. The third is, to subject that surplus to the control of the Irish parliament. If the other resolutions had not passed, these ought still to be supported. They put an end to debt; they decide the great question of 1753; they establish Irish economy; they make the British ministry a guarantee to the integrity of this house and the economy of Irish administration. The plan is open, fair, and just, and such as the British minister can justify to both nations. He gave to Ireland what she had a right to expect; and, perhaps, he could not give her more."

When the resolutions were at length finally agreed to, and an address had been voted to the king, expressive of gratitude for his recommendation of them, they were sent up to the house of lords on the 12th of February, and having been agreed to there, they were immediately despatched to England. They had there already formed a subject of public discussion in every part of the kingdom, and had raised much prejudice and ill-feeling, which promised a very resolute opposition. In laying the resolutions before a committee of the house of commons on the 22nd of February, Mr. Pitt protested against the hostile spirit which had been so industriously spread abroad on this subject, and called the attention of the committee to what had been and what was the relative situation of the two countries. Until

within a few years, he said, the prevailing system had been that of debarring Ireland from the enjoyment and use of her own resources; it had been the object of government to make Ireland completely subservient to the interests and opulence of Great Britain, without suffering her to share in the bounties of nature, or in the industry of her citizens, or making them contribute to the general interests and strength of the empire. This system of cruel restraint had, however, been exploded. It was at once harsh and unjust, and it was as impolitic as it was oppressive; for however necessary it might be to the partial benefit of certain districts in Britain, it did not promote the real prosperity and strength of the empire. That which had been the system counteracted the kindness of Providence, and suspended the industry and enterprise of man. Ireland was put under such restraint that she was shut out from every species of commerce. She was restrained from sending the produce of her own soil to foreign markets, and all correspondence with the colonies of Britain was prohibited to her, so that she could not derive their commodities but through the medium of Britain. This was the system which had prevailed, and this was the state of thralldom in which that country had been kept ever since the revolution. Some relaxation of the system, indeed, took place at an early period of this century; somewhat more of the restrictive laws was abated under George II.; but it was not till within seven years that the system had been completely reversed. It was not to be expected but that when Ireland, by the more enlarged sentiments of the present age, had acquired an independent legislature, she would instantly export her produce and manufactures to all the markets of the world. She did so, and this was not all. England, without any compact or bargain, generally admitted her to a share in her colonies. She gave her liberty to import directly, and to re-export to all the world, except to Britain, the produce of her colonies. Thus much, he said, was done some years ago; but to this moment no change had taken place in the intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland themselves. Some trivial points, indeed, had been changed; but no considerable change had taken place in our manufactures exported to Ireland, or in their's imported to England. That, therefore, which had been done was still viewed by the people of Ire-

land as insufficient; and clamours were excited, and suggestions published in Dublin and elsewhere, of putting duties on our produce and manufactures under the name of protecting duties. Having thus far relaxed from the system which had been maintained since the revolution; having abandoned the commercial subserviency in which we had so long persevered, and having so wisely and justly put them into a state in which they might cultivate and profit from the gifts of Nature; having secured to them the advantages of their arts and industry; it was to be observed that we had abolished one system and had established another; but we had left the intercourse between the two countries exactly where it was. There were, he said, but two possible systems for countries situated in relation to one another like Britain and Ireland: the one, of having the smaller completely subservient and subordinate to the greater; to make the one, as it were, an instrument of advantage, and to make all her efforts operate in favour of and conduce merely to the interest of the other. This system we had tried in respect to Ireland. The other was a participation and community of benefits, and a system of equality and fairness, which, without tending to aggrandize the one or depress the other, should seek the aggregate interests of the empire. Such a situation of commercial equality, in which there was to be a community of benefits, demanded also a community of burthens; and it was this situation in which he was anxious to place the two countries. It was on that general basis that he was solicitous of moving the proposition which he held in his hand, to complete a system which had been left unfinished and defective.

Such were Pitt's opinions at this time on the relative position of Ireland with regard to Great Britain. The concessions which he wished to make to Ireland he reduced to two heads, first, the importation of the produce of our colonies in the West Indies and America through Ireland into Great Britain, and, second, a mutual exchange between the two countries of their respective productions and manufactures upon equal terms. With regard to the first, he allowed that it had the appearance of militating against the navigation laws, for which England had ever had the greatest partiality; but as she had already allowed Ireland to trade immediately and directly with the colonies, he could not see how the importing

of the produce of those colonies circuitously through Ireland into Great Britain could injure the colonial trade of this country, which was a direct one, and therefore to be made at a less expense and risk than that which was circuitous. Pitt concluded by moving a general resolution, "that it was highly important to the general interests of the empire, that the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland should be finally adjusted, and that Ireland should be admitted to a permanent and irrevocable participation of the commercial advantages of this country, when her parliament should permanently and irrevocably secure an aid out of the surplus of the hereditary revenue of that kingdom, towards defraying the expense of protecting the general commerce of the empire in time of peace."

Fox and lord North, with their party, declared themselves from the first hostile to the Irish resolutions, and the business went on very slowly. A report was given in by a committee of the board of trade and plantations, founded on a series of examinations of the principal merchants and manufacturers in the kingdom; and the latter, while the result of their examinations was represented as favourable to the resolutions, held meetings, and consultations and declared their opinion against them. The whole of March and April, and one-half of the month of May were occupied in receiving petitions and hearing evidence of manufacturers and merchants. In the course of these examinations, the original propositions received so many modifications, explanations, and additions, that they were increased, in number to twenty. The object of the additional propositions was chiefly to provide, that whatever navigation laws the British parliament should thereafter find it necessary to enact for the preservation of her marine, the same should be passed by the legislature of Ireland; against the importing into Ireland, and from thence into Great Britain, of any other West India merchandises than such as were the produce of our own colonies; and that Ireland should debar itself, from any of the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan, so long as it should be thought necessary to continue the charter of the English East India company.

Pitt brought forward the twenty resolutions on the 12th of May, 1785, and they led to very warm discussions in the English house of commons. They were vigorously

opposed, chiefly on the ground that they contained concessions to Ireland which would be injurious to England, and which it was said the British ministers made under a species of coercion, inasmuch as, after driving the Irish to the utmost degree of discontent by their unpopular government, they were obliged now to give them the commercial treaty in order to stop their cries. Thus, said they, English commerce was to be sacrificed to purchase Irish slavery. In the grand debate on this question which took place on the 12th of May, and was only brought to a close at eight o'clock the next morning, Pitt carried his measure by a large majority. In their passage through the house of lords, Pitt's resolutions were opposed with equal vigour, and discussed with persevering minuteness. The most remarkable speech in the lords was that of lord Townsend, the lord lieutenant of Ireland for five years, at a period before the new liberal policy had been adopted, and who had taken several occasions since his recall of advocating principles which he had not practised in his government. He spoke again in the same tone, and said that he wished many of their lordships had visited the remote provinces of our sister kingdom: there they would have seen a hardy, innocent, oppressed race of men, in a rich soil, surrounded by numberless flocks and herds, yet unclothed, unfed, and mostly unhoused, owing to our restrictions upon their imports and exports, yet contributing their persons and their labours to the support of the empire. Would their lordships wish to continue so large a part of their fellow-subjects in that state of subordination and misery? After warning them against forcing the Irish into a collision with England, he observed that the parliament of Ireland had expressed twice the warmest satisfaction and perfect contentment at his majesty's gracious indulgences to that kingdom; that the volunteers were dwindling, and that the force of government was never stronger there, nor had ever been more exerted to the suppression of rebellion and tumults than at that period. He must, he declared, ever honour the national spirit of the volunteers of that kingdom, in spite of all the discountenance, discouragement, and expedients with which government attempted to depress them. They had given an illustrious example of what a brave and animated people could effect in their own defence. Yet he did not carry his admiration so far as to

approve of their assembling under the nose of parliament, to prescribe reform and dictate to their representatives. There was much palliation to be pleaded in behalf of our impassioned neighbours, especially when they recollected what a quantity of political combustibles had been exported into that kingdom from this, and even the most chimerical propositions recommended, however unfitting her peculiar situation. On the contrary, had the same constitutional regulations been imparted to her at that period, which we had adopted and enjoyed in this kingdom, those formidable volunteers had perhaps never existed; but it seemed we were as jealous of our constitutional superiority as our commercial, and consequently had surrendered with reluctance what we should have granted with cordiality. The alterations which had been made in the first propositions to Ireland were certainly very considerable, and plainly proved the defects of the original plan; imperfect and perilous it certainly was, and had it passed, might have produced greater evils than he was persuaded it was calculated to prevent.

After the resolutions had passed both houses, Mr. Pitt brought in a bill founded upon them, which was read a first time on the 2nd of August. It was then allowed to stand still until the decision of the parliament of Ireland should be known.

Accordingly, on the 12th of August, Mr. secretary Orde moved in the Irish house of commons for leave to bring in a bill which was a mere transcript of that which was in abeyance in the British parliament. If this bill encountered some warmth of opposition in England, it was nothing in comparison to the storm that burst upon it in the Irish parliament. Grattan joined with Flood in opposing it, and the old opposition was increased by the desertion from the treasury benches of all who wished to shew that they acted with independence. Their indignation was complete when they thought they traced a design to infringe upon their legislative independence, and they placed in every disadvantageous light the clause disposing of their hereditary revenue, the surrender of their right to commercial legislation, and the restraint from trading beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan. They treated the bill as a measure fraught with utter ruin to the Irish constitution, and as an insult to the nation.

Grattan's eloquent declamation against it at the commencement of the debate seems to have had great influence both in the house and throughout the country. He too regarded the bill as a direct and grave attack upon Irish liberty, and, after tracing briefly the history of the Irish trade since it had begun to obtain some degree of freedom, he proceeded to compare what had been previously done with what was proposed in the present bill. "The American war," he said, "was the Irish harvest. From that period, as from the lucky moment of your fate, your commerce, constitution, and mind took form and vigour; and to that period, and to a first and salient principle must they recur for life and renovation. It is therefore I consider those settlements as sacred, and from them I am naturally led to that part of the subject which relates to compensation, the payment which we are to make for the losses which we are to sustain; certainly compensation cannot apply to the free trade, supposing it uninvaded, first, because that trade was your right; to pay for the recovery of what you should never have lost, had been to a great degree unjust and derogatory? secondly, because that free trade was established in 1779, and the settlement then closed and cannot be opened now; to do so were to destroy the faith of treaties, to make it idle to enter into the present settlement, and to render it vain to enter into any settlement with the British minister. The same may be said of the colony trade, that too was settled in 1779, on terms then specified not now to be opened, clogged, conditioned, or circumscribed; still less does compensation apply to the free constitution of 1782. His majesty then informed you from the throne, 'these things come unaccompanied with any stipulation,'—besides, the free constitution, like the free trade, was your right. Free-men wont pay for recovery of right; payment had derogated from the claim of right; so we then stated to the ministry. It was then thought that to have annexed subsidy to constitution had been a barren experiment on public poverty, and had marred an illustrious experiment on the feelings of the nation, and had been neither satisfaction to Ireland, nor revenue to Great Britain. This bolder policy, this happy art, which saw how much may be got by tax, and how much must be left to honour, which made a bold push for the heart of the nation, and leaving her free to

acquire, took a chance for her disposition to give, had its effect, for since that time until the present most unfortunate attempt, a great bulk of the community were on the side of government, and the parliamentary constitution was a guarantee for public peace. See then what you obtained without compensation, a colony trade, a free trade, the independency of your judges, the government of your army, the extinction of the unconstitutional powers of your council, the restoration of the judicature of your lords, and the independency of your legislature! See now what you obtain by compensation—a covenant not to trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan; a covenant not to take foreign plantation produce, but as the parliament of Great Britain shall permit; a covenant not to take British plantation produce, but as Great Britain shall prescribe; a covenant to make such acts of navigation as Great Britain shall prescribe; a covenant never to protect your own manufactures, never to guard the primum of those manufactures! These things are accompanied, I do acknowledge, with a covenant on the part of England to disarm your argument for protecting duties, to give the English language in the act of navigation the same construction in Ireland, and to leave our linen markets without molestation or diminution. One should think some God presided over the liberties of this country, who made it frugality in the Irish nation to continue free, but has annexed the penalties of fine as infamy to the surrender of the constitution. From this consideration of commerce, a question much more high, much more deep, the invaluable question of constitution arises, in which the idea of protecting duties, the idea of reciprocal duties, of countervailing duties, and all that detail, vanish, and the energies of every heart, and the prudence of every head, are called upon to shield this nation, that long depressed, and at length by domestic virtue and foreign misfortune emancipated, has now to defend her newly acquired rights and her justly acquired reputation; the question is no less than that, which three years ago agitated, fired, and exalted the Irish nation, the independency of the Irish parliament. By this bill we are to covenant that the parliament of Ireland shall subscribe whatever laws the parliament of England shall prescribe, respecting your trade with the British plantations, your trade in the pro-

duce of foreign plantations, and part of your trade from the United States of North America. There is also a sweeping covenant or condition, whereby we are to agree to subscribe whatever laws the parliament of England shall prescribe respecting navigation; the adjustment subjects also your reversionary trade to the east to the same terms—over all these objects you are to have no propounding, no deliberative, no negative, no legislative power, whatsoever. Here then is an end of your free trade and your free constitution; I acquit the people of England; an ill-grounded jealousy for their trade seems aggravated by a well-founded alarm for your liberty; unwilling to relinquish, but, when relinquished, too magnanimous and too wise to resume abdicated tyranny—they feel in these propositions an honourable solicitude for the freedom of Ireland, and the good faith of Great Britain, and see the darling principles and passions of both countries wounded in an arrangement which was to compose them for ever; to a proposal, therefore, so little warranted by the great body of the people of England, so little expected by the people of Ireland, so little suggested by the minister, and so involving to whatever is dear to your interest, honour, and freedom, I answer, no. I plead past settlements, I insist on the faith of nations; the objection should have been made when these settlements were making; but now the logic of empire comes too late. No accommodation, no depreciation, on this subject; assertion—national assertion—national reassertion! If, three years after the recovery of your freedom, you bend, your children, corrupted by your example, will surrender; but if you stand firm and inexorable, you make a seasonable impression on the people of England, you give a wholesome example to your children, you afford an awful instruction to his majesty's ministers, and make (as the old English did in the case of their charter) the attempt on Irish liberty, its confirmation and establishment. However, lest certain glosses should seem to go unanswered, I shall, for the sake of argument, waive past settlements, and combat the reasoning of the English resolutions, the address, his majesty's answer, and the reasoning of this day. It is here said, that the laws respecting commerce and navigation should be similar, and inferred that Ireland should subscribe the laws of England on those

subjects—that is, the same law, the same legislature; but this argument goes a great deal too far—it goes to the army, for the mutiny bill should be the same; it was endeavoured to be extended to the collection of your revenue, and is in train to be extended to your taxes; it goes to extinction of the most invaluable part of your parliamentary capacity; it is an union—an incipient and a creeping union; a virtual union, establishing one will in the general concerns of commerce and navigation, and reposing that will in the parliament of Great Britain; an union where our parliament preserves its existence after it has lost its authority, and our people are to pay for a parliamentary establishment, without any proportion of parliamentary representation. In opposing the right honourable gentleman's bill, I consider myself as opposing an union *in limine*, and that argument for union which makes similarity of law and community of interest (reason strong for the freedom of Ireland), a pretence for a condition which would be dissimilarity of law, because extinction of constitution; and, therefore, hostility, not community of interest. I ask on what experience is this argument founded? Have you, ever since your redemption, refused to preserve a similarity of law in trade and navigation? Have you not followed Great Britain in all her changes of the act of navigation, during the whole of that unpalatable business, the American war? Have you not excluded the cheap produce of other plantations, in order that Irish poverty might give a monopoly to the dear produce of British colonies? Have you not made a better use of your liberty than Great Britain did of her power? But I have an objection to this argument, stronger even than its want of foundation in reason and experiment; I hold it to be nothing less than an intolerance of the parliamentary constitution of Ireland, a declaration that the full and free external legislation of the Irish parliament is incompatible with the British empire. I do acknowledge that by your external power you might discompose the harmony of empire, and I add, that by your power over the purse you might dissolve the state; but to the latter you owe your existence in the constitution, and to the former your authority and station in the empire; this argument, therefore, rests the connection upon a new and a false principle,

goes directly against the root of parliament, and is not a difficulty to be accommodated, but an error to be eradicated; and if any body of men can still think that the Irish constitution is incompatible with the British empire, doctrine which I abjure as sedition against the connexion; but if any body of men are justified in thinking that Irish constitution is incompatible with the British empire, perish the empire! live the constitution! Reduced by this false dilemma to take a part, my second wish is the British empire, my first wish and bounden duty is the liberty of Ireland; but we are told this imperial power is not only necessary for England, but safe for Ireland. What is the present question? what but the abuse of this very power of regulating the trade of Ireland by the British parliament, excluding you, and including herself by virtue of the same words of the same act of navigation? And what was the promovent cause of this arrangement? what but the power you are going to surrender, the distinct and independent external authority of the Irish parliament, competent to question that misconstruction? What is the remedy now proposed? the evil. Go back to the parliament of England; I ask again, what were the difficulties in the way of your eleven propositions? what but the jealousy of the British manufacturers on the subject of trade? And will you make them your parliament, and that too for ever, and that too on the subject of their jealousy, and in the moment they displayed it—safe! I will suppose that jealousy realised, that you rival them in some market abroad, and that they petition their parliament to impose a regulation which shall affect a tonnage which you have and Great Britain has not; how would you then feel your situation, when you should be obliged to register all this? And how would you feel your degradation, when you should see your own manufacturers pass you by as a cypher in the constitution, and deprecate their ruin at the bar of a foreign parliament—safe! Whence the American war? Whence the Irish restrictions? Whence the misconstruction of the act of navigation? Whence but from the evil of suffering one country to regulate the trade and navigation of another, and of instituting, under the idea of general protectress, a proud domination, which sacrifices the interest of the whole to the ambition of a part, and arms the little passions of the monopolist with the sovereign potency

of an imperial parliament; for great nations when cursed with unnatural sway follow but their nature when they are invaded; and human wisdom has not better provided for human safety than by limiting the principles of human power. The surrender of legislature has been likened to cases that not unfrequently take place between two equal nations covenanting to suspend, in particular cases, their respective legislative powers for mutual benefit. Thus Great Britain and Portugal agree to suspend their legislative power, in favour of the wine of the one, and the woollen of the other; but if Portugal had gone farther, and agreed to subscribe the laws of England, this covenant had not been a treaty, but conquest. So Great Britain and Ireland may covenant not to raise high duties on each other's manufactures; but if Ireland goes farther, and covenants to subscribe British law, this is not a mutual suspension of the exercise of legislative power, but a transfer of the power itself from one country to another, to be exercised by another hand. Such covenant is not reciprocity of trade; it is a surrender of the government of your trade—inequality of trade and inequality of constitution. I speak, however, as if such transfer could take place; but, in fact, it could not. Any arrangement so covenanting is a mere nullity: it could not bind; still less could it bind your successors, for a man is not omnipotent over himself; neither are your parliaments omnipotent over themselves, to accomplish their own destruction, and propagate death to their successors. There is in these cases a superior relationship to our respective creators—God—the community, which in the instance of the individual arrests the hand of suicide, and in that of the political body stops the act of surrender, and makes man the means of propagation, and parliament the organ to continue liberty, not the engine to destroy it. However, though the surrender is void, there are two ways of attempting it: one, by a surrender in form; the other, by a surrender in substance—appointing another parliament your substitute, and consenting to be its register or stamp, by virtue of which to introduce the law and edict of another land; to clothe with the forms of your law foreign deliberations; and to preside over the disgraceful ceremony of your own abdicated authority. Both methods are equally surrenders, and both are wholly void. I speak on principle, the principle on which you stand—your

creation. We, the limited trustees of the delegated power, born for a particular purpose, limited to a particular time, and bearing an inviolable relationship to the people, who sent us to parliament, cannot break that relationship, counteract that purpose, surrender, diminish, or derogate from those privileges we breathe but to preserve. Could the parliament of England covenant to subscribe your laws? Could she covenant that young Ireland should command, and old England should obey? If such a proposal to England were mockery, to Ireland it cannot be constitution. I rest on authority, as well as principle, the authority on which the revolution rests. Mr. Locke, in his chapter on the abolition of government, says that the transfer of legislative power is the abolition of the state, not a transfer. Thus I may congratulate this house, and myself, that it is one of the blessings of the British constitution, that it cannot perish of a rapid mortality—not die in a day, like the men who should protect her. Any act that would destroy the liberty of the people is dead-born from the womb. Men may put down the public cause for a season; but another year would see old constitution advance the honours of his head, and the good institution of parliament shaking off the tomb, to reascend in all its pomp, and pride, and plenitude, and privilege!"

The supporters of the bill in this debate were comparatively few, and not very warm. "I will not," said Mr. Gardiner, "enter into the subject at large, as I think as much as possible has been said upon it. The admission of the bill, and whether it is derogatory to this house, is the only question at present before us. I do not think that the bill is likely to infringe on our constitutional or commercial rights; and if I did think so, no man would be more ready to oppose it. I am of opinion, indeed I am convinced, that Ireland never can participate in the commerce of Great Britain without consenting to regulate that commerce by a similarity of laws. Many things may occur, in process of time, that may cause jealousies and rivalships injurious to both kingdoms, unless their trade is carried on by similar laws. Do gentlemen think it possible to arrange and establish a system of commerce with Britain on any other terms? I think no man can say that it is practicable. If the case is so, and gentlemen nevertheless refuse to admit the bill, merely because it mentions that Ireland is in future to pass such

laws, with respect to commerce, as Great Britain shall find it necessary to pass, I will ask why they entered at all upon the subject? or why did they address the crown respecting it? I do not think that any reasonable objection can be offered against the mode proposed for the regulation of the commerce of this country in future; for, in fact, Ireland has been acting under similar laws with England ever since we obtained a free trade. The great objection to the twenty propositions is, that we are to be bound by British laws; and a very strange objection it is indeed, when it is considered that our plantation trade has hitherto been and is still to be subject to a similar obligation. Now I am sure that resolution cannot put us in a worse situation than we are in at present. There is another matter that I must take notice of. Who are to be the judges of the infraction of the compact between the two countries? It is declared by the bill, that the king, lords, and commons of Great Britain must pronounce a positive statute, that Ireland has broken the treaty, before she can be charged with a breach of it; but if Ireland thinks that Great Britain has violated it, no other authority is thought necessary for charging the breach upon her, but an address of both houses of the Irish parliament. This is a strong guard to Ireland against the influence that ministers may be supposed to have over it, and consequently an advantage on the part of Ireland. There is certainly one very great objection to the system; and that is, while it guards the raw materials of England, it leaves those of Ireland without any protection. But it is better to speak of that point when the bill is before a committee, than at present; it is no reason for refusing leave to bring in the bill, in order that it may be examined. I shall vote for the motion, as I have so much confidence in the integrity and vigilance of this house on all occasions, especially when matters of consequence to the interests of this country come under consideration, that I have not a doubt but that the measure will be dealt with, upon examination, as it deserves. For this reason I hope it will be met manfully, and not stifled in its birth, in compliance with the advice of those gentlemen who have declared they will vote against the bill being brought in."

The debate was continued with unabated warmth till after eight o'clock in the morning; and then, on a division, the numbers

were found to be, in favour of the bill, a hundred and twenty-seven, and against it, a hundred and eight.

The opposition looked upon this small majority as a victory, while the ministers themselves felt that it was a defeat. The former wished to proceed immediately to further resolutions, and, although they had sat continuously during eighteen hours, the question of adjournment was only carried in the affirmative by a majority of sixteen, and the house separated at nine o'clock in the morning. When they reassembled on Monday, the 15th of August, secretary Orde announced that government had decided on abandoning the bill. He would not then, he said, remind the house of the proceedings that had taken place with regard to this measure after having had so many opportunities of expatiating upon it; he would do no more than just observe, that the measure had been undertaken, in obedience to the commands of that house, by the government of both countries, so far as to project and bring forward a proposition for their mutual benefit. With that view he had the honour of having moved for leave to bring in the bill then in his hand, and he hoped the contents of it would effectually answer the purpose; he had declared that on no ground whatever could those who had engaged in it have any view or satisfaction in proposing the bill, than as it might tend to attain that object. It was but justice to those gentlemen who had given government their support, to say thus much, as he was convinced that those who enjoyed most of its confidence, never would have advised or recommended a measure that had not that stamp. Under this idea, he had taken the liberty of applying for leave to bring in a bill; and having done so, he wished to have it understood, that it was his desire that full time should be given for the consideration of it. In reality he had effected his duty when he had brought it to the period of its being laid before the public. From that moment he should consider it to be in their possession, to do with it as they pleased. He should, therefore, wish to collect opinions upon it; and with that view he should move to have it printed, that the people might examine and understand it, and that gentlemen might have an opportunity of consulting their constituents, and collecting the sense of the country upon it. From what had passed in the house on the last day that they had assembled, he was

induced to suppose that considerable time would be necessary for that purpose. This opinion, it was true, arose from a minority of the house, yet that minority was of such a nature, and so composed, that the gentlemen who formed it might be well supposed to know the sense of the country, for which reason he should be sorry not to pay sufficient respect to them. Notwithstanding, therefore, that he was still decidedly of the same opinion with regard to the measure that he ever had entertained, yet as one great object was to enforce the justification of government, it was highly necessary that the bill should be seen and considered. He would with this view move that it be printed, and having done so, he did not intend making any further motion respecting it during the present session. His reason was, he thought the public much mistaken in the opinion they had formed of it, and therefore he was anxious that they should see it, as the minister wished only to proceed in concurrence with the sentiments of the people, having no view but the benefit and advantage of the country, nor would he desire to do anything with the measure unless it should appear to have that stamp upon it. He thought he had perfected his duty when he had brought it before the public. Its further progress must be by a motion from them; and as it had been the general opinion that it would be desirable that the session should elapse without further consideration of it, in order to give the country time to reflect upon it, he should proceed in that way. When the next session commenced, the country would have had sufficient time to consider it, and might take such further steps respecting it as they thought proper.

Mr. Orde's announcement was received with the utmost joy by the now formidable opposition, and Flood rose to declare his satisfaction. Any proposition, said he, to take away the right of legislation from the land, he was an enemy to. Such a proposition was inadmissible now; it would be inadmissible to-morrow—would be inadmissible at any time. The constitution was not a subject of negotiation; it was not a commodity for barter; it was not an article of commerce. The resolution he was going to propose was necessary to shew the people of Ireland, to shew the people of England, to shew the world, that it was too sacred for the hands of the most ruinous and profligate minister to touch; that it

was above the power or wickedness of even such—beyond the grasp of depravity or ambition. In his opinion, there existed not, at this day, a subject of commerce between the two countries worth any sort of altercation. We now had a right of trading with any part of the world that chooses to trade with us; no stipulation was, therefore, necessary; common probity would be sufficient. To think of binding the legislature was foolish and absurd, as the constitution acknowledged; common sense, or reason, acknowledged no power to reside in one parliament to bind any future parliament. Circumstances might, in the course of time, be so changed, as to render what at one period might be a wise and salutary measure, directly the contrary. There could never, therefore, exist any one general remedy, irrevocable, and to be applied to all cases whatever. The regulation of the commerce and intercourse between the two countries must be left to their respective legislatures, to be settled from time to time, as to them might seem meet. That England could have nothing to fear from leaving this in such a situation, he assumed, from the conduct invariably observed by Ireland since the recovery of a free constitution. "Had we, since that period—had we, since we were permitted to legislate for our own commerce, shewn any indisposition toward that country? Had we not, on the contrary, gone, on very many occasions, farther than the interests of Ireland could well permit? Had we never, since, sacrificed some of our most important interests at the shrine of their good pleasure?" Arguing from the greater influence possessed by England in our parliament, than by Ireland in hers, he said there was no necessity for that kingdom to invade the constitution of this, the only nation that shewed itself friendly to Great Britain; and we could not, ought not, must not attempt the subversion of the constitution. He said, that as the whole business was to be considered only in the light of a bargain between two equal and independent states, as each sought its own advantage, the rejection of their own propositions here could give no offence to the English parliament; nor should any Irishman be chagrined because the legislature of England did not agree to the propositions of this country. He then proposed a resolution, "that we hold ourselves bound not to enter into any engagement to give up the sole and exclusive right of the

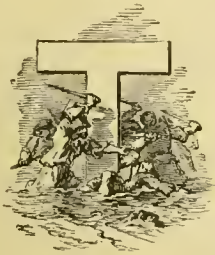
parliament of Ireland to legislate for Ireland in all cases whatever, as well externally as commercially and internally."

Flood's resolution drew on another warm debate, and many of those who had voted against the bill disapproved of it. Rather, therefore, than close the question with a

diminished minority, and thus lessen the popular victory, Flood agreed to withdraw his motion. Thus the subject of the commercial treaty, a subject which had caused the greatest agitation throughout Ireland for some months was set at rest for the present.

CHAPTER XIII.

OTHER PROCEEDINGS IN THE IRISH PARLIAMENT; DISTURBED STATE OF THE COUNTRY DURING THE SUMMER AND AUTUMN OF 1785; REOPENING OF PARLIAMENT; O'CONNOR'S INSURRECTION.



HE bill to regulate the commercial intercourse between the two countries was the subject of principal interest during this session of the Irish parliament. Several other questions, however, gave rise to animated debates, though the government continued to carry its measures by large majorities. In the first resolute attack by the opposition, that on the subject of attachments, ministers had a majority of a hundred and twenty against forty-eight. Early in the session Mr. Rowley, one of the members for the county of Antrim, brought in a bill for the better preserving the independence of parliament. Its object was to prevent the selling of seats in parliament; but it was opposed by the advocates of parliamentary reform, because it was only a half-measure, and on the motion for going into committee it only found twenty-one supporters.

On the 28th of April, while the commercial resolutions were under consideration in England, Flood again brought forward in the Irish house of commons the popular subject of parliamentary reform. After expatiating on the corruption of parliaments, and the danger with which this corruption threatened the nation, he proceeded to state some of the electioneering practices resorted to in Ireland. "There is scarce a corporate body in the kingdom," he said, "but that has been deprived of their rights of election; to remedy which, it seems necessary, first to take away by an

act of parliament, every bye-law or usage that hath crept into places to deprive electors of their original right of voting; secondly, that every leasehold housekeeper in every borough or town corporate should vote; thirdly, to register all freeholds whatever. We have seen elections carried on from day to day for a very long period, where it was well known that not one freeholder was polled, and these mockeries of electors were polled as ten pound freeholders. To remedy this, let every freeholder be registered at least as a forty-shilling freeholder, or not have a vote at all. It is well known that gentlemen in different counties agree to make freeholders on this condition—I will make forty or fifty freeholders in your county, if you will make the same in mine; and they shall go to you on condition that yours come to me. Thus they travel about, and a band of itinerant freeholders dispose of the representation of the country, while mock electors are brought from the north to the south, and from the south to the north, an army of fictitious freeholders produced as true. In towns too, what is the practice? A parcel of friends are made honorary members, who deprive the electors of their franchise and bestow the name of representative on one who has really no relation to them. My idea, therefore is, that no man shall be admitted to have a vote in any town, unless he has one hundred pounds a-year freehold; or resides within the precincts of the place. I should also wish to enforce a residence personally and actually for six months before the test of the writ of election; that every man should be acquainted

with them upon the tender of their votes. I wish, too, that the sheriff should be deprived of all discretionary power, and rendered merely ministerial, as to the act of election; that he should be enabled to appoint persons who might hold the election in every barony on one and the same day. This I think, would prevent corruption, and accelerate the election. Besides the prosecution now allowed by law for false registry, my intention is to give a penalty to be recovered by any kind of action before any judge of assize. It is also my wish that every man shall be registered in the barony where he resides, and poll there and nowhere else. The precedent of the disfranchisement of the borough of Shoreham was a good one; it had its right of election restored by annexing certain parishes annexed to it. To restore and keep up a chain of populous towns in the kingdom, will be one of the great means of improving the representation; I shall therefore move that the house do resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, for the following purpose: to prepare a clause or clauses to be inserted in the bill to be brought in by the committee appointed to bring in a bill for the more equal representation of the people in parliament, the better to promote due population in small contracted or decayed cities, towns corporate, and boroughs, whereby it shall be provided that any city, town corporate, or borough returning members to serve in parliament, which shall not, twelve months before the next general election, contain, duly registered, a number of resident protestant leasehold housekeepers, not less in Leinster, Munster, or Connaught than seventy, nor less in Ulster than one hundred and forty, in each city, town corporate, or borough respectively, shall return to parliament one representative only on the next general election; and shall continue on every subsequent election to return one representative and no more, until such number as aforesaid shall be completed; and that as soon as such number shall be completed, then the said city, town corporate, or borough, shall again return two representatives to parliament, and shall continue so to do as long as, and no longer than, it shall retain the aforesaid number complete."

Sir Hercules Langrishe replied to Flood in a long and able speech, in which he controverted the statement that parliamentary reform was the unbiassed wish of the peo-

ple, and asserted that the manner in which what was called the people's opinion was got up was at least as corrupt as the parliamentary representation of the people. The demonstrations in favour of parliamentary reform, he said, were in general made by small numbers of persons, and were not composed of those most capable of forming an opinion on the subject. After detailing at some length the practices of the agitators, he proceeded to observe: "Now, sir, I say wherever the people collectively have given an opinion in favour of reform, they have spoken by a decided minority of the voters in the place whose sense they would convey; and the public opinion on this subject is conspicuous in the elections of delegates to the national congress. I do not mean to say one word as to the legality or illegality of that measure; that has been already sufficiently explained; I know, too, that several respectable gentlemen were elected to that assembly; I only speak of it at present merely as it bears testimony to the national sentiment; and when we consider the manner of the elections, where they were held, and the number of places where no such were held at all, it is impossible not to conclude that the sense of the nation was adverse to the measure. It was admitted that the whole province of Munster sent no delegate; and I am sure every county or city, within my knowledge, which elected delegates, elected them by a decided minority of those entitled by law to vote for representatives. The honourable member who introduced this bill knows very well the election for the county in which he resides was not held even in the body of the county itself; it was held in another county, where the freeholders had not a right by law to exercise the elective franchise, even under the king's writ; and though I do allow that five respectable gentlemen were the objects of their choice, yet no man alive will say that the sense of twelve hundred freeholders were expressed by an assembly convened out of their county, and composed of thirty, or forty, or fifty, of those freeholders and the populace of a large city. We are all very well acquainted with the manner in which the election for the metropolis was conducted. I do not mean any disrespect to the gentlemen that were elected; I dare say they were very worthy of the trust; but the manner was this:—after several unsuccessful attempts in the usual place of election, it was by a sort of

popular *certiorari*, removed to a place never before resorted to, as the seat of election, though it has lately been the scene of summary justice; a part of the city, perhaps recommended by the popularity of its name—it is called the liberty; or, perhaps, preferred to all others, from an opinion that in that centre of peace and industry, in that sacred suburb, diversity of opinion would be silenced; that the friends of experiment were sure to find a decisive support, and that though the election might not be perfectly free, it would certainly be unanimous. I shall not trouble you with a description of other elections throughout this country, but submit it to the observation of gentlemen to judge in general what testimonies they bore of the national opinion. The grand aggregate body were indeed liberal and comprehensive in their invitations; they looked to the east and the west, and the north and the south at once, but unfortunately the whole kingdom was not at that time sufficiently informed, as they are now, that the great men who conducted and enlightened that assembly were really persons whose condition in life gave them an authority, and whose education that degree of knowledge which could entitle them to stand and talk to the nation about a change of its constitution. Their summons, therefore, was disregarded; those who were bidden refused to come; one would not come because he had a piece of ground, another would not come because he had five yoke of oxen, another would not come because he had got a wife (and excellent reasons in my opinion for not coming!) I will not say that on these refusals they sent out into the streets and lanes of the city, into the highways and hedges, for guests, because I know respectable guests were gotten; but this I must say, that their elections afterwards became so concise and summary, that if the sense of the nation had not been decidedly against the measure, it is impossible the house should not have been filled. Now, sir, as to the interference of the people at large on every political question, I am willing to allow it every extent consistent with our form of government. The people have a right to expect from us everything in our power to promote their real happiness; they are entitled to our love while they behave well; they are entitled to the protection of the laws whilst they obey them, and they are entitled to liberty whilst they

will share it with others. But the constitution and the laws, and the nature of things, have drawn a line, and fixed a boundary to their interference in the state; they are the object of all government, but not government itself; whenever they have been so, their dominion has been tyranny, and the public condition unhappiness. It is very true, human nature is the same in all degrees of men, but education and intercourse enlighten some minds above others, and men must be exalted on some little eminence above the level of the community to look far into remote objects; but when you observe men of low rank and condition, the obscure, the ignorant, and the desperate, desirous to step into a sphere to which they are inadequate, you may be sure the state is disordered. If the man that cleans your shoes were to aspire at that chair which you fill with so much ability, you would laugh at the absurdity, if you were not controlled in your mirth by the reflection 'that it was a symptom of public disorder.'

Flood's bill was brought in on the 12th of May, and, after a not very animated debate, was rejected by a large majority. After this failure, little business of importance was brought forward. Grattan had on one occasion said—"I think the mind of every man in this kingdom should be applied to one point, and one point only—the commercial arrangements; and that no other business should interfere with the subject of that arrangement;" and his wish seems to have been in a great measure complied with. The last debate on the subject of the commercial bill, on the 15th of August, was closed on the morning of the following day by a complaint of the veteran speaker, Mr. Pery, that he was much indisposed, and the house adjourned to the 5th of September. When it reassembled on the day last mentioned, a letter from Mr. Pery announced his determination, on account of his advanced age and the decline of his strength, to resign the speakership, and John Foster, the member for Louth, was elected in his place. Next day an address of confidence in the administration of the duke of Rutland was moved and carried by a very large majority, in spite of some opposition from Grattan, who was now joining more decidedly in the opposition to the duke of Rutland's government. On the 7th of September, the lord lieutenant prorogued the parliament to the 22nd of No-

vember, with a speech in which he made particular allusion to the question of commercial intercourse. "Although the very advanced season of the year," he said, "renders it expedient to conclude the present session of parliament, I flatter myself that the great object of adjusting a commercial intercourse with Great Britain has not in vain engaged your attention, and protracted your deliberations. You have repeatedly expressed your wishes for the attainment of an equitable settlement, and I have the satisfaction to observe that you continue to be impressed with the true sense of its necessity and importance. You will have the fullest leisure to pursue our consideration of the subject in private, with that dispassionate assiduity which it so eminently deserves." In speaking of the supplies, he said—"The necessity of preventing the accumulation of debt cannot be too strongly enforced, and it shall be my earnest and constant endeavour to render your wise exertions for this salutary purpose effectual and permanent. I feel the truest satisfaction," he said, in conclusion, "in observing the various beneficial laws which have passed during this session, and the wholesome effects of your wisdom in the returning tranquillity and industry, and in the rising prosperity of the kingdom. The conduct of parliament has had its just influence; their deliberate spirit and approved attention at all times to the public welfare, has inspired the people with full confidence in the legislature, and will teach them to consider their true interests with calmness and discretion. The noblest object to which I can direct my attention, and which will ever constitute the happiness and pride of my life, is the establishment of the prosperity of Ireland, by extending and securing her commerce, and by cementing and perpetuating her connection with Great Britain; and I trust you will continually cherish this sentiment in the national mind, that the stability and strength of the empire can alone be ultimately ensured by uniting the interests and objects of both kingdoms in a general and equitable system of reciprocal and common advantage."

When parliament rose, the popular agitation throughout the country increased, and the city of Dublin especially continued to be the scene of riot and disorder through the whole of the summer and autumn of the year 1785. The old plan of non-importation agreements was again resorted to, and

engagements of this kind became popular throughout the kingdom. They received the sanction of several grand juries, and the merchants of the trading ports found themselves compelled to subscribe to them. The mob everywhere undertook to enforce these prohibitory contracts, and they led to the commission of unjustifiable acts of violence. In Dublin it was found necessary, in order to restrain these excesses within some bounds, to post the military in such parts of the city as were most subject to tumult, and sentinels were placed to prevent or give notice of the first appearance of riot. Even these precautions were hardly sufficient to check the discontent of the multitude, and the firm conduct of the government only increased the unpopularity of the lord lieutenant, until he could hardly pass along the streets without the risk of being insulted. On one occasion, when his excellency paid a visit to the theatre, he was received on his arrival in the house by the performance of a piece of music called the *volunteers' march*. A general uproar ensued, and the entertainments of the evening were stopped. The duke of Rutland himself narrowly escaped from the mob, which proclaimed its intention of subjecting his person to the same outrages which they were in the custom of inflicting upon other objects of popular vengeance.

Most parts of the kingdom began to be invaded by this riotous spirit, which gave rise to frequent disturbances. In the north, the struggle between the defenders and the peep-of-day boys continued. In the south, and more especially in the county of Kilkenny, the whiteboys were succeeded by a set of insurgents who assumed the name of right-boys, and professed to be commanded by a leader, to whom they gave the name of captain Right. The proceedings of these men, who rose into importance towards the spring of 1786, were directed chiefly against the protestant clergy, and presented marks of organization which pointed to men above the station of the peasantry as the promoters of them. They suggested to the farmers to enter into a combination, under the sanction of an oath, not to deliver their tithes, or to assist any clergyman in drawing them. At the same time, a printed form of summons to the clergy to draw their tithe, penned with legal accuracy, was circulated in Munster, and men attended at the Romish chapels, and in market towns, to administer the right-boy oath to the lower class of the

population. They even went so far as to publish a tithing-table, fixing what they were willing to allow the clergy, which amounted to little better than depriving the clergy of their livelihood. The more respectable and intelligent portion of the Roman catholic clergy supported the government in its efforts to restore tranquillity to the country; and Dr. Troy, the Roman catholic bishop of Ossory, distinguished himself, as usual, by addressing a circular letter of instructions to his clergy, in which he said: "Notwithstanding the uniform doctrine of the catholic church concerning the invalidity of combination oaths in general, and of the late one administered by persons calling themselves right-boys in particular, has been frequently explained, I am extremely concerned to hear that some of our deluded people, who have taken the said wicked oath, think, or seem to think, themselves obliged to observe it. In order to remove this great error, equally prejudicial to the interests of society and religion, I think it necessary to require each and every one of you (as I do hereby) to declare, in the name of God and our church, from your respective altars, that the aforesaid right-boy oath is so far from being binding in conscience, that whoever obstinately adheres to the contrary opinion is unworthy of catholic communion, because he acts in direct and scandalous opposition to the express command of God, the laws of the church, and statutes of the realm. You are not, therefore, to administer any sacrament to such persons, even when dying, as have taken the said oath, unless they shall abjure it entirely, and promise to hold and regard it as null and void, and of no effect. If, after this our solemn declaration, any person calling himself a Roman catholic, who has already taken or may hereafter take the said oath, shall depart this life after refusing to make the above-mentioned abjuration and promise, he is to be deprived of all the rights and suffrages of our holy church, and to be looked upon in every respect as separated from the communion of saints. I confide much in your zealous and prudent endeavours to reclaim these misguided poor creatures; and hope our efforts to procure their happiness and promote public peace will, by the mercy of God, prove successful."

In spite of the strong opposition they had met with, ministers did not relinquish the scheme of the bill for the regulation of

commercial intercourse. Pamphlets in favour of the measure were published during the recess, especially one by Mr. Orde, in the shape of a letter addressed to his constituents. When parliament reassembled on the 19th of January, 1786, it was generally believed that the lord lieutenant had the commercial bill of the previous session in view when he expressed his opinion that their natural solicitude for the welfare of Ireland, and a just sense of her real interests, would direct all their deliberations, and point out to them the line of conduct which might be most conducive to the public advantage, and to that lasting connection between the sister kingdom so essential to the prosperity of both. He said to the house of commons—"The principle which you so wisely established, of preventing the accumulation of the national debt, will, I hope, appear already to have proved successful; and I entertain no doubt that your wisdom will persevere in measures which in their operation promise such beneficial effects." And in alluding to the disturbed state of the country, he told parliament that "A systematic improvement of the police, and a vigorous execution of the laws, were essential not only to the due collection of the public revenue, but to the security of private property, and indeed to the protection of society. The frequent outrages which have been committed in some parts of the kingdom, will particularly call your attention to this important object."

Grattan had now thrown himself entirely into the ranks of the opposition, which was further strengthened by the desertion of Mr. Conolly and others, who had hitherto supported the measures of government. Thus enforced, the popular party became unusually active, and the debate on the address was carried on with some heat. It turned chiefly upon the commercial bill, against which many public meetings during the recess had declared their sentiments, and its opponents in the house now held for the popular opinion as one of their chief arguments against it. The ministerial party retorted by describing the partial manner in which these demonstrations had been got up, and the efforts which had been made to prejudice the populace. "I have heard it said," lord Luttrell observed, "that the people are unwilling to receive the system that was offered. I know the arts that are used to make the people unwilling; but the

people do not always remain in the same opinion. Sometimes they change their opinion in a year, sometimes in a month, sometimes in a week, nay, sometimes even in a day, and if the present session should continue as long as the last, I am persuaded it will outlive the present opinion of the people." "As to the bill which was introduced last session," said the attorney-general, "I have read, I believe, all the resolutions that have been entered into against it, and I find the proceedings at the different meetings upon the bill have been thus:—sometimes they have read it, sometimes they have not; then they have stated something that was not in the bill, and this something they have condemned. Nay, they have condemned every part of the negotiation as injurious to their constitution, and an alienation of their unalienable rights. They say a covenant on the part of Great Britain to secure to them for ever a decided preference to their linens, is injurious to their constitution, and an alienation of their unalienable rights. A covenant never to tax coals, bark, and sundry materials necessary to manufacture, is an infringement on their constitution, and an alienation of their unalienable rights; so that, while the people of this country remain in their present humour, I never will advise that any commercial system be undertaken, because it is impossible to give them satisfaction, until time and cool reflection shall show them that to accept the many and great advantages offered by England, would neither be a dereliction of their constitution, nor an alienation of their unalienable rights."

The opposition followed up the advantage they seemed to have gained, by repeating during the session several of their old popular motions. Of these, the one most likely at the moment to add to the unpopularity of the government, was that of the pension list, and on the 6th of March, Mr. Forbes, who represented Drogheda, brought the subject before the house of commons in the form of a motion, "That the present application and amount of pensions on the civil establishment, are a grievance to the nation and demand redress." He was seconded by Mr. Brownlow, and warmly opposed by the chancellor of the exchequer, and by sir Hercules Langrishe and others. It was on this occasion that Grattan, in some heat, uttered the offensive expression, in giving his vote

in favour of the motion, "Should I affirm the pension list is not a grievance, I should affirm, in the face of my country, an impudent, insolent, and a public lie." The motion was negatived by a hundred and twenty-eight to seventy; yet, on the 13th of March the same gentleman returned to the attack by bringing a bill into parliament to limit the amount of pensions. The debate on this occasion was much longer, and not less warm. The bill was opposed on the old plea, that it was an encroachment on the prerogative; it was represented that the grievance was one created long ago, that the additions to the pension list of late years were not unreasonable, and were founded on merit, and that there was no reason to suppose that the power of granting pensions would in future be abused. The chief speakers against the bill were, sir Hercules Langrishe, sir Boyle Roche, and the attorney-general. It was supported by Curran, who assailed the pension list with wit as well as eloquence. "I am surprised," he said, banteringly, "that gentlemen have taken up such a foolish opinion, as that our constitution is maintained by its different component parts, mutually checking and controlling each other. They seem to think with Hobbes, that a state of nature is a state of warfare, and that like Mahomet's coffin, the constitution is suspended between the attraction of different powers. My friends seem to think that the crown should be restrained from doing wrong by a physical necessity, forgetting, that if you take away from a man all power to do wrong, you at the same time take away from him all merit of doing right, and making it impossible for men to run into slavery, you enslave them most effectually. But if instead of the three different parts of our constitution drawing forcibly in right lines, at opposite directions, they were to unite their power, and draw all one way, in one right line, how great would be the effect of their force, how happy the direction of this union! The present system is not only contrary to mathematical rectitude, but to public harmony; but if instead of privilege setting up his back to oppose prerogative, he was to saddle his back and invite prerogative to ride, how comfortably might they both jog along; and therefore it delights me to hear the advocates for the royal bounty flowing freely, and spontaneously, and abundantly, as Holywell in

Wales. If the crown grants double the amount of the revenue in pensions, they approve of their royal master, for he is breath of their nostrils. But we will find that this complaisance, this gentleness between the crown and its true servants, is not confined at home, it extends its influence to foreign powers. Our merchants have been insulted in Portugal, our commerce interdicted; what did the British lion do? Did he whet his tusks? Did he bristle up and shake his mane? Did he roar? No; no such thing—the gentle creature wagged his tail for six years at the court of Lisbon, and now we hear from the Delphic oracle on the treasury bench, that he is wagging his tail in London to chevalier Pinto, who he hopes soon to be able to tell us will allow his lady to entertain him as a lapdog; and when she does, no doubt the British factory will furnish some of their softest woollens to make a cushion for him to lie upon. But though the gentle beast has continued so long fawning and couching, I believe his vengeance will be great as it is slow, and that posterity, whose ancestors are yet unborn, will be surprised at the vengeance he will take. This polyglot of wealth, this museum of curiosities, the pension list, embraces every link in the human chain; every description of men, women and children, from the exalted excellence of a Hawke or a Rodney to the debased situation of the lady who humbleth herself that she may be exalted. But the lessons it inculcates form its greatest perfection; it teacheth, that sloth and vice may eat that bread which virtue and honesty may starve for after they had earned it. It teaches the idle and dissolute to look up for that support which they are too proud to stoop and earn. It directs the mind of men to an entire reliance on the ruling power of the state, who feeds the ravens of the royal aviary, that cry continually for food. It teaches them to imitate those saints on the pension list that are like the lilies of the field—they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet are arrayed like Solomon in his glory. In fine, it teaches a lesson which indeed they might have learned from Epictetus—that it is sometimes good not to be over virtuous, it shews that in proportion as our distresses increase, the munificence of the crown increases also—in proportion as our clothes are rent, the royal mantle is extended over us. But notwithstanding the pension list like charity,

covers a multitude of sins, give me leave to consider it as coming home to the members of this house—give me leave to say that the crown in extending its charity, its liberality, its profusion, is laying a foundation for the independence of parliament; for hereafter instead of orators or patriots accounting for their conduct to such mean and unworthy persons as freeholders, they will learn to despise them, and look for the first man in the state, and they will by so doing have this security for their independence, that while any man in the kingdom has a shilling they will not want one. Suppose at any future period of time the boroughs of Ireland should decline from their present flourishing and prosperous state—suppose they should fall into the hands of men who would wish to drive a profitable commerce, by having members of parliament to hire or let; in such a case a secretary would find great difficulty if the proprietors of members should enter into a combination to form a monopoly; to prevent which in time, the wisest way is to purchase up the raw material, young members of parliament, just rough from the grass, and when they are a little bitted, and he has got a pretty stud, perhaps of seventy, he may laugh at the slave-merchant; some of them he may teach to sound through the nose, like a barrel-organ; some, in the course of a few months, might be taught to cry hear! hear! some chair! chair! upon occasion, though, those latter might create a little confusion, if they were to forget whether they were calling inside or outside of those doors. Again, he might have some so trained that he need only pull a string, and up gets a repeating member; and if they were so dull that they could neither speak nor make orations, (for they are different things), he might have them taught to dance *pedibus ire in sententia*. This improvement might be extended; he might have them dressed in coats and shirts all of one colour, and of a Sunday he might march them to church two and two, to the great edification of the people, and the honour of the christian religion: afterwards, like the ancient Spartans, or the fraternity at Kilmainham, they might dine all together in a large hall. Good heaven! what a sight to see them feeding in public upon public viands, and talking of public subjects for the benefit of the public. It is a pity they are not immortal; but I hope they will flourish as a corporation, and that

pensioners will beget pensioners to the end of the chapter."

In spite of the eloquent support of Grattan and others, this bill was likewise rejected by a large majority, the numbers being seventy-eight in its favour, and a hundred and thirty-four against it.

The attention of parliament was first called to the disturbed state of the country, by a rather serious insurrection in Connaught. The turbulent spirit of the people had encouraged a man named O'Connor, who claimed descent from the ancient kings of that province, to gather together and arm the disaffected in that part of the country, in order to support his pretended rights. He established his residence in a place surrounded by bogs and fastnesses, where he had a cannon placed at his door, by the firing of which he assembled the mob of the country for several miles round. They proceeded to dispossess people of their lands by force, under pretence that these lands, having once belonged to the kings of Connaught, were now by right the property of their descendant; and in the month of January they went to the lands of a Mr. Bourke of Ballydogan, and, having made a formal entry, they told the hind who had the care of the cattle, that if his master did not, before the 16th of February, send O'Connor a certain sum of money, they would carry his cattle away where they should never be found.

The subject was brought before the house of commons on the 6th of February, by Mr. Ogle; and several members, who possessed estates in the disturbed district, expressed their apprehensions, and their wish to be efficiently protected. Mr. Ogle alluded to riotous practices in other parts of the country, and declared his opinion that the protestant ascendancy was in danger. "It was not my intention," he said, "to upbraid government, but to warn them, and support them in maintaining the protestant ascendancy. I own my mind was disturbed when I saw the utter ruin of that ascendancy, not only in the affair of Mr. O'Connor, but in ten thousand other instances. What portends the resistance that is made to the collection of tithes? Does it not go to the utter overturning of the protestant establishment in church, and consequently in state? What shall we say to the daily practice of carrying away women? An honest, industrious farmer, by great care and labour, lays by four or five hun-

dred pounds for his daughter. No sooner is this known, than some ruffian in the neighbourhood assembles a gang of two or three hundred banditti, forces the farmer's house, drags the girl out, throws her across a horse, and so carries her off to the next priest, where she is compelled to marry him, or suffer worse. Our gazette is full of such offences; and do you think that any man of common sense will trust his money in a country where they are practised?"

The depredations of O'Connor's band were, it appears, soon repressed, by sending the military into the disturbed district; but the outrages of the right-boys in the south increased during the sitting of parliament, and reached such a height that it became necessary to devise some new measures of severity against them. These outrages were, as I have before stated, directed principally against the protestant clergy. Some notion may be given of the melancholy state of the country over which this insurrection extended, by a few extracts from the newspapers of the time. At the beginning of December, a numerous band, completely armed, appeared in the neighbourhood of Birr, a considerable town of King's County on the borders of Tipperary. Nine of them one night attacked the house of a farmer named Flattery on lord Gundore's estates, plundered the house of everything of value, and threatened him and his whole family, whom they had tied together, to broil them on a hot "griddle," which they had put on a large fire for that purpose, unless they confessed where they had concealed their money. By the activity of the magistrates three or four of the offenders were secured. A short time before, upwards of twenty right-boys, covered with white shirts, and armed with guns, pitchforks, and other weapons, broke into the house of the rev. William Ryan of Mullanouly, near Mullinahone in Tipperary, and after robbing the house of firearms, and other things, dragged Mr. Ryan out of the house in his shirt, and beat and cut him in a cruel manner to force him to take their oath, besides committing various outrages on his family. At twelve o'clock at night a party attacked the house of a gentleman at Ballyshoneen, near Cork, where they had received information that the clergyman of the parish was sleeping, whom they had warned on pain of death not to take his usual fees at marriages and christenings. Another party,

the same night, entered six different houses near Kilmurry, in Tipperary, and forced the owners to contribute each two pounds of gunpowder, which they deposited next day at a certain house in the neighbourhood; and in the parish of Magourney, in Cork, the right-boys shewed their hostility to the clergyman by cutting and tearing off the tails of three fat cows belonging to him in such a brutal manner that it was necessary to kill the cows immediately; the tails were found next morning nailed to the chapel-door of the parish. The next day (the 12th of December), as John Ryan, a farmer of Grange Paddel, in Tipperary, was riding home on horseback with a child about three months old before him, he was attacked by a number of right-boys or white-boys, who demanded his horse, and on being refused beat him severely and killed the child with a stroke of the butt-end of a gun. That night, a party of sixteen, under a leader who gave his name as captain Right, all well armed, came to the house of Dennis McCarthy at Dromenah, near Kanturk, in the county of Kerry, and demanded contribution money, which being refused, and more resistance offered than was expected, they went into one of his fields, where they killed a cow and maimed two others. In Cork, about the same time, they proceeded to the house of a farmer in the neighbourhood of Tralee, and threw all his hay into a neighbouring river which was flooded; they took a valuable mare belonging to another farmer in the said neighbourhood, and rode it almost to death; and on the night of the 14th of December, they went to the house of a tithe-farmer of Beall, near Tralee, and destroyed his hay and corn. In Tipperary, Cork, and Kerry, these outrages now became so frequent, that no man's person or property was safe. They assembled regularly on Tuesday and Friday nights, being gathered together by the sounding of a horn on one of the hills, and seldom mustered less than eighty, all in arms. The farmers were in such dread that they dared not shut up their horses, which these

depredators took for their excursions, and returned them before morning. On the 15th of December, they posted notices on the church-doors in the neighbourhood of Castle-Island, announcing that no tithes were to be paid in future. It is stated that a person styling himself their captain, "well dressed, with a gold-laced hat, a silver-mounted sword, a case of pistols in his hand, and appearing in every particular like a gentleman," entered the house of a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Castle-Island, and asked if any one there knew him; he remained in the house some time, but none of the family recognised him.

While the country was in a state like this, it is not to be wondered at if the public mind was continually disturbed with false intelligence of rebellions and insurrections of a still more formidable character.* During the earlier months of the year 1786, the spirit of turbulence spread more widely, and became more alarming. In March the evil had reached such a height, that it became necessary for parliament to consider of a remedy; and accordingly, on the 29th of that month, the secretary of state moved, in the house of commons, for leave to bring in a bill "to protect the persons, houses, and properties of rectors, vicars, and curates, actually resident within their parishes." He stated that, although these outrages were not restricted to the clergy, yet they were the persons more especially persecuted, and who stood more in need of protection. "They are," said he "generally sent strangers into the country, unsupported by family, by connections, by tenants, where, through an unhappy combination of circumstances, almost every landholder is interested against them, and nothing but the authority of the laws can protect them. Of late the most barbarous outrages have been committed against the protestant clergy. Men of the purest morals, and most inoffensive manners, have had their houses broken open in the dead time of night—their wives and children driven naked into the open air—their selves

* Some of the notices in the newspapers of this time are amusing. The following may be given as an example, while it helps to complete our picture of the state of the country:—

"*Mullingar, March 11.*—On Sunday, two companies of the 62nd regiment arrived at Castlereagh from Galway, a troop of horse from Athlone, one company of the 48th from Mullingar, and another from Granard. Nothing but the false and malicious report of a pretended rebellion in that neighbour-

hood, could equal the surprise of both officers and privates, on seeing the walls of the old castle of Ballintubber, instead of finding it another Gibraltar, surrounded by morasses, with heavy cannon, and several thousand troops to defend it, the garrison only of an owl (old as Nestor), two ravens, some jackdaws, and pigeons, who surrendered at discretion, though they were in the quiet and peaceable possession of that decayed and solitary habitation many years."

have been carried and thrown on dunghills, and hardly suffered to escape with life. This as to the persons of clergymen. Then, as to the protestant religion itself, I know many instances in which affronts of the most atrocious kind have been offered to it. Let me mention one. A clergyman of excellent character, being, for the safety of his person, obliged to fly from his parish, prevailed upon another, who was thought less obnoxious to the insurgents, to officiate in his stead. What did they do? In the middle of divine service, a number of ruffians, armed with bludgeons, rushed into the church, where they continued to march about in a most riotous manner, until they had thrown the minister and congregation into the greatest terror; and while the most solemn rite of our religion, the sacrament of the lord's supper, was administering, a number of wicked people climbed up the church window, and in the grossest manner insulted the persons engaged in the performance of such a serious duty."

The government bill met with some opposition, which was based on different pleas. It was alleged that the tithe system in the south was very oppressive; that articles of general consumption, such as potatoes, which paid tithes in no other part of the kingdom, were tithed there; and that the extortions of the clergy themselves had provoked the outrages of the right-boys. Others urged that the clergy, like all other classes of the community, might have relief, when injured, without the necessity of a new law; and the strongest ground of opposition was, that ministers were taking advantage of the misguided violence of a few people to arm themselves with extraordinary powers, which they might use against the liberties of the people. These represented that the spread of the right-boy insurrection was owing entirely to the remissness of the magistrates; and they endeavoured to conceal the extent of the outrages, for the purpose of shewing that a new law was not wanting. The particular object of the bill was to throw the responsibility of these disorders on the whole body of the parishioners of the place where they occurred, or, as the mover expressed it, "to make the parishioners the guardians of the public peace, from one end of the kingdom to the other." The chief debate on this bill took place when it was in committee, on the 3rd of April; and the third reading was fixed for the 5th. In the

mean time the outrages which it was intended to prevent had decreased so much, that people began to think the insurrection would be quelled without the necessity of any extraordinary means, and the bill was supported with less warmth than would otherwise have been the case. It was opposed by the attorney-general, who seems to have viewed the question in a light totally different from that adopted by his colleagues. He stated it as his opinion that the bill would fail in answering the intentions for which it was brought in, and rather operate against them, as no regulation respecting the abuses and oppressions committed in collecting the tithes was a part of it; for this evil was arrived at such a height, that he had known at one time in Limerick, one hundred and twenty processes against poor people for tithes in the civil bill court. He wished, he said, that as a more equitable provision for the clergy, the tithes should be levied on the lands. The result was that the secretary of state agreed to postpone his bill, which was virtually a withdrawal of it for the present session.

There was a much greater struggle between ministers and their opponents on the bill for regulating the police of the city of Dublin, which was represented as having for its only object to strengthen the government interest in the capital. The opposition declared that it was a despotic measure which government attempted injudiciously to introduce in Dublin, that it might eventually be applied to the whole kingdom; and they said that O'Connor's, and other insurrections were mere inventions to conceal their designs. "I have spoken of Mr. O'Connor in a former debate," said sir Edward Crofton, "and I am firmly persuaded that, as to that gentleman, matters have been extremely exaggerated and misrepresented. I know it has been mentioned as an affair that required the interference of government; and that camps, cannon, and fortifications were erected. It was also rumoured, that the Roman catholics were in open rebellion; this was an insidious, infamous, and false report, calculated to cast an undeserved reflection on a body of men remarkable for their loyalty to their sovereign, and their known attachment to the constitution; it was an illiberal and an infamous attack on a people distinguished for their peaceable demeanour, and was intended but to serve the purposes of this still more infamous bill. However great my knowledge

may have been of the loyalty of the Roman catholics of this country, yet I must confess, on this occasion, I was made a dupe to report; for, from the gentleman who had declared the county of Roscommon to be in a state of rebellion, I could scarcely believe but government had authority for saying so; I confess, therefore, I felt for my property, and it was natural I should make every possible inquiry; I did so, and found there was no rebellion in the country; and also found the trifling disturbances, which had been so exaggerated, were only the effects of some whiskey to which the country people had been treated, and which every gentleman knows operates on the lower order of people as oil of rodim does on rats; and what was very extraordinary, there was not a broken head on the occasion. I wrote to a gentleman of veracity, and a magistrate (a Mr. Caulfield), who assured me, the peace of the country was not for a moment disturbed; I offered to reinstate those gentlemen who were said to be dispossessed of their lands, with the assistance of a troop of dragoons; the power was denied me; I therefore was well-founded in an opinion that, when this bill was mentioned, the affair of Roscommon would be made a handle of, and that it would be said, the rebellion, as it was ludicrously termed, of O'Connor, made it absolutely necessary. I am also convinced, that the affairs in the south are likewise exaggerated, and by no means fairly stated, so as to give rise to this measure."

The supporters of the bill urged the unchecked turbulence of the Dublin mob, and the numerous outrages which they had perpetrated. When a petition against the bill was presented from that rather turbulent portion of the city population which had assumed the title of "the aggregate body," the attorney-general observed indignantly: "If any argument was wanting to prove the necessity of the bill, it is the frequency of these tumultuous meetings called aggregate meetings, assembled at the instigations of persons who, no doubt, are very inimical to the bill, as it goes to restrain

licentiousness, and to teach those worthy constitutional citizens a due deference to the laws of their country. They behold with the deepest concern a police bill introduced—I doubt it not. If passed into a law, it will give great additional influence to the crown. I doubt not they think it will prevent an opposition to the laws; that it will preserve the public peace, and that there will be an end of that branch of the police, the tarring and feathering committee. There will be an end to the worshipful company of glass-blowers, a set of ruffians hired and paid by those worthy constitutional gentlemen, to drag from his habitation any citizen that refuses to take such illegal oaths as they were pleased to administer, or who is suspected of a due regard to the laws and government of the country—to drag free citizens to the Tenter-fields, and there to torment them with whipping and other marks of ignominy; and therefore I doubt not that a plan for a regular police has greatly alarmed the worthy gentlemen who in general promote the calling of aggregate meetings, as it will put an end to that kind of opposition to the laws which they are always ready to give." The petition was rejected as disrespectful and indecent; and, after several very warm debates, and a violent opposition from Grattan, Conolly, and their friends, the police-bill passed the house, and became law.

This was the most important bill of the session, which was not distinguished by any other measures worthy of remark. On the eighth of May the lord lieutenant closed the session, with a speech, in which he expressed his satisfaction at the constant attention and uncommon dispatch with which they had gone through the public business, and told them that "the determined spirit with which they had marked their abhorrence of all lawless disorder and tumult, had, he doubted not, already made a useful impression; and the salutary laws enacted in this session, and particularly the introduction of a system of police, were honourable proofs of their wisdom, their moderation, and their prudence."

CHAPTER XIV.

INCREASED SPIRIT OF INSURRECTION; PARLIAMENTARY SESSION OF 1787.



THE turbulent spirit of the peasantry of the south seemed so much appeased towards the spring of the year 1786, that there appeared to be ground for hope that the right-boy insurrection was at an end; yet no sooner was the session of parliament brought to a close than it broke out with greater force than ever, and soon spread over most of the counties of Munster. Where the insurgents had formerly assembled in hundreds, they now came together in thousands, and their proceedings were more deliberate and formidable. During the summer the papers were filled with accounts of their illegal proceedings, and of encounters between them and the soldiery, who were now employed in repressing them. The force of the insurrection appears to have lain in Limerick and Cork. They now made their excursions by daylight; and on the 11th of July, a body of about two hundred and fifty assembled at Galbally in the former county, from whence they proceeded to Murrogh, where they were attacked by a strong body of volunteers, who pursued them and took a number of prisoners. A few days afterwards, the inhabitants of Fedamore in the same county having entered into resolutions approving of the conduct of their clergymen, and condemning the proceedings of the right-boys, a body of these misguided people, to the number of more than two thousand, armed with guns, spades, shovels, and other weapons, invaded that parish, and threatened the people who had agreed to the resolutions with destruction; and when a party of dragoons came to disperse them, they offered resistance, and shots were fired.

In Tipperary the spirit of the peasantry was equally tumultuous. At the end of June a party of about two thousand right-boys marched into the town of Caher at eight o'clock in the morning, and remained in possession till noon, administering oaths to the inhabitants, chiefly binding them as to what fees they should pay to the clergy. About the same time a body of four or five

hundred of these insurgents assembled at Newport in the county of Cork, and forced every body they met to take their oath. The clergyman of the parish, who was in the chapel, attempted to make his escape through the window, but they pursued and took him, and, having dragged him into the street in his vestments, they compelled him to promise that he would take only five shillings for a marriage, and eighteenpence for a christening. In this county the volunteers of the Dumanway union distinguished themselves by their zeal against the right-boys. A party of them, in conjunction with some regulars, attacked a large body of the insurgents on the night of the twenty-second of June, of whom they wounded three, and took thirteen prisoners and nine horses. Among the prisoners was one of their captains who pretended to act under the title of captain Right. The same volunteers and regulars came up with a body of about fifteen hundred right-boys near Macroom, on the 29th of June, and after a short engagement, in which three of them were killed and several wounded, put them to flight, taking some prisoners and a considerable quantity of arms.

These rencontres and skirmishes between the insurgents and the military were now frequent. On the ninth of July a body of two thousand right-boys were attacked in the road from Rathkeal to Ardagh in the county of Limerick by a party of dragoons and foot, and a skirmish ensued, in which six of the insurgents were killed, about forty wounded, and a few prisoners taken. At the beginning of August several hundred right-boys came to the chapel of Ouring, near Carrick, on a Sunday, to swear the congregation, but they were surprised by a party of the 14th Dragoons, and two of their ringleaders were captured. On the sixth of the same month about five hundred of them attacked the house of the clergyman of Ballymartle in Cork, but some of the parishioners having joined in the defence of the house, and being well furnished with fire-arms, the insurgents were driven away with some loss.

They had now become so powerful, that

they no longer restricted their hostilities to the protestant clergy, but made war indiscriminately upon protestants and papists, and put forth a regular scale of fees, to which each was to be restricted.* The accounts of their proceedings became so alarming, that government thought it necessary to send a considerable portion of the army to the south under the command of lord Luttrell, but even the presence of the troops only procured temporary peace, as they had no sooner quitted any place than the insurgents reappeared. They received a more effectual check from the assizes in September, when many of them were sentenced to imprisonment and public flogging, and some of their leaders were hanged. The turbulence of the south drew attention to many grievances under which the population of that part of the kingdom suffered, especially with regard to tithes, and several county meetings were held, at which resolutions were passed to apply to parliament for their redress. The catholic inhabitants of Roscrea presented an address to lord Luttrell, in which they declared their loyalty, and at the same time expressed their sense of the grievances. "We are sensible," they said, "that the unwarrantable proceedings of the misguided people of the south is by no means the way to induce the legislature to examine into and redress the grievances which we believe some part of our fellow-subjects do experience from tithe-farmers, proctors, and priests. As to ourselves, we are free to declare that we have no great cause to complain of oppression or exaction from either church; but unless the legislature should in its wisdom regulate the claims of the clergy, we do not know how soon we may be oppressed in the like man-

* The terms now regulated by the right-boys were as follows:—

"To be paid to the Romish clergyman from each married couple, sixpence at Christmas and sixpence at Easter.

For every mass for the dead One shilling.

For a certificate One shilling.

For anointing the sick . . . One shilling.

For christening the child

and churching the woman One shilling and sixpence.

For marriage by banns . . A crown.

If by licence, 2s. 6d. to the bishop for the same.

Plate money to be abolished.

"Tithes to be paid to the established clergyman.

s. d.

For potatoe ground . . . 4 0 an acre.

Wheat and barley . . . 1 6 an acre.

Oats 1 0 an acre.

Flax, if grown to perfection 1 6 an acre.

"All plantation measure."

ner as some of our fellow-subjects certainly are. If any other person should succeed to the present worthy rector or priest, we should be in their power, and we therefore feel ourselves interested in the cause of others; but we do beseech your lordship to be a mediator for us, and to represent to his grace the lord lieutenant, whom we revere, and to whose administration we do not intend any disturbance, that we are determined to observe due obedience to the laws; and that no oaths hastily taken or forced upon us, oaths which want every essential to constitute their validity, free-will, truth, justice, or judgment, shall or ought to have any influence on our future conduct."

When the Irish parliament reassembled on the 18th of January, 1787, the speech of the lord lieutenant called especial attention to the turbulent condition of the southern province. "I had hoped," he said, "that upon the present occasion of meeting you again in parliament it would have been in my power to have announced to you the entire suppression of those commotions which, in some parts of the kingdom, have disturbed the general tranquillity. Under the present circumstances I am persuaded, by my confidence in the accustomed proofs of your wisdom and zeal, that I shall receive from you whatever assistance may be necessary for the more effectual vindication of the laws and the protection of society. Your uniform regard for the rights of your fellow-subjects, and your zealous attachment to the religious and civil constitutions of your country, will stimulate your attention to their inseparable interests, and will insure your especial support of the established church, and the respectable situation of its ministers."

A vigorous opposition was made to the usual vote of thanks to the lord lieutenant, and the paragraph of the speech alluding to the disturbances in Munster became a subject of warm debate. Some of the opposition, admitting the gravity of the outrages, accused government of being wanting in the energetic measures of repression which they called for. "The legislature," said Mr. Browne, one of the members for the university of Dublin, "sitting there, with a vain image of authority, thought they governed the country; but a new power had risen in the land, who laughed at their edicts—a visionary monarch, a captain Right, who seemed to have more real strength than the legislature ever had. This royal will-o'-th'-wisp, whom no man could catch, made laws in-

finitely more effectual, or better enforced, than those of parliament." He accused government of not putting in force the laws to disarm papists. In consequence of the general enforcement of the right-boy oath, he said, "that possibly all the peasantry of Munster might at that instant be sworn to overturn the constitution, and lift the horrid hand of treason against the throne. The acts of outrage that followed were numberless and beyond measure extravagant—attacking private houses, burning corn, burying men up to their necks, and threatening those who should release them till mid-day, while the timidity or disaffection of magistrates suffered these orders to be obeyed;* firing on the king's troops, threatening large towns, such as Cork and Limerick, with famine and blockading, unless prisoners were released. The whole wore rather the appearance of a foreign invasion, than intestine commotion, and had nothing in it to resemble civil tumult but its cruelty. One whole class of men, at least as meritorious as any other in the community, had been outlawed and proscribed; their properties confiscated to the rapine of the mob; their persons endangered; their characters vilified and aspersed; he might safely say, that domestic comfort had fled the roof of every clergyman in Munster, during the past year; most of them, harassed with perpetual alarms, and tired with a constant state of war, had fled to towns for protection. The towns of Munster wore the appearance of cities besieged, filled with refugees from the open country. Those clergymen who continued in their habitations, lived under military protection. So universal and undistinguishing a proscription had not been heard of in modern times."

Others of the opposition declared that

* The opposition urged constantly that the laws in existence were sufficient to put down these insurrections, if enforced by the magistrates; but the following example will show how difficult it was to find any who dared to support the law, even by giving evidence. It is given in January, 1787, in the papers, as intelligence from Clonmel:—

"We lay before the public the following circumstances relative to the murder of John Dunn. Dunn was an industrious farmer, and lived on the lands of Fennor, contiguous to the road leading from Longford Pass to Urlingford; about the middle of January last his horses were taken away and abused by the white-boys, several of whom being known to him, he threatened to lodge informations against them, if his horses were again taken. On account of this declaration, the white-boys went to Dunn's house the 31st of the same month, took him naked in triumph to Beggar's Inn, in the county of

there had been no disturbances, or that they had been greatly exaggerated; they even accused government of having fomented them, in order to have an excuse for new measures against popular liberty. Mr. Longfield, the representative of Baltimore, in the county of Cork, declared that he had been there during the summer, and had heard of no disturbances except some petty riots in which none but the most miserable and oppressed were concerned. Curran took this view of the question, and made it the ground of a general attack on the conduct of government. He accused them of neglecting the interests of the people, and taking no steps for securing their happiness, and he went over most of the alleged grievances of the nation, such as absenteeism, parliamentary reform, and the pension list. "Will any man," he said, "dare to say that there is a single man of property, a single man of consequence connected with the insurgents? or that any such men afford them support? No; and with what justice then can the paragraph stand in the address? When a body of men stood forward, in the moment of general consternation and dismay—in that perilous moment, when it was a question whether you should longer sit as a house of commons, government was unable to defend you—they, the volunteers, defended you; and to be sure you held out a good encouragement to loyalty! What did you do? You thanked them first, and dismissed them afterwards. This was attended with the blessed effects we are now witnesses of. Fired with honest indignation, they withdrew themselves from the service of their country, and left it exposed to all the consequences of intestine commotion; it is true, you talked of substituting a militia-bill, but, sir, this was a mere farce, to amuse

Kilkenny, a distance of about five miles, where a grave was prepared in the centre of three roads, in which they buried him up to the neck; but not content therewith, they most inhumanly cut off both his ears, which they nailed to a public pump in the said town, where they remained for some days. In consequence of this outrage he lodged an information, and three of the offenders being taken, he attended at the last assizes of Clonmel to prosecute, but the prisoners found means to have the trial put off, and the white-boys, in order to defeat the operation of the laws, and put an effectual stop to the prosecution, went armed with guns on Sunday night, the 17th instant, about the hour of nine o'clock, to Dunn's house, broke open the door, took him out of bed, and with a hatchet clove his head, laying it open from the crown to the joining of the neck, and then severed the mangled head from the body."

for the present moment; and you should not have deprived the country of one support, until you had actually supplied her with another. You were called on, sir, solemnly called on for a proper reformation in the representation of the people; did you grant it? No; and how does it at present stand? Why, sir, seats in this house are bought and sold; they are set up to public sale; they are become an absolute article of commerce, a traffic of the constitution. And, sir, I have a doubt whether, if a member of this house should become a bankrupt, that his seat in this assembly would not be claimed by his assignees, as a part of his property, and whether they might not put it up to public auction. Sir, the legal and constitutional idea is, that a member should represent his constituents by virtue of the property he has. Now members for these saleable rotten boroughs represent their constituents, or the people, by virtue of the property which they have not, for they represent them in virtue of the two thousand pounds which they give the proprietor for his seat. Nothing then can be more clear than that they do not represent the people in virtue of the property they have; and certainly as they have bought the people for a sum of money, it is natural they should sell them, and so they do, and make the most they can of the bargain. The mandate of a boroughmonger can return any man, however contemptible, however obnoxious, into this house, and I ask any man should this be tolerated? But, sir, there is a race in this country between public prodigality and connivance. Prodigality is everywhere to be seen, and connivance affords it the means of existence, and hence the race between public prodigality and public connivance, and the fact of their both keeping pace together. I do not blame a certain right honourable gentleman (Mr. Orde), I see him look grave at what I say, I am sure he feels it with regret. Sir, that right honourable gentleman knows, that the people have no power of control over their representatives; and what is the consequence? Why, it is in the power of a few boroughmongers to impede the necessary motions of government—to obstruct the necessary business of the nation! And hence, sir, expectants and demandants must be gratified with places and pensions, or we should have in fact no government; and hence are the people victims! I know what I say may be offensive to many gentlemen; individually and personally, I have as much

respect for them perhaps as any man can have, but private respect must give way to public necessity. But unless something is done, what will be the end of all this? Why government will be necessitated, at length, to imitate the policy of Henry the Seventh, who broke the neck of an abominable aristocracy, and caused the property they had accumulated to circulate amongst the people. But in this case it would only be restoring to the people their own property, the right of election. Nor are the evils I speak of seen in theory only, but in practice; you have now, sir, near one hundred thousand pounds on your pension list, and this should surprise and alarm every man who is not dead to the real subjects of surprise and alarm. The peasantry had formed hopes of relief, and will you, sir, dash the cup of comfort, or snatch the bread of hope from the mouth of affliction? People when oppressed, though oppressed by law, will make reprisal, and these, sir, are the real causes of disturbance. I, sir, have been a resident of this county, spoken of as in open insurrection, and since gentlemen are in the habit of speaking of themselves, I shall do myself the same honour. Sir, I could not perceive any of the outrages spoken of, and I am certain that they were nothing more than the offspring of the most abject misery. They were all forlorn wretches, who, were they inclined to become dangles, and to pin themselves to the petticoat of administration, so poor, so naked are they, that administration would not find on them a rag whereby to pin them to their petticoat."

The outrages in the south were, however, too notorious to be overlooked by any one, and too alarming not to be brought forward before the house of commons on every occasion which offered itself. On the 23rd of January, Curran again raised his powerful voice, and joined in the cry against the misconduct of magistrates. "I will relate to you," said he, "a circumstance that will give you an idea of the vigilance of magistrates in that quarter (Kerry). One Seely, a notorious offender, for whom a reward had been offered by government, appeared openly in the county. A poor cottager was met by a person one morning in going to pay his rent. The person asked him, was he not distressed to make up the money? the poor cottager innocently replied, why should I want money, when I can at any time get fifty pounds for informing against Seely. For having dropped this expression,

the wretch's cabin was that night broken open by six armed men, and as himself, his wife and children, sat round a little table at their tasteless and scanty meal of dry potatoes, a blunderbuss was discharged on them. Scarcely one of the children escaped being wounded, the father died on the spot. In Tralee, another fellow broke gaol; and they are both walking about the country, not skulking or hiding, but in the face of day. To my knowledge informations were laid before a magistrate, a very respectable person, but no step has been taken to apprehend them, and the murderer and the outlaw stalk about the land, laughing at the sleeping laws."

The more this subject was debated in parliament, the more the alarming character of the outrages became evident, and no less so the miserable condition of the peasantry of the south. On the 31st of January, the attorney-general moved, in a committee of the whole house, "That it is the opinion of this committee, that some further provisions by statute are indispensably necessary to prevent tumultuous risings and assemblies, and for the more adequate and effectual punishment of persons guilty of outrage, riot, and illegal combination, and of administering and taking unlawful oaths." He attributed the spread of these commotions, in the first place, to the circumstance that under the existing law the kind of combination which pervaded the province of Munster was deemed only a misdemeanour, and was a bailable offence; and, in the second place, to the insufficiency and criminal neglect of the magistrates. The attorney-general laid before the house an abstract of the information which government had been able to collect relating to the origin of the insurrection. "Their commencement," he said, "was in one or two parishes in the county of Kerry, and they proceeded thus—the people assembled in a mass-house, and there took an oath to obey the laws of captain Right, and to starve the clergy. They then proceeded to the next parishes on the following Sunday, and there swore the people in the same manner, with this addition, that they (the people last sworn) should, on the ensuing Sunday, proceed to the chapels of their next neighbouring parishes, and swear the inhabitants of those parishes in like manner. Proceeding in this manner, they very soon went through the province of Munster. The first object of their reformation was tithes: they swore not to give

more than a certain price per acre; not to take from the minister at a great price; not to assist or allow him to be assisted in drawing the tithe, and to permit no proctor. They next took upon them to prevent the collection of parish cesses; then to nominate parish clerks, and in some cases curates; to say what church should or should not be repaired; and in one case to threaten that they would burn a new church, if the old one was not given for a mass-house. At last they proceeded to regulate the price of lands, to raise the price of labour, and to oppose the collection of the hearth-money and other taxes. In all their proceedings they have shown the greatest address, with a degree of caution and circumspection which is the more alarming as it demonstrates system and design. Bodies of five thousand of them have been seen to march through the country unarmed, and if met by any magistrate who had spirit to question them, they have not offered the smallest rudeness or offence; on the contrary, they have allowed persons charged with crimes to be taken from amongst them by the magistrates alone, unaided with any force. Wherever they went, they found the people as ready to take an oath to cheat the clergy as they were to propose it; but if any one did resist, the torments which he was doomed to undergo were too horrible even for savages to be supposed guilty of. In the middle of the night he was dragged from his bed, and buried alive in a grave lined with thorns, or he was set naked on horseback, and tied to a saddle covered with thorns; in addition to this, perhaps his ears were sawed off. There is this day an account received of two military men, who had exerted themselves in the line of their duty, being attacked by a body of right-boys, and I fear murdered; for there is but little hope of their recovering of their wounds. The way in which the right-boys perpetrated this crime was, the two men were walking together, armed, they set a dog at them, when one of the men fired; he had no sooner thrown away his fire, than a multitude rushed upon the two from behind the ditches, and wounded them in a most shocking manner."

The attorney-general declared, that as far as he had been able to obtain information, there was no ground for charging the clergy with extortion. He attributed the misery of the peasantry to their landlords. "I am very well acquainted with the pro-

vince of Munster," he said, "and I know that it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable peasantry in that province. I know that the unhappy tenantry are ground to powder by relentless landlords; I know that, far from being able to give the clergy their just dues, they have not food or raiment for themselves—the landlord grasps the whole; and sorry I am to add, that not satisfied with the present extortion, some landlords have been so base as to instigate the insurgents to rob the clergy of their tithes, not in order to alleviate the distresses of the tenantry, but that they might add the clergy's share to the cruel rack-rents already paid." "A poor man," said he, "is obliged to pay six pounds for an acre of potato ground, which six pounds he is obliged to work out with his landlord at fivepence per day."

The attorney-general's motion was carried without a division, and leave was given to bring in a bill in accordance with it. Accordingly, on the 13th of February, a bill for preventing tumultuous risings and assemblies, or, in other words, an Irish riot act, was read the first time, not without some warm opposition. On the second reading, which took place on the 19th of February, it was partially opposed by Grattan, who objected to the severity of some of its provisions. It met with a more determined resistance from other members of the opposition, who objected to any measure of this kind as a new instrument of arbitrary power. The first division on the bill took place on this occasion, when the motion for committing it was carried by a hundred and ninety-two against thirty.

In spite of the proceedings in parliament, the southern insurrection had not diminished, and the alarming accounts which even at this time were brought in daily, determined the ministers to hasten the bill through the house. With this object, they relinquished several of the more objectionable clauses; nevertheless, when in committee next day, the bill again experienced a warm opposition, the chief point in dispute being whether the bill should be general, or whether it should be merely restricted to Munster. The question was carried in favour of its general application by a large majority, and it was read a third time on the 23rd of February, without further opposition.

The opposition leaders in parliament now turned their attention to the grievances under which the peasantry laboured, the relief of which they considered to be the only effectual measure to put an end to their turbulence. At the beginning of the session, Mr. Stewart of Killymoon, proposed the old scheme of an absentee-tax as the only means of relieving the southern peasantry, but his suggestion attracted little attention. Later on, on the 13th of March, Grattan brought before the house the subject of tithes. He represented the oppressive character which the levying of tithes for support of the church assumed in the south. "Our present system of supporting the clergy," he said, "is liable to radical objections; in the south, it goes against the first principles of human existence; in the south you tithe potatoes. Would any man believe it? the peasant pays, I am informed, often seven pounds an acre for land, gets sixpence a day for his labour, and pays from eight to twelve shillings for his tithe—if the whole case was comprised in this fact, this fact is sufficient to call for your interference—it attacks cultivation in its cradle, and tithes the lowest, the most general, and the most compassionate subsistence of human life—the more severely felt is this, because it is chiefly confined to the south, one of the great regions of poverty. In Connaught potatoes do not pay tithe, in the north a moderate modus takes place when they do pay; but in the south they do pay a great tithe, and in the south you have perpetual disturbances." After pointing out at length the advantages which he believed would arise both to the people and to the clergy by a change in the system, Grattan moved a resolution, "That, if it shall appear, at the commencement of the next session of parliament, that public tranquillity has been restored in those parts of the kingdom that have been lately disturbed, and due obedience paid to the laws, this house will take into consideration the subject of tithes, and endeavour to form some plan for the honourable support of the clergy and the ease of the people." This motion was combated with the plea that the distress in the south arose not from tithes, but from the disproportionate high rent of land and low rate of wages, which was attributed to the agency of a class of men long known in Ireland as the middlemen, whom the attorney general described as "a set of gentry

who, having no inheritance, no education, no profession, or other means of life, than by getting between the inheritor and the cultivator of the soil, grind the poor people to powder." If tithes were abolished altogether, he said, that "would not make the situation of the cottager one whit better, while those harpies are suffered to prey upon them." Grattan's motion was eventually negated without a division.

The other measures of this session were not of very great importance, and were chiefly directed to the internal regulation of the country. Parliament was prorogued on the 28th of May, with a speech from the throne in which the lord lieutenant congratulated them on their exertions for repressing the disorders in the south. These were now abating, and the summer of 1787 promised to be less turbulent than those which had preceded it. This expectation was not disappointed; the terror of the new law seemed to have worked effectually, and comparatively few occasions occurred for putting it in force.

As the evil itself abated, a newspaper agitation arose out of it which was carried on for some time with considerable warmth. Woodward, bishop of Cloyne, who had distinguished himself on more than one occa-

sion as a pamphleteer, and whose diocese was especially the scene of right-boy turbulence, took alarm at the danger which he imagined to threaten the Irish church establishment. At the beginning of the year 1787, he published a pamphlet, in which he declared it as his opinion, that there was a conspiracy between the catholics and presbyterians to overthrow the protestant established church, or, as he expressed it more pointedly, that Peter had joined with John to drive out brother Martin. This publication made a great sensation, and in a very short space of time passed through five or six editions. It was replied to with considerable asperity by O'Leary, a popish ecclesiastic, to whom bishop Woodward had imputed covertly the crime of encouraging sedition, and by several presbyterian clergymen. It was severely animadverted upon in the house of commons by the opposition speakers, who represented it as a firebrand to kindle religious intolerance, and as throwing the most unjust reflections on the body of the Irish Roman catholics. At the moment when the parliamentary session was closing, the paper war which this dispute had given rise to was at its height, but it also soon dwindled away.

CHAPTER XV.

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF RUTLAND; PARLIAMENTARY SESSIONS OF 1788 AND 1789;
THE REGENCY QUESTION.



N event occurred during the recess which was calculated to change in some measure the position and policy of the Irish administration.

The duke of Rutland possessed most of the personal qualities requisite to ensure popularity among a people like the Irish, and the odium which had been attached to his administration began to diminish, when, on the 24th of October, 1787, he died somewhat unexpectedly in Dublin. The government of Ireland was entrusted, during a fortnight, to three lords justices, the archbishop of Armagh, lord

Clifford (the chancellor), and Mr. Foster (the speaker of the house of commons); and at the beginning of November the marquis of Buckingham was appointed lord lieutenant.

The Irish parliament met again on the 17th of January, 1788. The speech of the new lord lieutenant contained little of importance, beyond condoling with them on the loss of their late chief governor, which was also the chief subject of the debates which followed. The opposition agreed in acknowledging the private virtues of the duke of Rutland, but they refused to concur in a vote of respect to his memory, which they thought implied their approval of his public measures, and some of their

orators spoke with great severity of the acts of the late administration. The address stated the opinion of parliament that "the wise and steady course of his public administration had established the public tranquillity, and exalted the credit of the nation;" in place of which Mr. Parsons, (one of the members for the university of Dublin, and a staunch supporter of the opposition) proposed to insert the words:—"At the same time, our regard to truth, and to the real interests of his majesty and his loyal people of Ireland, which will not suffer us to convey an imperfect representation of the state of this kingdom to his royal mind, compel us to declare, that notwithstanding the good disposition which we are willing to believe our late lamented chief governor had for the prosperity of this island, yet through the misguidance of his counsellors, this kingdom, during his administration, has been afflicted with a most burthensome increase of taxation, and with several grievous and severe acts, repugnant to the principles of our wise constitution, and injurious to the liberties of his majesty's subjects of this realm." This amendment expressed the general sentiments of the opposition; it was rejected without a division.

On the 14th of February, Grattan again brought before the house the subject of tithes, and he made on this subject and occasion one of the most remarkable of his eloquent appeals. This made a great sensation in the country; it was published with a spirited preface, and four editions were sold in less than a month. Grattan shewed more especially the manner in which the tithes weighed on the people of Munster, as it affected the produce and support of the cottagers' potatoes. "As to potatoes," he said, "the clergyman ought not to proceed with reference to the produce but to the price of labour; in the parts of which I have been speaking, the price of labour is not more than five-pence a-day the year round; that is six pounds four shillings the year, supposing the labourer to work every day but Sunday; making an allowance for sickness, broken weather, and holidays, you should strike off more than a sixth; he has not in fact more than five pounds a-year by his labour; his family average about five persons, nearer six, of whom the wife may make something by spinning (in these parts of the country there are considerable manu-

factories.) Five pounds a-year, with the wife's small earnings, is the capital to support such a family, and pay rent and hearth-money, and, in some cases of illegal exaction, smoke-money to the parson. When a gentleman of the church of Ireland comes to a peasant so circumstanced, and demands twelve or sixteen shillings an acre for tithe of potatoes, he demands a child's provision: he exacts contribution from a pauper—he gleans from wretchedness—he leases from penury—he fattens on hunger, raggedness, and destitution. In vain shall he state to such a man the proctor's valuation, and inform him that an acre of potatoes, well tilled and in good ground, should produce so many barrels—that each barrel at the market price is worth so many shillings, which, after allowing for digging, tithes at so much. The peasant may answer this reasoning by the Bible; he may set up against the tithe-proctor's valuation the New Testament—the precepts of Christ against the clergyman's arithmetic—the parson's spiritual professions against his temporal exactions; and, in the argument, the peasant would have the advantage of the parson. It is an odious contest between poverty and luxury—between the struggles of a pauper and the luxury of a priest. Such a man, making such a demand, may have many good qualities; may be a good theologian; an excellent controversialist; deeply read in church history; very accurate in the value of church benefices; an excellent high priest—but no christian pastor. He is not the idea of a christian minister—the white-boy is the least of his foes—his great enemy is the precept of the Gospel and the example of the apostles."

After giving a variety of examples of oppression and extortion, on the part of the church, which the peasantry of the south certainly experienced, not only in the tithe itself, but in the manner in which it was collected, Grattan proceeded to describe the grievance of letting out the tithes to farm—of placing the middle-man between the church and the people. "This oppression," said he, "connects itself with another part of this subject, a very obnoxious, a very oppressive, and a very notorious part of it—the tithe farmer. The farming of any revenue is a pernicious idea. It is the practice of absolute kings, who, anxious about their riches, and careless about their people, get a fixed income from some desperate adventurer, and then let loose on

the community this animal of prey, at once destitute of remorse and armed with authority. In free countries such a practice is not permitted. You would not allow it to the king, and you ought not to allow it to the church. It is an evil in politics, but a scandal in religion; and the more dangerous in the latter, because tithe being indefinite, the latitude of extortion is indefinite. The use of the tithe farmer is to get from the parishioner what the parson would be ashamed to demand, and to enable the clergyman to absent himself from his duty; the powers of the tithe-farmer are summary laws and ecclesiastical courts—his livelihood is extortion—his rank in society is generally the lowest, and his occupation is to pounce on the poor in the name of the Lord. He is a species of wolf, left by the shepherd to take care of the flock in his absence—he fleeces both, and begins with the parson.” Here Grattan stated that the tithe-farmer seldom got less than one-fourth of the money collected, but sometimes one-third. That there were instances where he got even more, and had reduced the parson to the state of a poor pensioner on his own living. He said that he had heard, that in one of the disturbed parishes, the parish had wished to come to a good understanding with the clergyman, and to pay him in person; but that the tithe-farmer had obstructed such an accommodation, and had by his mercenary intervention prevented concord, moderation, and composition. Parishes were not only subject to one tithe-farmer, but, in some cases, were cursed with a legion of them. “A non-resident clergyman shall employ a tithe-farmer, who shall set the tithe over again to two blacksmiths, who go among the flock like two vultures. A tithe-farmer shall, on being questioned, give the following account of himself: That he held the tithe from one, who had them from an officer, who held them from a clergyman, who did not reside in a parish where there were resident no dean, no rector, no vicar, no schoolmaster; where the whole business of Christianity, on the Protestant side, was transacted by a curate at fifty pounds a-year; and as the parish has been disturbed by the tithe-farmer or proctor, so has it, in some cases, been quieted in getting rid of him. I have known a case where the parish made, with their clergyman, the following agreement:—Sir, we pay your proctor eight hundred pounds a year, and he gives you

six hundred. We will give you six hundred pounds, and become your collectors and your security. In another living, the parish paid the proctor four hundred and fifty pounds a year, and the proctor paid the parson three hundred pounds. The parishioners became the collector and the security, paid the clergyman three hundred pounds a year, took for their trouble thirty pounds, and ceased the parish of a hundred and twenty pounds. The consequence was peace; and the more you investigate this subject, the more you will find that the disturbance of the people, and the exactions of the church, have been commensurate, and that the peace of the former has attended the moderation of the latter; nor is it only the excess of exaction which makes the tithe-farmer a public misfortune—his mode of collection is another scourge. He puts his charges into one or more notes, payable at a certain time; if not then discharged, he serves the countryman with a summons, charging him sixpence for the service, and a shilling for the summons; he then, sometimes, puts the whole into a Kerry bond, or instrument, which bears interest; he then either keeps the bond over his head, or issues out execution, and gets the countryman's body and goods completely in his power: to such an abuse is this abominable practice carried, that in some of the southern parts of Ireland the peasantry are made tributary to the tithe-farmer; draw home his corn, his hay, and his turf—for nothing; give him their labour, their cars, and their horses, at certain times of the year—for nothing. These oppressions not only exist, but have acquired a formal and distinct appellation—tributes. Tributes to extortioners; tributes paid by the poor in the name of the Lord. To oppression we are to add intoxication, the drunkenness and idleness which not seldom attend the method in which the tithe-farmer settles his accounts with the poor parishioners devoted to his care; the place in which he generally settles these accounts, makes his bargains, and transacts his business is the alehouse: he sometimes, I am told, keeps one himself, or he has a relation who gets a licence to sell ale and spirits—because his friend is employed by the church, and will bring him custom. Do you, gentlemen, sign your leases in the alehouse? what should you think of a steward who made your tenants drunk, when he should collect your rents? and what should a clergyman think of his

tithe-farmer, who made his flock drunk, when he collected or settled his tithes, and bathed in whiskey this precious offering, this primeval property, held by some to be the very essence of religion, and not only most ancient, but divine?"

Grattan's motion was a moderate and a reasonable one; it required only that a committee should be appointed to inquire, "whether any just cause of discontent existed among the people of the province of Munster, or of the counties of Kilkenny or Carlow, on account of tithe, or the collection of tithes; and, if any, to report the same, together with their opinion thereupon." Yet it was rejected by a majority of a hundred and twenty-one to forty-nine.

The numbers of the opposition had, indeed, been diminished by a few desertions to the new viceroy; the most important of which was that of Mr. Longfield. Yet the popular party seem not to have been daunted, but continued their attacks with spirit. Mr. Forbes again fell upon the pension list, and made more than one motion to enforce economy in the public expenditure. On the fifteenth of March Mr. Conolly made an effort to obtain a repeal of the tax of hearth-money, which bore so heavily upon the poor. His motion only went to require that steps should be taken to lay before the house, at the commencement of the following session, an account of all houses in the kingdom paying hearth-money which were not of greater value than thirty shillings a year, and were inhabited by persons who had not lands, goods, or chattels, of the value of five pounds in their possession. The act itself, he said, originated in injustice, and it was continued in oppression. Gentlemen seemed to have forgotten its origin. This tax was given in England and Ireland to Charles II. in lieu of his right to wardship and marriage. The poor felt none of this oppression, they care not whom their children married; not so the rich; but still this tax was, by the rich, put upon the poor. At the revolution, in England, king William took away this tax, and substituted a window tax in the place of it; the house of a poor man there, having only six windows, was exempted. Compare an English house with six windows, to an Irish house with only one hearth, which was the poorest? The motion was resisted, not on the merits of the case, but because it was said it would be difficult to obtain

the required returns, and because it was dangerous to move a question which might only end in provoking discontent; and, after a short debate, it was negatived without a division.

This, and another attempt of Grattan's to force on parliament the subjects of tithes and of the relation between the clergy and their flocks, were the only questions of any importance which came before the Irish parliament during the remainder of this session, which was brought to a close on the eighteenth of April, with a very short speech from the lord lieutenant. He merely congratulated the two houses on their temper and wisdom, thanked the commons for their supplies, and rejoiced in the prosperity of the country, and that the "national tranquillity and security" had enabled them to attend "with peculiar advantage" to the important objects which had been brought under their consideration.

As the insurrection in the south ceased to be alarming, public attention was called to a scene of turbulence in the north. The petty hostilities of the defenders and the peep-o'-day boys had not only continued, but had been gradually aggravating, until in this year (1788) it was thought necessary to have recourse again to raising some volunteer corps with the avowed object of enabling the civil authorities to repress them. As it was in their directions to deprive the turbulent of both parties of their arms, and being protestants they were inclined to enforce these orders very strictly with regard to the defenders, they soon became more obnoxious to the latter than the peep-o'-day boys themselves. The consequence was, that several encounters took place between the volunteers and the defenders. On one occasion, in consequence of a previous challenge, a numerous body of defenders and peep-o'-day boys met near Lismadil in the county of Armagh, to fight a pitched battle. Eighteen of the first volunteer Armagh company repaired to the spot, declared they would shoot the first person who should resist the lawful commands of the magistrate, and took some arms from both parties, who separated without bloodshed. The defenders, who had increased very much in numbers, now sent challenges to the volunteers; and on one occasion, when a party of volunteers were exercising at Granemore in Armagh, preparatory to a general review, a strong body of the defenders watched them till

they had fired their last cartridge, and then challenged them to fight. The volunteers, unable to defend themselves, were obliged to retreat to a place of safety, where they waited the arrival of a reinforcement of their own party, and then proceeded to their respective homes. Soon after this, a corps of volunteers belonging to the county of Tyrone, marched one Sunday without arms to the church of Armagh, to hear divine service. On their way, passing a catholic chapel, they engaged in a quarrel with the congregation, who threw stones at them. Instead of returning quietly by another way, the volunteers procured arms at Armagh, and marched back to the catholic chapel, where the quarrel was renewed, and ended in a conflict, in which two of the catholics were killed, and several were wounded on both sides.

This event was the cause of much excitement, and the volunteers incurred great blame for returning to renew the quarrel. The defenders now collected arms with greater activity than ever, for they had the excuse that they were necessary for self-defence; upon which lord Charlemont, who was governor of the county of Armagh, where the disturbances were most frequent, with the consent of the grand jury, issued a manifesto against all papists who should assemble in arms, and also against any person who should attempt to disarm them without legal authority. This was directed against the peep-o'-day boys as well as the defenders, but it was evidently partial to the former, and it only tended to irritate the catholics, although the law was administered between them with sufficient impartiality. For some of the peep-o'-day boys having sought to disarm their antagonists by means of the law, by inditing the defenders at the summer assizes of 1788, the judge quashed the indictments, and dismissed both parties with an impressive exhortation to live in peace and brotherly love.

Little else of importance to Irish history occurred during the year of 1788, but in England an event had taken place which was the cause of some embarrassment to the Irish government, and gave rise to a new and warm contest in parliament—this was the mental aberration of the king, and the question of the regency, which it had been resolved in England to confer on the Prince of Wales, with limited power. The whig party, who at this time were closely leagued with the prince, finding themselves defeated

in England, were prepared to renew the battle in Ireland, where they saw a better prospect of success. When the session of 1789 opened on the fifth of February, the lord lieutenant (the marquis of Buckingham) expressed his deep concern at being obliged to communicate the painful information that the king had been afflicted with a severe malady, in consequence of which he had not honoured him with his commands upon the measures to be recommended to that parliament. The public excitement that existed at this time was shown by the turbulence of the strangers in the gallery of the house of commons, who were so noisy during the short debate which followed the reading of the speech, that it was found necessary to give stricter orders for keeping the galleries clear, especially during the sitting of committees. The political conduct of the lord lieutenant was bitterly attacked by the opposition speakers, and some of them seemed to doubt the legality of the parliament called under such circumstances. This objection received little attention, for the question of the regency was one which involved a multitude of points on which the popular party were eager to enter, because they presented themselves under circumstances favourable to them, and among them was the old question of the independence of the Irish parliament. The opposition assumed that they had a right to receive information of the king's health independent of the English parliament, and that they were not to pay any attention in their choice of a regent for Ireland to what might be the will or intentions of the parliament of England. On the first day of the debate on this subject, Grattan, who took the lead in this matter, asked whether any other evidence was expected relative to his majesty's health than that which had been laid before the houses of parliament on the other side of the water. For his part, he said, he was sure that the physicians' report who attended his sovereign, as solemnly given and properly certified, was complete and conclusive evidence; but the house should not wait for his excellency's report of these transactions, for, if they did, it would appear to the world as if the measure of another assembly was to be the rule of their conduct. He had a high veneration for such respectable authority, but he spurned the idea of insolent dictation; the first was evidence, the last control; and were the house to wait for it, they would act with

gross impropriety; for the presence of such a form being necessary was designed to cut out the free agency of the Irish parliament; it was meant as the ground for wanton delay. Mr. Griffith "thought it highly derogatory to the dignity of that house, and to the independence of Ireland, to receive any reports from the parliament or privy council of another country, on a subject which related to the rights of the king of Ireland. Such conduct would be highly undignified, and the precedent which it would establish, would undermine the very foundations of our independence." "Suppose," he said, "that his majesty had been taken ill in Hanover, would the English parliament have been satisfied with the report of the Hanoverian physicians? No; and yet England is not more independent of Hanover than Ireland is of England."

All objections of this kind were, however, overruled; and it was accepted as sufficiently proved that the king was in such a condition as to be unable to fulfil the functions of his state. The prospect of a rising sun seems to have dazzled the Irish parliament, and numerous supporters of government deserted in an instant, so that when Grattan moved that the house should resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to take into consideration the state of the nation on the eleventh of February, his motion was carried against the government by a majority of a hundred and twenty-eight against seventy-four. Next day a motion of Grattan's to postpone the consideration of the supplies till after the other question had been entered upon, was carried against ministers without a division; and then the house adjourned till the eleventh.

The committee on the eleventh of February produced a long and very warm debate, which was interrupted almost at its commencement by an attack upon the house by a violent and numerous mob from without, in which the students of Trinity college, who were at this time hot politicians, and were angry at strangers being excluded from the gallery in committees, were distinguished. At the moment when Mr. Conolly was explaining the steps he wished to be taken in the appointment of a regent, the speaker rose in the committee, and said he was obliged to interrupt the debate, as he believed it was necessary that he should take the chair, and that the house should resume, as he was informed that there was a danger-

ous riot, several persons with arms having assaulted the door-keepers, the constables, and the sergeant-at-arms. He accordingly resumed the chair, and the sergeant-at-arms, on being called, stated that there was a great riot at the door, that several persons having got arms, they had attacked the door-keepers and constables, and that one of the latter had been almost cut to pieces. A sufficient force having been called, the rioters immediately dispersed, and the house again resolved itself into committee.

Ministers urged that the house should delay the consideration of the subject until it was known what course the English parliament would resolve upon, but this was refused indignantly, as a surrender of Irish independence. The attorney-general having stated the wish of the government that the prince of Wales should be appointed regent with limitations, as was proposed in England, Grattan at once rose to state the plan which he and his friends had chalked out. They agreed with the castle only in the person on whom their choice fell, the prince of Wales, but he conceived the idea of limitation to be an attack on the Irish constitution. It was the lords and commons of Ireland, he said, and not the castle, who were to appoint the regency and judge of his functions. Parliament could not, in its present state, pass a bill to invest him with the necessary powers, and therefore an address must be presented to him, requesting him to assume the powers of regent, and then a bill could be passed to declare and recognise those powers. Grattan's first resolution, "that it is the opinion of this committee, that the personal exercise of the royal authority is, by his majesty's indisposition, for the present interrupted," was agreed to without a division. Mr. Connolly then moved a resolution, which was seconded by Mr. George Ponsonby, "That it is the opinion of this committee, that an humble address be presented to his royal highness the prince of Wales, humbly to request his royal highness to take upon himself the government of this realm, during the continuance of his majesty's present indisposition, and no longer, and under the style and title of prince regent of Ireland, in the name of his majesty to exercise and administer, according to the laws and constitution of this kingdom, all regal powers, jurisdiction, and prerogatives, to the crown and government thereof belonging."

The sentiments of the more moderate of the opposition, on this subject, were fully expressed in the observations, in support of the motion, made by Mr. Sheridan, who represented the borough of Rathcormuck, in Cork, and had usually voted with ministers. "I feel it incumbent upon me," he said, "to state my reasons for differing from those gentlemen with whom I have hitherto had the honour of acting. I object, on this occasion, to our waiting till England shall have completed the business of the regency, because I think it would be disgraceful to this country, and injurious to her independence, and I am convinced it would be completely subversive of the constitution, were we to proceed by bill, in the manner proposed by the right hon. gentleman (the attorney-general). This, sir, is a question not of English government, but of Irish constitution; it is a question where two branches of the independent and supreme legislature of Ireland are, as of right they ought, to judge for themselves. Upon a question of such constitutional magnitude, and, in other respects, of such national importance, it is beneath this house to look to the right hand or the left. I am by no means convinced of the necessity of our consulting what others may have done, but I am convinced of the necessity of our consulting our own dignity, the honour of the nation, and the genius of the constitution. We are now placed in a situation which may be rendered, by our conduct, the most dignified of any in which this house was ever placed, since that memorable era which established the independence of our country; but we may also render this same situation one the most humiliating we have ever known, should we follow the advice of the right hon. gentleman (the attorney-general); should we adopt the despicable expedient of putting our understanding into the keeping of other men, should we acknowledge to the world, upon an emergency like the present, our total incapacity to act for ourselves. We are to determine upon the means, the constitutional means, of supplying the deficiency in our legislature, which has arisen from the unhappy malady of our sovereign. We have a plain line of conduct before us; we are to take care to preserve the constitution entire, and our connection with the sister kingdom unimpaired; these, as it were, are two land-marks to direct our course; while we keep them in view we

cannot go wrong. I know not, sir, what has been done in the other houses of parliament, nor will I insult the members of this house by the degrading supposition, that we are to look to another country in order to learn our duty to our own; that we are to stand with folded arms, waiting in humble silence, and ready to receive, with mean submission, the dictates of any assembly of men; to suppose so, would be to suppose you had forgot the constitution you had acquired, or that you felt that you were unworthy of it; but it is not so; on the contrary, I am proud to assert, that the parliament of Ireland was never more competent, than at the present moment, to assert the constitution, and I trust it will be shewn they never were more determined. Here are no party animosities, here are no views of interested ambition; unbiassed and uninfluenced by such considerations, you will act with the spirit of freemen that know the value of your liberties; you will scorn meanly to follow any other assembly; will act like men who deserve a free constitution." "I cannot find," continued Mr. Sheridan, "that either the common law or the statute law gives any right to the prince of Wales to assume the regency, neither are the houses, by any law that I know, empowered to bestow it on whom they will; but there is a statute which prohibits the two houses, in any possible case, from legislating without the concurrence of the crown. If, therefore, we proceed by address, we, at the worst, commit but an unavoidable irregularity, where the law is silent, though the constitution and precedent both clearly speak; but, in the other case, we are guilty of the contumacy of acting in defiance of law, and violating the constitution."

The opposition to the motion was led by the attorney-general, who began by stating his conviction that the majority of the house had for a moment passed over to the other side, and that whatever he might say would have little effect with them. He endeavoured to shew that, by the law and the constitution, their proceedings on this occasion were irregular. He argued for acting by bill, and not by address, if they must hurry on the question, because he knew that the proceedings on a bill would give government more time, but he still urged the propriety of waiting to see the course pursued by the parliament of England. "There is a feature in this pro-

ceeding," he said, "which, independent of every other objection to it, does in my mind make it highly reprehensible, and that is, that I consider it as a formal appeal from the parliament of England to that of Ireland. Respecting the parties who make this appeal I shall say nothing. But, although there may be much dignity on our part in receiving this appeal, I cannot see any strong symptoms of wisdom in it; because, by so doing, I should conceive we must inevitably sow the seeds of jealousy and disunion between the parliaments of the two countries; and though I do not, by any means, desire of the parliament of this country implicitly to follow the parliament of England, I should suppose it rather a wise maxim for this country always to concur with the parliament of Great Britain, unless for very strong reasons indeed we are obliged to differ from it. If it is to be a point of Irish dignity to differ with the parliament of England, to shew our independence, I very much fear that sober men in this country, who have estates to lose, will soon become sick of independence. The fact is, that, constituted as it is, the government of this country never can go on unless we follow Great Britain implicitly in all regulations of imperial policy. The independence of your parliament is your freedom; your dependence on the crown of England is your security for that freedom; and gentlemen who profess themselves, this night, advocates for the independence of the Irish crown, are advocates for its separation from England. Let us agree with England on three points: one king—one law—one religion. Let us keep these great objects steadily in view, and we act like wise men; and if you make the prince of Wales your regent, and grant him the plenitude of power, in God's name, let it be done by bill; otherwise, I see such danger, that I deprecate the measure proposed. I call upon the country gentlemen of Ireland; this is not a time to think of every twopenny grievance, every paltry disappointment sustained at the castle of Dublin. If any man has been aggrieved by the viceroy, and chooses to compose a philippic on the occasion, let him give it on the debate of a turnpike bill, where it will not be so disgraceful to the man who utters it, and to those who will listen to him, as it will be on the present occasion. Sir, I abominate the idea of restraining the prince regent in the

power of making peers in this country, or in limiting him in the power of making grants, on the narrow principles of suspicion and distrust. This is a question which rests upon very different ground, in this country, from that on which it has been taken up in England; and, if gentlemen can reconcile to themselves a precedent for adopting, in this country, a different form of executive government from that established in England, I have not the smallest apprehension that the powers which may be committed to the prince of Wales by the parliament of Ireland will be abused by him."

So completely were parties broken up on this occasion, that the secretary of state took a contrary view from the attorney-general, and spoke in favour of an address. Curran turned the arguments of the attorney-general to ridicule. Others urged the house not to proceed hastily on a question of so much importance, and among these Mr. Johnson spoke warmly on the side of government. He said he was sorry the people of this country were likely to imitate the conduct of men on the other side of the water, men who seemed to be the encamped Prætorian guard of the empire; who had been eagerly on the watch to tear the imperial ornaments from the limbs of their fallen monarch, even before his eyes had closed upon their splendour, in order to lay them at the feet of the rising Cæsar. Was this affection, was this loyalty? No—it was the prospect of the liberal donative to the troops, that excited their zeal, and that animated their activity. Cæsar, however, would live to regret his confidence in such men. He thanked God he was not one of them, and he rejoiced in the opportunity of saying so. It is said by a right hon. gentleman, (Mr. Grattan) with more quaintness than point, 'that we may create in order to legislate, but we cannot legislate in order to create.' It is not easy to discover the meaning of this phrase. A higher act of legislation cannot well be conceived than the creation of sovereign power. But the two houses will not legislate if they proceed by bill. They approve by vote of the chancellor's putting the great seal to a commission to give the royal assent. The assent is the act of the organ of the king's will, and is safe from censure, because the only bodies capable to censure have before approved. It was said by a right hon. gentleman (the secretary of state), that a great and able

chancellor had once put the great seal without the royal authority to the instruments for calling a parliament; that the very parliament so called afterwards approved of the act, and then all was legal. Will the chancellor, if we proceed in this case by bill, do more? Or will the approbation of a parliament, legally convened, and that approbation expressed before hand, give less authority to the act than an approbation expressed afterwards? I am therefore against the proceeding by address, as precipitate and indecent, and I am for proceeding by bill, as being more deliberate, more agreeable to the forms of law, and more respectful to the sovereign, whose situation calls upon us for this melancholy attention."

Sir Frederick Flood said that he did not intend to have said a word upon the subject, if he had not been roused by the rash declaration of the right hon. gentleman, the attorney-general, and the unfounded assertion of his hon. friend, Mr. Parsons, "that the committee and house of commons of Ireland had dethroned the good old king, by their address to the prince of Wales, without evidence." He said that it was a libel upon the house of commons of Ireland, and a fire-brand cast at random to inflame the minds of the people, which he trusted, the authority of the right hon. gentleman could not effect. He avowed himself a warm friend to unfettered regency. There were several reasons why he thought a generous confidence in the prince of Wales would not only be just, but politic; and that it would induce his royal highness, (if not very ungrateful indeed,) to distinguish between his distrustful subjects of England, and his liberal people of Ireland. That we are a free and independent country, and ought to keep ourselves so, with all due regard for the united and common interests of both kingdoms; that some gentlemen wanted, for purposes best known to themselves, to pare down and weaken the royal and rightful executive powers, which were originally given for the public good; and as such he would maintain them.

At a late hour, near three o'clock in the morning, Mr. Conolly's motion was carried without a division, and the house adjourned till three o'clock in the afternoon, to give time to draw up the proposed address.

When the commons reassembled at three o'clock on the 12th of February, the lord lieutenant had sent by his secretary, to be laid before them, copies of the resolutions of

the British parliament on the subject of the regency, and of the prince of Wales's reply. This announcement led to a discussion whether the house could listen to them or not, but it was eventually agreed they should be read, after which Mr. Conolly read the address proposed to be sent to the prince in the name of the Irish parliament, which was worded as follows:—"May it please your royal highness, we, his majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Ireland in parliament assembled, beg leave humbly to request that your royal highness will be pleased to take upon you the government of this realm during the continuation of his majesty's present indisposition, and no longer, and under the style and title of prince regent of Ireland, in the name and on the behalf of his majesty to exercise and administer, according to the laws and constitution of this kingdom, all regal powers, jurisdiction, and prerogatives of the crown and government thereto belonging."

After a short debate, the address was agreed to, and was sent up to the house of lords. During these debates, the excitement out of doors was so great that it had been found necessary to surround the house of commons with armed guards. The commons were again interrupted on the 12th by rumours of a riotous mob, led by some of the collegians, armed with pistols and swords, who threatened to force their way in.

On Monday, the 16th, lord Charlemont moved in the house of lords that that house should concur with the commons in their address to the prince of Wales, and after rather a warm debate, the address, with the addition of an introductory paragraph which did not affect its meaning, was agreed to by a majority of nineteen. Most of the peers who opposed it signed a very energetic protest against it. Next day, the 17th, the amended address was returned to the commons, and the attorney-general attempted to produce further delay, by proposing a conference with the house of lords upon the amendment. But it was insisted upon by Mr. Ponsonby, and others, that, as the lords had agreed to the address upon the same principles as the commons, their amendment should at once be received, and this was agreed to without a division.

On the 19th of February, both houses waited upon the lord-lieutenant with their address, and requested him to transmit it to the prince. Lord Buckingham replied that, under the impressions he felt of his official

duty and of the oath he had taken, he did not consider himself warranted to lay before the prince an address, purporting to invest his royal highness with powers to take upon him the government of that realm, before he should be enabled by law so to do; and, therefore, he felt obliged to decline transmitting their address to Great Britain. When the commons had returned to their house, it was resolved, on the motion of Mr. Grattan, to adjourn to the next day, that they might not proceed with hurry or precipitation under circumstances so entirely new.

On the 20th, the lord lieutenant's answer was entered on the journals, and then Grattan moved, "That his excellency the lord lieutenant having thought proper to decline to transmit to his royal highness George prince of Wales the address of both houses of parliament, a competent number of members be appointed by this house to present the said address to his royal highness." This motion having been carried by a large majority, Grattan next moved that "Mr. Conolly should attend the lords with the said resolution, and acquaint them that the commons requested them to appoint members of their own body to join with the members of the commons in presenting the said address." Mr. Conolly accordingly waited upon the lords, who concurred in the resolution of the commons, and chose the duke of Leinster and the earl of Charlemont, who, with Conolly, John O'Neil, W. B. Ponsonby, and J. Stuart, were appointed commissioners on the part of the two houses of the Irish parliament, for the purpose of presenting the address to the prince.

These questions having been settled, Grattan next moved, "That it be resolved, that his excellency the lord lieutenant's answer to both houses of parliament, requesting him to transmit their address to his royal highness the prince of Wales, is ill-advised, contains an unwarrantable and unconstitutional censure on the proceedings of both houses of parliament, and attempts to question the undoubted rights and privileges of the lords spiritual and temporal and commons of Ireland." Most of the previous motions had been subjects of warm debate, but now that opposition was no longer useful, the ministerial party gave in, and little was said on this vote of censure upon the lord lieutenant. Some of those who had voted for the previous motions, were opposed to this, but, after two amendments had been rejected,

it was carried by a large majority. The absolute majority was, however, diminishing, and had the question been kept open long, it would probably have diminished considerably. For this reason ministers wished for delay, and their opponents urged haste.

On the 25th the finances of the kingdom were brought forward, and Grattan followed up his victory by moving a short money bill, openly declaring that the object of this measure was to keep the government at the mercy of the majority. The popular speakers confessed that their aim was to hinder the lord lieutenant from proroguing or dissolving parliament. The progress of events, however, disappointed their expectations, and soon restored the majority to the court.

The committee of the two houses of the Irish parliament arrived in London on the 25th of February, and the following day they were received at Carlton-house to present the address. At this time it was apparent that the king was fast recovering his health, so that it was necessary to act with some caution. The prince, accordingly, returned his warmest thanks for the address, and spoke of his gratitude for the attachment which the people of Ireland had shown for him; he expressed his satisfaction at this proof of their loyal and affectionate attachment to the person and government of his father, acquainted them with the fortunate change that had taken place, and promised them his final answer in a few days, when he hoped for the joyful event of his majesty's resuming his government. Immediately afterwards it was announced publicly that the king was perfectly recovered.

Grattan attempted to profit by the circumstances of the moment to introduce some of his reforms, and on the third of March, after stating his intention to bring forward the subjects of a reform of the police, of the pension list, and of abuses connected with elections, he moved a resolution, "that recommendations for the purpose of granting the great offices of this kingdom, or the reversion of great offices, to absentees, are improvident and prejudicial, especially now as great annual charges have been incurred by making compensation to absentees for resigning their offices that those offices might be granted to residents." This motion was aimed more directly at Mr. Grenville, to whom a reversionary patent had recently been granted. The debate was chiefly distinguished by a violent per-

sonal altercation between Grattan and Mr. Parsons; and when the attorney-general attempted to get rid of the original motion by moving the adjournment of the house, he carried his object by a majority of nine. On the next day Grattan obtained leave to bring in a bill to disable revenue officers from voting at elections of members of parliament. A bill to disable persons having pensions during pleasure from being chosen members of the house of commons or from sitting and voting in it, was read a second time on the 9th of March, and, in spite of a warm opposition, the motion for committing it immediately was carried by a hundred and thirty against ninety-eight. A bill for the limitation of the amount of pensions was read a second time on the 10th of March. On the 14th of March, the lord lieutenant went to the house of lords and made a formal announcement to the two houses of parliament of the king's entire restoration to health; and on the 20th the parliament's commissioners having returned from England, Mr. Conolly communicated to the house the final answer of the prince of Wales to their address. From this moment the majority again changed to the side of the ministry. Grattan's bill to deprive revenue officers of the right of voting at elections was warmly debated on the 21st of April, and was opposed on the ground that it was uncalled for and unnecessary, that there were no grounds for supposing that the men it went to disfranchise had voted corruptly, and that it was contrary to justice to punish those who were not even charged with a crime. Much special pleading was exhibited on the ministerial side of the question, and they went even so far as to assert that a measure that was good in England might be the contrary in Ireland. "In England," said one of the supporters of government, "the parliament is purified by a pension bill, and by a bill to disqualify revenue officers. In Ireland the parliament is not so purified—there is no pension bill—there is no bill to disqualify revenue officers. Yet how have gentlemen on the other side of the house stated the conduct of the two parliaments? In England, a house so purified, say the gentlemen, led by a daring minister, violated the constitution, insulted the prince, and attempted to destroy the balance between the estates of parliament. But in the parliament of Ireland, a faithful and honourable band of placemen and pensioners, led by the right

honourable gentleman (Grattan), asserted the constitution, maintained the independence of the kingdom, and carried a bold disapprobation to the breast of the very man who, at the head of government, was supposed to direct their movements and to control their consciences. Would you wound the feelings of such an honourable band immediately after such an exertion? Would you say to such men, you have been returned by corrupt revenue officers, and you have proved their corruption by your own? this would be unkind treatment as well as bad argument. It does not appear to me, therefore, that in this country the influence of the crown has ever prevailed, whenever popular virtue, angry party, or family faction have exerted themselves. But if it did prevail in such a contest, the prevailing power, and not the yielding one, should be lessened; and in these reasons I find my justification and my consolation for refusing to consent to the committal of this bill."

There was much justice in this not ill-timed irony on the late conduct of the opposition, for the regency question had been particularly calculated to draw out in full view whatever factious spirit existed among them. But the arguments against the pension bill were not so well founded, and they were vigorously resisted by Grattan and his friends. Grattan told the house that this bill was not a new one—that it had passed the commons on a former occasion, and was only lost in the lords through a change of the administration. It had been represented that the bill was partial, because it only disfranchised a part of the various denominations of the people who were pensioned on the government. "This bill," said Grattan, "has been now combated on various grounds, and first—partiality. It is that the bill is partial, because it does not extend to all revenue officers; and partial, because it does not extend to all the officers of the crown, and to all professions, to the law, and the army. To the first part of this objection, the bill itself is the answer. It does extend to all revenue officers, and a blank is left for such exceptions as may be agreed on; and if the bill did not, which it does, extend to all revenue officers, the imperfection of its formation is no argument against its committal. To the other part of the objection, the answer is to be found in the difference of the subject-matters compared—the law, the army, and the revenue. The first is a profession—an independent

profession; the bar is not fed by the minister. The gentlemen of the bar do not resemble excisemen, tide-waiters, hearth-money collectors, tide-surveyors, in number, in sentiment, or in condition. Those of the bar, who are servants of the crown, are, compared with such a tribe, not numerous; and compared with the bulk of electors, nothing. The mischief, therefore, is not the same in its extent, nor in the rankness of its nature. The army, that part of it which is composed of officers, does not contain numbers to affect the elections of the people; that part of it which is composed of rank and file men, do not contain electors; common soldiers are not freeholders, nor likely to become such; but if a colonel of a regiment should do what a commissioner is said to have done—if he should make his troop or his battalion such occasional voters, in a county or borough, I do then believe parliament would interfere; because then a very probable and unforeseen mischief would have taken place. But though the laws of England have not disqualified the military from giving votes at elections, they have removed them from the place of election, guarding the rights of the people against the evil incidental to the army—force; as they have guarded those rights against the evil incidental to the revenue officers—corruption.”

The bill was thrown out by a majority of a hundred and forty-eight against ninety-three, so completely had the castle recovered its majority.

The opposition next fell upon the old grievance of the police bill, which also gave rise to a long and warm debate, which only ended in a new victory on the part of ministers. On the 29th of April, Mr. Conolly again brought forward the subject of hearth-money. A bill of Grattan's, for the improvement of barren lands, by giving encouragement to cultivation, a main part of that encouragement being exemption from tithes for the first seven years, was thrown out on the second reading. A bill brought forward by this patriot to appoint commissioners for the purpose of inquiring into the state of tithes, met with the same fate. The session was closed on the 25th of May, with a speech from the lord lieutenant, in which he did little more than congratulate them on the flourishing state of the country.

Meanwhile the regency question had widened and rendered, if possible, more intense the division of political parties.

Many of those who, during the king's illness had deserted from the ministerial ranks, did not return on his recovery, but made the conduct of the duke of Buckingham, in refusing to transmit their address, an excuse for joining the opposition, which thus became at all events more numerous and formidable than before. The lord lieutenant, who had become excessively unpopular, and who could hardly conceal his dislike of the people whom he was sent to govern, was exasperated at seeing the great popular leaders, who now represented personally most of the interests of the country, knit into a closer and more resolute union against him. In spite of the return of the great majority of his supporters to their posts, and of his avowed principles of economy, he was now compelled to resort to the ruinous system of purchasing votes by retail, in order to break through this new combination; and in this new canvas for parliamentary influence, neither bounds, nor reserve, or even decency were kept. It was an open market, in which on one side the prices of boroughs and votes, and on the other those of titles and peerages, were reduced to a regular standard. Peerages, places, and pensions, were exchanged for parliamentary influence, and for this purpose every office or emolument was resumed, for the resumption of which a plausible excuse could be found. The duke of Leinster, Mr. George Ponsonby, Mr. Fitzherbert, and every person holding place, office, or pension at pleasure, were displaced or deprived for having joined in the address to the prince of Wales; and, in addition to many new appointments, eight new peerages were created. Thus the pension list was considerably increased, single offices were split into more than one, and dormant and unnecessary employments were revived, and these in many instances in favour of the marquis of Buckingham's own relations and connections.

On the other side, the opposition had formed a closer alliance with the whig party in England, and had imitated them in their plans and tactics. They had established, as a common centre of union, a whig club, the members of which professed the same principles, and adopted the same uniform of blue and buff, as the whig club in England. This club was excessively obnoxious to the castle. At its head were the duke of Leinster, the earl of Charlemont Conolly, Grat-

tan, Forbes, the two Ponsonbys, Curran, and a number of the leading members of opposition in both houses. In a round of dinners and meetings, the opposition here planned and arranged all their measures for attacking the ministry, each member having his measure or question in turn, while to each was assigned that share in the attack he was most competent to sustain. This club, aided by some of the popular newspapers, continued to announce its days of dining, to proclaim its sentiments in the shape of resolutions, or to publish them indirectly in the shape of anonymous paragraphs. The speeches at its meetings were reported with point and virulence, and held forth the abuses of government and parliament in a manner calculated to inflame the passions of the multitude.

The castle party took every advantage of the king's recovery, which was celebrated with much ceremony. A public thanksgiving was rendered with great pomp in the cathedral of Dublin, on the 23rd of April; and on different days particular services were performed in every church and chapel throughout the kingdom. A solemn high mass was performed, with a new grand *Te Deum* composed for the occasion by the celebrated Giordani, in the Roman catholic chapel in Francis-street at which some of

the first protestant nobility and gentry were present. At the castle, a superb gala was given on the 5th of May, from which all those who had voted for the address were carefully excluded, as a mark of reprobation; and this feeling was carried to such a degree, that in the list of toasts drunk after dinner, the prince of Wales and duke of York were purposely omitted. The attorney-general, who had so much distinguished himself throughout in his support of the castle, was raised to the peerage under the title of lord Fitzgibbon, and made lord chancellor of Ireland, that office having become vacant by the death of lord Lifford.

The office of lord lieutenant had become, among all these subjects of disagreement, by no means an agreeable one to the marquis of Buckingham, and he determined to proceed to England for the purpose of resigning it. He had become so unpopular, that, to avoid personal outrage, instead of making his departure publicly, he took shipping secretly from Mr. Lee's villa at the Black Rock; and after his departure, on the 30th of June, the new chancellor, lord Fitzgibbon, and Mr. Forster, the speaker of the house of commons, were sworn in lords justices. On the 5th of January following, the lord lieutenancy was given to John earl of Westmoreland.

CHAPTER XVI.

SESSION OF 1790; ACTIVITY AND VIOLENCE OF THE OPPOSITION.



THE new appointment to the lord lieutenancy was a mere change of persons, for it was evident that the English ministry had determined to carry on the government of Ireland in the same spirit which had recently characterised it. During the summer of 1789 the turbulent spirit still continued to show itself in the south although much abated, but the dissensions between defenders and peep-o'-day-boys in the north remained much as before, especially in the county of Armagh, which had been hitherto

their chief seat. Their hostility rose to such a height, that it was found necessary to send troops to reduce them to order, but before they arrived an affray had taken place, in which many were killed on both sides. These dissensions are said to have received encouragement from men who aimed at turning them to political purposes.

The patriotic party were looking forward to the opening of parliament, to make a more desperate series of attacks than the court had ever yet been exposed to in that arena. The earl of Westmoreland opened the session on the 21st of January, 1790,

with a speech which alluded only to common-place topics. The addresses were not opposed, but Grattan, as the leader of the opposition in the commons, declared the intention of bringing all the old grievances forward during the session. He said that, though he did not mean to oppose the address, he felt it incumbent upon him at this early period of the session to mark his disapprobation of the measures of the late administration, and to prove to the full conviction of that house that they had been ill-governed. He mentioned briefly the new grievances of which they complained—the increase of the pension-list, the increased expense in the ordnance department, and other things which he laid to the charge of lord Buckingham, who had at the beginning of his lord lieutenantancy promised so many reforms. “Such,” said Grattan, “has been the conduct of your reformer. This was the man; you remember his entry into the capital, trampling on the hearse of the duke of Rutland, and seated in a triumphal car, drawn by public credulity; on one side fallacious hope, and on the other many-mouthed profession; a figure with two faces, one turned to the treasury, and the other presented to the people; and with a double tongue, speaking contradictory languages. This minister alights; justice looks to him with empty hopes, and speculation faints with idle alarms; he finds the city a prey to an unconstitutional police—he continues it; he finds the country overburthened with a shameful pension-list—he increases it; he finds the house of commons swarming with placemen—he multiplies them; he finds the salary of the secretary increased to prevent a pension—he grants a pension; he finds the kingdom drained by absentee employment, and by compensations to buy them home—he gives the best reversion in the country to an absentee, his brother! He finds the government at different times had disgraced itself by creating sinecures to gratify corrupt affection—he makes two commissioners of the rolls, and gives one of them to another brother; he finds the second council to the commissioners put down because useless—he revives it; he finds the boards of accounts and stamps annexed by public compact—he divides them; he finds the boards of customs and excise united by public compact—he divides them; he finds three resolutions declaring that seven commissioners are sufficient—he makes nine; he finds the country has suffered by

some peculations in the ordnance—he increases the salaries of offices, and gives the places to members—to members of parliament.”

The vituperation of Grattan was weak in comparison of that of one of his supporters, Mr. Egan, member for the borough of Ballynakill, in Queen’s county, which affords a fair sample of the violent recrimination to which the Irish orators sometimes gave vent. “I rise,” said this speaker, “to give my hearty concurrence in the address to our most gracious sovereign. I trust I shall obtain the patience of the house while I state to them the negative reasons which induce my concurrence. I concur, sir, in this address, because the men who conducted the administration of the marquis of Buckingham have had neither the audacity nor the servility to promise, nay, even have had the prudence not to glance at the measures of his administration. That nobleman has suffered a political decease in this country, and this address has left his tombstone without an inscription. This is seldom the lot of any man who has left either fame to justify his panegyric, or friends to commiserate his departure. His excellency has the peculiar felicity not to merit the meed of fame, nor the memorial of friendship. I have listened, sir, to the gentleman who has so justly animadverted on his excellency’s administration, with that delight which his pointed and polished eloquence must give to every man; but I have followed him through the political biography of the last administration with lamentation at the melancholy catalogue of national calamities, which he has disclosed with veracity and chastised with justice. Sir, that historical detail, and detestation of the measures of a departed and an execrated chief governor, is pregnant with many advantages to this insulted and abused land. It will teach his majesty’s ministers in Great Britain in future not to suffer their arrogant ambition to banish to this kingdom the outcasts of their counsels, and to dignify his excellency with the viceroyalty of this devoted country; to amuse his officious meddling capacity from concurring in the destruction of his native land, by submitting this country to the ravage of his profusion, and its constitution to the rage of his disappointed disloyalty. It will instruct his majesty’s ministers not to transmit, as the governors of this land, the transports from their counsels, and to convert the kingdom of Ireland into the political

Botany Bay of Great Britain. We have read in history an instance that bears near affinity to this political subterfuge. When Edward II., that weak and that unfortunate prince, was obliged to comply with the reiterated demands of his people, to banish from his presence the favourite Gavaston, he appointed him chief governor of Ireland, and thus thought to abate while he illuminated the degradation of his exile. Let me not be understood to disgrace our gracious sovereign by insinuating any parallel between him and Edward II., that sacrifice of misguided favouritism; nor let me be thought to reflect on the memory of Gavaston, who possessed many manly qualities and conciliating accomplishments, by suggesting any family resemblance between him and our departed viceroy. If any man in this house thinks I have said anything too severe in this brief abstract of his late excellency I will recant it, if either the opulent or the indigent announce one public or one private virtue to purchase his redemption from deserved execration. If not, I will inscribe under this sketch, *Monstrum nulla virtute redemptum*. I will take the liberty briefly to detail and to contrast his excellency's conduct in the choice of men and of measures, and in his renunciation of men and of measures. With the men whom he selected for his ministers, being contemporary, I am rendered unfit to do those characters strict historical justice. I shall only observe, and probably it may be thought sufficiently severe, that they will be transmitted to posterity at least under the suspicion of political depravity, by his excellency's adoption and approbation; of the men whom he vainly and impotently thinks he discomfited and disgraced, I shall also say, that they will be handed down to posterity in the opposite page of history, encircled and illuminated with the glory of having merited his reprobation. Sir, the notoriety of the maladministration of the marquis of Buckingham would entitle me to group his measures for public odium, for public detestation. But, sir, I am forced by gentlemen on the other side into some details. I say, sir, his administration was not only unprincipled in practice, but barefacedly and avowedly so in profession. Former majorities in this house demanded of the minister, under whom they mustered for the honourable demolition of the constitution and degradation of their country, some plausible pretences for supporting him—some abilities on the side of

administration artful enough to gloss over the pravity of his measures, and to make political baseness at least argumentative and problematical. The administration of his excellency addressed themselves neither to the passions nor to the understanding of men; they stood mute and bully-bold against principle, in practice or profession, announced ministerial vengeance against all political integrity, and laughed to scorn the indignation of their contemporaries and the abomination of their posterity. I shall terminate this short observation on this profligatory crusade against all public principle by one remark. We find from this era, that few men can resist the strong attraction with which they are drawn to corruption by the common centre of every administration. If we cannot, therefore, by some political association increase the centrifugal force of public and of private virtue, so as to correct, if not to overcome this irresistible attraction, the constitution must soon meet its dissolution. You saw the dignity of parliament prostrated at his excellency's feet, for their treasonable practices in supporting the succession of the house of Hanover against the arrogant ambition of the relatives of Buckingham; but you saw also, to their immortal honour, that parliament vindicated themselves, and with recorded and unanimous opprobrium stigmatized his political audacity, his disappointed profligacy. You saw this ministerial profligacy beget a dignified and a laudable confederacy against his administration. To moderate parliamentary indignation, and to break the confederacy, you beheld a waste of profusion and a renunciation of all principle; you beheld places and pensions multiplied, and boards divided against ministerial contracts and covenants with parliaments. But, sir, these were not the most flagrant outrages committed. You beheld titles commuted for the liberties of the people, the fountain of honour had an almost indiscriminate and venal issue, and we beheld one house of parliament, as our Saviour found the Temple, polluted with money-changers."

This violence of language at the commencement of the session, showed that it was destined to be a turbulent one; and accordingly, after some slight sparring between the two great parties on several occasions of less importance, Grattan rose in the house of commons on the first of February, and, in one of those extraordinary floods of eloquence for which he was so celebrated,

arraigned the entire system of the late administration, which was now continued by their successors. He boldly attacked the whole system of court influence, and described the universal corruption with which it was then maintained. He accused the government of making a market of places and pensions, and of disregarding the interests of the nation; and he went fully into all the charges against lord Buckingham's administration, which he had enumerated in his former speech. He dwelt especially on the increase of the number of commissioners of the revenue, contrary to the expressed opinion of parliament, the object of which was evidently to increase the number of places, as instruments of court influence, and then he proceeded, "I have dwelt enough on this particular measure, I have shown it to be a defiance of the advice of this house, without the pretence even of expediency, and that nothing since that advice was given, has taken place in the laws to justify the minister in disregarding it; on the contrary, that it is now necessary, in order to conform to the law, to disregard the instruction of the minister. I say I have shewn this measure to be a disregard to the sense of this house, for the purpose of extending influence; this leads me from the particular subject, to the general policy; the nature of this policy I have described; the ultimate consequences I shall not now detail, but I will mention one, which seems to include all: I know you say a union—no, it is not the extinction of the Irish parliament, but its disgraceful continuation. Parliament, under the success of such a project will live, but live to no one useful purpose. The minister will defeat her attempts by corruption, and deter the repetition of her attempts by threatening the repetition of the expenses of corruption. Having been long the bawd, corruption will become the sage and honest admonitress of the nation. She will advise her no more to provoke the minister to rob the subject—she will advise her to serve in order to save, to be a slave on the principles of good housewifery; then will parliament, instead of controlling the court, administer to its licentiousness—provide villas and furniture for the servants of the castle; afford a place army to obnoxious members; accommodate with cruel and contradictory clauses the commissioners of the revenue, or feed on public rapine the viceroy's clanship! Parliament, that giant that purged these

islands of the race of tyrants—whose breed it was the fortune of England to preserve, and of Ireland to adopt; parliament, whose head has for ages commenced with the wisdom of the gods, and whose foot has spoken thunder and deposition to the oppressor, will, like the sacred giant, stand a public spectacle, shorn of its strength, or rather, like that giant, he will retain his strength for the amusement of his enemies, and do feats of ignominious power to gratify an idle and hostile court; and these walls, where once the public weal contended, and the patriot strove, will resemble the ruin of some Italic temple, and abound, not with senators, but with animals of prey, in the guise of senators, chattering their pert debates, and disgracing those seats which once belonged to the people. Here you will stop to consider, and demand why all this? Why this attack on Ireland? the minister will tell you what caused, but I will tell what contributed—it was impunity—impunity. You have no adequate responsibility in Ireland, and politicians laugh at the sword of justice which falls short of their heads, and only precipitates on their reputation. Sir, this country has never yet exercised herself in the way of vindictive justice; in the case of Strafford, she was but an humble assistant, and yet in this country we have had victims—the aristocracy at different times have been a victim, the whole people of Ireland, for almost an entire century, were a victim; but ministers in all the criminal successions—here is a chasm, a blank in your history. Sir, you have in Ireland no axe, therefore no good minister. Sir, it is the misfortune of this country, that the principles of her constitution have not yet become entirely the maxims of all those who take the lead in her government. They have no public mind, their maxims are provincial, and this misconception of our situation is not a little assisted by a prudent sense of their own interest. They know that Ireland does not punish—they see that the British court does reward. This will explain why the Irish court prefers a strong corrupt government to a good sound constitution; why peculations of the most scandalous nature, if the English court do not appear affected thereby, are represented as trifles; and why corruptions of a most flagitious nature, if the British court can by any misinterpretation be represented as benefited thereby, are advanced as pretensions. This will ex-

plain why, under the same British minister, on the same subject, the powers of the two houses of the British parliament shall be asserted, and those of the Irish denied; why the extraordinary power of the two houses of the parliament of Britain shall be advanced, and the ordinary powers of the three estates of Ireland denied." In conclusion, Grattan moved, "That the resolutions of this house against increasing the number of the commissioners of the revenue, and dividing of the boards, be laid before his majesty, with an humble address, that his majesty will be graciously pleased to order to be laid before us the particulars of the representations in consequence of which two new commissioners of the customs have been added, notwithstanding the resolutions of this house; and also, that his majesty will be graciously pleased to communicate to his faithful commons the names of the persons concerned in recommending that measure."

Grattan's motion was seconded by Mr. Conolly, who, in a short speech, said in allusion to the vote of censure against the lord lieutenant on the regency question, that he was ashamed of himself when he saw his name enrolled in an assembly that could first censure and then support the marquis of Buckingham, and, if he could judge by the complexion of the house, was still determined to sanction his proceedings; he remarked that the two additional commissioners were not only added to the original number in despite of the resolutions of the house, but that they were added for the purposes of corruption, coercion, and revenge. The motion was opposed with considerable vehemence by John Beresford, the head commissioner of the customs, and by sir Hercules Langrishe, who were supported by the new attorney-general (A. Wolfe) and others. After a debate which was carried on with great violence till nearly two o'clock in the morning, Grattan's motion was rejected by a majority of a hundred and thirty-five against eighty.

This was about the relative strength of parties at this time. Two days only were allowed to pass over before the opposition returned to the attack, with a motion made on the 4th of February by Curran, "that an humble address be presented to his majesty, praying that he will order to be laid before this house the particulars of the causes, considerations, and representations, in consequence of which the boards of stamps and accounts have been divided, with an increase

of salary to the officers; also, that he will be graciously pleased to communicate to this house the names of the persons who recommended that measure." The debate again was long, and so warm as to lead to great intemperance on both sides. Since the last session of parliament, the French revolution had broken out, and several allusions were made to it as well by the patriotic as by the ministerial party, the latter not hesitating to speak of the opposition as of men who aimed at snatching the crown from the head of the monarch in order to trample it in the dust. One ministerial member, Mr. Moore, defended the use of corruption by declaring that against a desperate party, combined to seize the crown, he, if he were a minister, would think himself justified in employing all the influence of the crown for the crown's protection. On a division, this motion also was thrown out by a hundred and forty-one against eighty-one.

The warmth of party animosity went further, and even degenerated into coarse personalities, in a debate on the 11th of February, on a motion by Mr. Forbes relating to the public expenditure. The opposition not only upbraided their opponents with being bought and hired to vote against their own convictions and the welfare of their country, but they taunted them with the want of ability and talent, as well as of honour and honesty. In reply, the attorney-general charged the opposition with being turbulent and overbearing, and said that their only object was to attain the power of which they envied others the possession. Mr. Forbes replied to this attack, that he preferred the man who contended for power rather than him who sought for place; he was not ashamed to confess that he was ambitious of the possession of power, which might enable him and his friends to effect measures beneficial to the country, and obtain a pension bill, a place bill, and a responsibility bill, and other salutary measures. He said he should ever prefer men who contended for such a power of serving their country, to a set of men who, regardless of principles, characters, and measures, were the indiscriminate supporters of any and every description of men whom an unforeseen occurrence of circumstances, the confusion of times, or the coalition of parties, might enable to take possession of the government. The opposition had received a slight accession of strength since their last attack on government; for in spite of their intemperance,

their numbers on this division were ninety-two, while the ministerial majority was only a hundred and thirty-six.

On the 15th of February the opposition rallied again in battle array, led by Mr. George Ponsonby, who congratulated his friends on the accession to their numbers, which had followed the exhibition of Grattan's transcendent abilities in attacking the corrupt influence of the crown, and this he said had encouraged him again to call the attention of the house to the same subject. Mr. Ponsonby went over the old course of popular grievances, and repeated with increasing asperity the charges against lord Buckingham, although, he said, as they had declared from the opposite benches that they would avow and defend every measure of that nobleman's administration, he had little hope of succeeding in his motion. This motion was "To represent to his majesty, that his faithful commons having taken into consideration the growth of public expense in the last year, could not but observe many new and increased salaries, annexed to offices granted to members of this house, no fewer in number than fourteen; that so rapid an increase of places, together with the number of additional pensions, cannot but alarm the house; and though they never could entertain a doubt of his majesty's affection and regard for his loyal kingdom of Ireland, yet they feared that his majesty's servants may, by misinformation, so far have abused his majesty's confidence, as to have advised such measures for the purpose of increasing influence." The motion was seconded by Mr. Grattan, and gave place to another of the violent debates which characterized this session. Every force of eloquence, invective, and vituperation, was brought to bear against the ministerial party, who, secure in their majority, stood on the defensive. Mr. Ponsonby's motion was rejected by a hundred and forty-six against eighty-seven.

On the 20th of February ministers were again exposed to one of the grand outpourings of Grattan's eloquence. This great orator then rose unexpectedly in the house of commons, and, addressing himself to the chair, said:—"Sir, we persist to combat the project to govern this country by corruption. We have hitherto contended against those parts of the system which proceed to undermine the constitution, without an apparent breach of the law, and therefore might impose on

the public as a government by law; such was the addition of two unnecessary commissioners; such was the unnecessary salaries for four officers of the stamps; such were the additional salaries to four officers of the ordnance; such, in short, the creation of fourteen new parliamentary places, and of eight or nine parliamentary pensions, in the course of less than twelve months. These measures import their own criminality, and bespeak, on the part of his majesty's ministers, a design to govern this country by sapping the foundation of her liberty. They called upon us to disallow them, they called upon us to withdraw our confidence from the ministers by whom they were imposed—but they went no further. They did not appear to be accompanied with any overt act, whereby the criminal designs of their authors could be substantiated by evidence enough to punish their persons; they were good reasons for dismissing the ministers for ever from his majesty's councils, but, for as yet appears, no grounds for personal punishment. But there is another part of this project, wherein his majesty's ministers have not only attempted to undermine the constitution, but have actually broken the laws—for that part of the project, we conceive his majesty's ministers to be impeachable. Sir, the sale of honours is an impeachable offence—the crime speaks itself. But, to take the point out of doubt, I will state you a case: the duke of Buckingham, in the reign of Charles I., was impeached on thirteen articles, and the ninth article was the sale of honours—the very crime of which the ministers of Ireland have been guilty. He was impeached for the sale of a peerage to lord Roberts for ten thousand pounds," "But," he continued, "there is a circumstance in the offence of the Irish ministry, which is not to be found in the case of the duke of Buckingham—they have applied the money arising from the sale to model the house of commons. This is another impeachable offence: that minister who sells the honours of one house to model the representation of the other, is impeachable for the last offence as well as the first; he makes a wicked, and scandalous, and illegal use of the prerogative of the crown, in order to destroy the privileges of parliament. He makes the two houses of parliament auxiliary, not to support, but to contaminate, one another. Thus he is a conspirator against the legislation—

attacking it in both houses of parliament, and poisoning the two great sources of the law."

After showing the enormity of the offence with which ministers stood charged, Grattan proceeded to point out its consequences, and the necessity of bringing the criminals to punishment. "I will lay before you their project of government, considering it first as an instrument of domestic government, and secondly, as a bond of connexion. As an instrument of government it is very powerful indeed, for it will make the minister not only strong, but completely absolute. He will first buy the question, and afterwards favour you with the forms of debating it. He will cry up parliament when it is venal, and cry parliament down when it feels the stings of remorse. He will be soon, however, raised above the necessity of those artifices; for the ascendancy he will obtain will not only secure a majority on all ordinary occasions, but deprive the people of the chance of a majority on any, and will procure a legislature ready to allow expense, and overlook any crime, and adopt any measure according as the divan of the castle shall give to its janissaries here the word of command. Thus will this country lose, not indeed the existence of parliament, but whatever can be derived from it. The consequence of this must be, that the court will be free from control; and, free from control, its first idea will be plunder. Do not imagine that opposition alone makes government extravagant. Some past administrations in this country prove that the most licentious thing imaginable is a little castle, presuming on the languor of the empire; too low to think itself responsible to character, and too shifting to be responsible to justice. Remove from such a court the dread of parliament, and they will become a political *High Life below Stairs*; carrying not only the fashions, but the vices and the insolence, of their superiors to outrageous excess. From the infamy of the court the discredit of the executive power follows natural and rapid. When I say discredit, I do not mean unpopularity. I see some who make a merit of being publicly obnoxious, and would canvass for the favour of the British minister, by exhibiting the wounds of their reputation. No, I mean the loss of the esteem of all moderate and rational individuals. Already such men are disgusted—they are shocked at your pension list—they

are alarmed at your place list—they cannot approve of what they know your only principle of government, the omnipotence of corruption. We know you do not love us—I do not mean as individuals; but we know the present ministers do not love Ireland; this we collect from their measures, and this we collect from their manners—manners which come immediately from the springs of action, and are a faithful, and sometimes, a fatal guide to the principles of the heart; but the executive power will not be involved in discredit and disgrace, without also affecting the character of the laws. Do you imagine that the laws of this country can retain due authority, under a system such as yours, which would make parliament the prostitute, and has made government the common bawd of the nation? a system which not only poisons the source of the laws, but pollutes the seats of judgment; you may say that justice between man and man will be faithfully administered, and you will set up the private dispensation of the laws, as an apology for their political perversion; but even that private dispensation will not be long pure, when you sell the power of that dispensation to every man who will give you money. Nor can the laws, in a free country, long retain their authority, unless the people are protected by them against plunder and oppression; nor can that long be the case, unless the body who is to make, and the body who is to decide on the laws, be themselves protected against corruption. The present administration, therefore, is an enemy to the law: first, because it has broken the law; secondly, because it has attempted to poison the true sources, both of legislation and justice; and however the friends of that administration may talk plausibly on the subject of public tranquillity, they are, in fact, the ringleaders of sedition placed in authority. Rank majorities may give a nation law—but rank majorities cannot give law authority."

"I say, therefore," Grattan concluded, "the present ministers of this country cannot govern Ireland—they cannot govern Ireland for England. I do not call corruption government, not the carrying a question at the loss of their money and character. They have then procured for British government neither character sufficient to command respect, nor revenue sufficient to pay the establishment; but then they have gotten other strength—they have gotten the sup-

port and good-will of the nation. No—the loss of the nation's good-will is synonymous with the loss of reputation. The measures these men have pursued, the violent principles they have advanced, and the tone in which they have spoken to this country, must have long lost them the opinion of the public. Before this country can have any confidence in them, she must lose all confidence in herself, and surrender all her tenets, maxims, and principles on every constitutional and commercial subject. She must forget the propositions, the regency, the park extravagance, the police, the pension list, her visual powers as well as her recollective ones must melt away, and she must grow blind to the corruption of your establishment, insensible to the unconstitutional and lawless violence of your principles. After an experience of years, your country, taking an impartial survey of all your offences, your country, perhaps, in the prodigality of mercy, may if she pleases forgive, but surely she can never trust you. The independent country gentlemen, have you forgotten them? No—they never can support a minister who practises extravagance, and professes corruption; supporting such a minister they would be country gentlemen no longer—they would be the servants of the castle out of livery. They must see and despise the pitiful policy of buying the country gentlemen by an offer to wrap them up in the old cast-clothes of the aristocracy. A clumsy covering and a thin disguise, never the object of your respect, frequently the subject of your derision; the country gentleman must recollect how seldom he can procure even an audience from that bench, except when he artificially deserts his cause and his country. Place him on his native hills, and he is a protection against the storm; transplant him to the hot-bed of the castle, he degenerates, and becomes a weed. As to the aristocracy, I will not say you have alienated every member of that body; but I do say, you have alienated as great, as respectable, and as formidable a part of that body as ever stood in the phalanx of opposition; and you have not only given them every personal provocation, but every public topic, and every public provocation to raise on their side the interest, the feelings, and the voice of the community. You have not, however, left yourselves without some part of the aristocracy of the country, but that part you have endeavoured to leave without any kind of reputation, by directing against

the aristocracy of Ireland in general the whisper of your castle and the scurrility of your press, reducing all men to the level of your own reputations. Thus, the result of your project has been to render British government in this country as feeble and contemptible as the tendency of your project is to render the Irish constitution corrupt and dependent. For the sake of both nations, therefore, we oppose it; but how defeat this project? Certainly not by a plan of self-defence. It is a maxim of war, that the body which is ever attacked, and only defends, must finally be subdued. It is then on a principle of self-preservation that we resort to the good old method of impeachment. We have long disputed about this pension and that place, until inch by inch we are driven into our trenches by a victorious enemy. It is now necessary to change our system of action, and to come forth with the power of the constitution to punish the enemies thereof. We call this house, whose foundation the minister now undermines, to witness that we are compelled to this, and that these men have, by a multiplication and repetition of plunder, prodigality, corruption, insult, outrage, and misdemeanours, brought forth at last the reluctant justice of the nation. The great influences which the philosopher tells you are necessary to bind together the moral system are wanting here. The influence of opinion, of future and of sublunary punishment, the two first the minister disregards; be it our province to introduce into this region the last, that his majesty's ministers may be sensible there is a vindictive justice, and that there is in this country a power competent to inflict that justice upon them. Gentlemen come over to this country for a livelihood, and they find servants who, like themselves, look to government for nothing but a livelihood, and this alliance, that does not include an idea of public care or duty, they call an administration; but it is our task to interrupt this venal commerce by impeachment. Had the people of England only condemned ship-money, they had done nothing. No, they brought forth to public punishment the projectors, they exhibited the malefactor at the bar of the nation. The injuries you have suffered demand a spectacle of that kind—a state offender kneeling at the bar of the lords, and impeached in the name and on the behalf of the commons of this realm."

Grattan then moved, "That a select committee be appointed to inquire, in the most

solemn manner, whether the late or present administration have entered into any corrupt agreement with any person or persons, to recommend such person or persons to his majesty as fit and proper to be by him made peers of this realm, in consideration of such person or persons giving certain sums of money to be laid out in procuring the return of members to serve in parliament, contrary to the rights of the people, inconsistent with the independence of parliament, and in violation of the fundamental laws of the land."

This motion was opposed by the chancellor of the exchequer on the plea that there was no evidence to ground a specific charge upon; he insisted that simple assertion and common fame were insufficient evidence. The ministers in general resisted the proposal as an interference with the king's prerogative. The prime sergeant considered the motion of so extraordinary a nature, of such alarming magnitude and novelty, and introduced in so strange a manner, that no man could, consistently with the principles of justice or the dictates of his conscience, accede to it. It was complained that the house was taken unawares, that no notice had been given of the subject of the motion which the house had been called to debate on this day. Other objections of the same kind were made, and the debate was characterized throughout with extreme warmth. At the close, Grattan rose and drew a summary of the debate, and expressed his indignation that it should have been stated that the facts rested upon his simple assertion. "Will you," he said, "rest it on that? Will you maintain it is only a simple assertion? I do not assert only that I have heard it commonly said, and specially stated, the sums, the persons, the circumstances; but I said I never heard it out of these walls denied. It is a crime as generally known, and as publicly reported, as anything which is not yet reduced to special conviction; it is a crime we offer to prove; we come here to arraign the ministers of the crown. I will read the charges which I make against them." He then read the following paper. "We charge them publicly, in the face of their country, with making corrupt agreements for the sale of peerages, for doing which, we say they are impeachable; we charge them with corrupt agreements for the disposal of the money arising from the sale, to purchase for the servants of the castle, seats in the assembly

of the people, for doing which, we say they are impeachable; we charge them with committing these offences, not in one nor in two, but in many instances, for which complication of offences we say they are impeachable; guilty of a systematic endeavour to undermine the constitution in violation of the laws of the land. We pledge ourselves to convict them. We dare them to go into an enquiry. We do not affect to treat them as other than public malefactors. We speak to them in a style of most mortifying and humiliating defiance. We pronounce them to be public criminals. Will they dare to deny the charge? I call upon and dare the ostensible member to rise in his place, and say on his honour, that he does not believe such corrupt agreements have taken place. I wait for a specific answer."

The conclusion of this bold defiance was followed by a pause in the house, until secretary Hobart, the "ostensible member" called upon, rose and made an evasive reply. He said that if he could think the right honourable gentleman had any right to ask him the question he had proposed, and he were alone concerned in it, he should find no manner of difficulty in answering it; but as it was a question which related to the exercise of his majesty's undoubted prerogative, it would ill become him, upon the instigation of an individual, to say what were the reasons which had induced his majesty to bestow upon any persons those honours which the crown alone could constitutionally confer. "As to the charge that has been made, I cannot," he said, "avoid expressing some surprise that gentlemen were not sufficiently alarmed by common fame at the end of lord Northington's administration, to bring forward such a charge then. Common fame certainly did then report that peerages had been notoriously granted in return for seats in the commons house of parliament; yet the right honourable gentleman and his friends were in the confidence of that administration, and must be presumed to be informed of the fact." Mr. Conolly replied to this attempt at evading the appeal to him, that Grattan had asked a plain, unequivocal, direct question, and the house was to judge whether an intelligible and satisfactory answer had been given—for his part he conceived not.

The members, on a division, were much the same as before—a hundred and forty-four for ministers, and eighty-eight against them.

On the twenty-fourth of February, an-

other violent attack was made on the ministry, upon occasion of a bill for renewing the police act, and the debate was carried on with great asperity. The attorney-general complained, that no measure could be introduced into the house, but gentlemen on the other side brought a charge that it was for the purpose of influence. "This," he said, "is a language that we have endured too long; I have submitted to it as long as possible, but the representatives of the people cannot bear this imputation longer. The opinions of this house must be governed by a majority, and therefore the decisions of that majority should not become the sport of censure. I respect the men who make objections of this nature, but I more highly respect the great body of the people, represented by the commons in parliament, and therefore I tell them, that when they express such sentiments, they are out of order, and that their expressions tend to lessen the authority of parliament with the people." The minority, on this question, received some numerical increase, for the numbers were ninety-four against government, and a hundred and forty for it.

The next violent struggle between government and its opponents took place on the 26th of February, when Mr. Forbes moved the second reading of the place bill. Ministers had now been so provoked with the galling attacks to which they had been exposed during the whole of the session, that, in revenge for the menace of impeachment, they had uttered threats of state prosecutions, and the debate on the night of which we are now speaking, was characterized by unusual bitterness of feeling. It was represented, in favour of the bill, that there were then not less than a hundred and four persons holding places or pensions, being members of that house, and that the place bill in England had long been considered one of the necessary parts of the constitution. The ministers complained that the opposition had adduced no new arguments in favour of the bill, and that such a bill might be necessary in England, and yet uncalled for in Ireland. They again complained, that they were continually assailed with charges of employing corrupt influence, and that these charges were brought forward in general terms and without evidence. These complaints again drew forth the eloquence of Grattan and Curran, the former of whom alluded in very strong language to the threats of the court. "I

cannot avoid observing," he said, "that in this day's debate gentlemen on the other side of the house have adopted a certain tone of power, I presume in consequence of a very indecent and disorderly interposition on the part of one who does not belong to this house, though he has lately interfered in its proceedings. Sir, I am not uninformed to what length that person went within these walls, even during the debates of this house; it seems to me somewhat strange, that gentlemen on the other side should dwell so much on the necessity of parliamentary decorum, when they have been evidently spirited up by an interposition, which in itself was the grossest violation of parliamentary decency. Sir, I have been told, it was said that I should have been stopped, should have been expelled the commons, should have been delivered up to the bar of the lords, for the expressions delivered that day. I will repeat what I said on that day. I said that his majesty's ministers had sold the peerages, for which offence they were impeachable. I said they had applied the money for the purpose of purchasing seats in the house of commons for the servants or followers of the castle, for which offence I said they were impeachable. I said they had done this not in one or two, but in several instances; for which complication of offences I said his majesty's ministers were impeachable, as public malefactors, who had conspired against the common weal, the independency of parliament, and the fundamental laws of the land; and I offered and dared them to put this matter in a course of inquiry. I added, that I considered them as public malefactors, whom we were ready to bring to justice. I repeat these charges now, and if anything more severe was on a former occasion expressed, I beg to be reminded of it, and I will again repeat it. Why do not you expel me now? Why not send me to the bar of the lords? Where is your adviser? Going out of the house I shall repeat my sentiments, that his majesty's ministers are guilty of impeachable offences; and advancing to the bar of the lords, I shall repeat these sentiments; or if the tower is to be my habitation, I will there meditate the impeachment of these ministers, and return not to capitulate, but to punish. Sir, I think I know myself well enough to say, that if called forth to suffer in a public cause, I will go farther than my prosecutors, both in virtue and in danger."

The minority was on this occasion increased to ninety-six, against a hundred and forty-three. Another long debate took place on the 3rd of March, on the legality of issuing fiats for levying unascertained damages. The numbers, on this occasion, were ninety-one and a hundred and twenty-five, the house being not so full as usual. One Magee, the printer of a newspaper, whilst under a criminal prosecution at the suit of Mr. Higgins, was confined to jail upon different fiats, signed by lord Clonmel, to the amount of seven thousand eight hundred pounds. He had petitioned parliament, and a committee had been appointed. Mr. George Ponsonby, who led the patriots on this occasion, moved, "That it was the opinion of the committee, that the issuing writs from courts of justice in actions of slander or defamation, where the sum of damages could not be fairly ascertained, and holding persons to special bail in excessive sums thereon, is illegal, and subversive of the liberty of the subject."

The fifth of March witnessed another violent debate on the second reading of the pension bill, which was opposed by government. The ministerial party complained on this occasion of the bitterness of the attacks which they had sustained from the opposition, whom they called upon with an air of authority to account for their conduct. Sir Hercules Langrishe led the attack against the pension bill, as one of the ablest defenders of the court. He attacked the place bill with art, rather than with argument. After remarking with some asperity on the complaints of the opposition, and the remedies they were proposing for the suffering in state, he proceeded to observe:—"The first grand specific of my learned friend, is the place bill; why, sir, that may be a very good prescription, and agree very well with some constitutions, but as for us, give me leave to say, it has always here been a question on which doctors differed; some of our best and ablest men have always been apprehensive that the state of this country, as to affluence and numbers, was not such as to allow of the exclusion of placemen from parliament. They thought it would too much degrade the executive, by throwing the offices of the crown into lower hands, and that if there ever should be any thing like corruption in the state, it was better it should rest on the ostensible and responsible, than to flow in dark and secret channels where you

could never face it, for every body knew that every enemy is most formidable in proportion as he is most concealed. The next favourite prescription of my learned friend is the pension bill, now before you; but, indeed, since he has taken it off the file, where it has lain since the last year, he has so altered, he has added so many compounds and new ingredients, that if I had not seen the hand that administered it, I should not have thought it was the same medicine, or came from the same shop. In the first place I must make my acknowledgments to my learned friend for his kind attention to our wives; in this new composition he has added something for their particular use, something at least to confirm them in habits of abstinence. As a married man, I am obliged to him for his attention to our tenderest connections, but I have some doubts whether his partiality may not, in this instance, have led him to throw a little too much weight into the scale of female supremacy. As the laws stand at present, every man is governed by his wife,—that is very right! and some wives have power enough to turn their husbands out of their own houses if they choose it,—that, perhaps, may be right enough too: but I have some doubt whether it would not be too much to enable the wife to turn her husband out of the house of commons, if she choose it, and this in effect the present bill does. I will explain its effect fairly and familiarly. Suppose any person in power were to have a good understanding with my wife or your wife, Mr. speaker, or any other honourable member's wife—suppose then this bill to pass, and next session we were to come down here to give a vote, not supposed to be very agreeable to government, to vote, suppose, an impeachment, a place bill, a responsibility bill, or such like, when we come to the door, 'Hold!' says Mr. Lestrangle, 'you cannot come in here! your wife has dismembered you,—she took a pension this morning for pleasure, and you know by Mr. Forbes's bill that disqualifies you from sitting in parliament.' If this were to happen, my honourable friend must confess he had sacrificed rather too largely on the altar of beauty; and let any man read the bill and tell me, why that may not be the case? I shall now rest on another objection to the bill that is obvious to every man, the absolute power it gives the crown to vacate seats in parliament. Besides,

there are so many searching ingredients introduced, to follow the blood through such a circuitous progress, through so many dark and secret passages, that we cannot trace their effects. I am sure we have not sufficient time this session to examine or analyze the different materials, so as to judge of their probable operation. Upon the whole then of those political maladies and political medicines, I, as one of the guardians of the country, must beg leave to answer thus—'Doctor, I am obliged to you. I daresay your medicines are very good, and have been of great use in other countries where they have been tried. I am sure they are made up with skill, and offered with benevolence; but I thank God, at present my ward is in very good health, improving daily in strength and spirit, and good looks: she has an excellent constitution, and has, by the assistance of her domestic friends, lately thrown off all her infirmities: therefore, doctor, with all manner of respect for your talents and integrity, I, as one of her guardians, must decline accepting your prescriptions.'

The pension-bill was thrown out by a hundred and twenty-four votes, against ninety-six. The next evening, the 6th of March, another favourite measure of the opposition, the responsibility bill, was thrown out without a division: and then Curran rose to make a promised motion, which he prefaced with a long and animated speech. In answer to the recent call from the opposite treasury benches, he said, "on their conduct he was not afraid to appeal solemnly to the sense of the country, at the eve of a political dissolution, when the members of the house were about to be refunded to the great mass of the people, and to give an account whether they had been remiss in their parliamentary vigilance, slumbered upon their posts, or betrayed passes of their constitution. He said gentlemen on his side of the house had been accused of invective: it was not their wish to shield, but to scourge venality. He decried the invective that could call a blush into the cheek of virtue or innocence: but the invective complained of was the last resource which God had left to injured virtue, and he gloried in the consciousness of being one of its dispensers. No man, he said, could be blamed for want of character or talents: he blamed not ministers for inability to defend, but for inclination to destroy. They had been charged with vin-

dictiveness, but did not their opponents, while trampling on the liberty of the press on one side, employ it for the purposes of vilification, misrepresentation, and scurrility on the other? He called upon the country to witness that he and the friends with whom he acted were solemnly pledged to each other, never to resign the project which he had held up against corruption: and though he might never again rise in that house, though it might not be their fate to see the perfection of that constitution which they hailed on its return to life, they would never relinquish their efforts in its support. He had the satisfaction to reflect, that in those countries where liberty was extinguished, it had never given way, but when the corruptions of the prince had combined with the vices of the people for its subversion. But he thanked heaven that country was blessed with a virtuous and patriotic prince, attached to the freedom and happiness of his people, and the spirit of the people was yet unbroken. Even in the capital, where corruption sat like an incubus upon the public heart, and sucked the vital blood of the constitution, the indignation of the people was manifest against the conduct of their rulers. He called upon the representatives of the people to join him in an address to his majesty: in a supplication to that king whom all revered, not as from an humble arm of the British empire, but as from a great and independent kingdom, to free them from those measures which rendered that country a scandal to the name of British liberty." Curran concluded by moving the following resolution:—"1. That an humble address be presented to the king, to inform his majesty, that having taken into consideration the growth of expense and influence in that country, it appeared, on a comparative view of the public charges of 1759, with those of 1784, exclusive of the charges for bounties and parliamentary grants, and including the charges in collecting the revenue, that there had been in 1789 an increase of expense of one hundred and eighty-three thousand pounds. That the civil list within that period had increased thirty-one thousand pounds, of which the increase of the pension-list was sixteen thousand pounds, besides fourteen thousand pounds which had ceased, and was supplied within the same period: so that in the course of five years not less than thirty thousand pounds a-year in pensions had been granted on the civil establishment

alone, besides an increase in military pensions, and in charges on other establishments in the nature of pensions. 2. That the expense of collecting the revenues has, since Lady-day, 1784, increased one hundred and five thousand pounds. 3. That the increase of expense of collecting the hereditary, additional, and stamp duties, had increased seventy-three thousand pounds, without including additions made since March, 1789, by adding two members of parliament to the revenue board, and making nine commissioners of revenue instead of seven, the number to which the commissioners were in 1773 reduced by public agreement; and also without including new salaries, given in the persons of five members of parliament to stamp officers, for discharging a duty which was formerly annexed to the board of accounts by public agreement, and executed without any distinct salary, and without complaint. 4. That this increase of seventy-three thousand pounds could not be justified; that the new taxes, particularly those on malt and tobacco, were no excuse for such an increase, inasmuch as the tax on malt produced not more than twenty-seven thousand pounds net; and that the late excise on tobacco was not attended with any increase of revenue. 5. That that expense was the more censurable, because the collection of the revenue was already loaded with many unnecessary charges, particularly great salaries to officers of customs who did no duty, and with other sinecure offices, which were in fact pensions given to individuals for political considerations, without any view to the collection of the revenue. 6. That the increase of the revenue since 1784, after paying drawbacks and bounties, appeared to be a sum not less than one hundred and sixty-eight thousand pounds; but by the increase of expense in collecting the same, was reduced to a net sum of about sixty-seven thousand pounds, so that after deducting the charge of thirty-two thousand pounds for the post-office, his majesty's government paid seventy-three thousand pounds for getting net to the treasury sixty-seven thousand pounds. 7. That they were sensible of the blessing of his majesty's reign, and the improving state of the agriculture and commerce of the country, but must consider the same as the result of a free constitution, recovered under his majesty's auspices, and not of the ability or virtue of his present ministers; on the contrary, that their plans of expense, if not immediately

checked, must deprive them of those blessings, inasmuch as the public expense exceeded the public income in a sum of not less than seventy thousand pounds, after allowing for a payment of thirty-four thousand pounds made to government that year for New Geneva, which was a casual resource, and could not again recur; so that their annual expense was then in a course of exceeding their annual income in a sum of more than one hundred thousand pounds, notwithstanding the new taxes. 8. That in the two last years, ending holy-day, 1789, after striking off fictitious charges, they had increased the debt of the nation one hundred and thirteen thousand pounds, notwithstanding a surplus of the loan duties in that period to diminish the funded debt, and the continuation of those new taxes which were granted in consequence of preventing the accumulation of any debt whatsoever. 9. That this house having before them the returns of those articles of revenue, in which the health and comforts of the people were particularly concerned, could not but observe, that the regulations affecting the breweries, appeared not only to have been fruitless, but in a great degree pernicious, inasmuch as the inland excise on beer and ale, for three years previous to July, 1789, produced not less than three hundred and ninety thousand pounds, whereas the said excise for the three years, ending 1790, produced two hundred and sixty-six thousand pounds, which was a falling off in the latter period of one hundred and twenty-four thousand pounds, so that the breweries had been almost extinguished by the present regulation, and instead of giving the people a wholesome and necessary liquor, the regulations of his majesty's ministers had extracted a pernicious income from the sale of spirits, at the expense of the morals and health of the lower class of the people. 10. That this house having taken into consideration the growth of influence, begged leave to inform his majesty, that within the last year, the new salaries and additional places created for members of that house, together with new or revived offices for the same, amounted to a number not less than fourteen, and there was also a considerable number of pensions granted to members of that house or to their connexions, within the same period, and that the joint increase was so considerable, as to comprehend a number which, when taken from one side

and added to the other, was not less than that majority which had, in the course of that session, usually decided the great questions between the people and the ministers.

11. That when they looked at the progress of influence within the last twenty years, they found, that the number of revived or new places and salaries created within that period, and then in the possession of members of that house, was not less than forty, a number which exceeded all the counties in Ireland, and that they could not but observe, that the number of placemen and pensioners, then members of that house, was not less than a hundred and eight. That to that they were to add a number of persons expecting both reversions and honours; and that they could not avoid informing his majesty, that they had but too strong reason to apprehend that the ministers of the crown had grossly abused the prerogative, by virtue of which his majesty had been wont to confer honours on the subject, and they apprehended, that his ministers had entered into various agreements for the purpose of procuring improper and corrupt returns into that house by the sale of the honours of the other. 12. That they were most apprehensive for the safety of their liberties, inasmuch as the attempts of actual influence had been accompanied by positive declarations, and his majesty's faithful commons had been informed, that in order to defeat a resistance made in parliament to the will of the minister, certain great portions of the public money had been expended, to which most alarming confession they could annex no meaning other than that the government of that country had, in breach of trust, misapplied the public treasure under the names of place, pension, or salary, to induce individuals to betray the community for such corrupt considerations. 13. That even the particular sums so expended had been specified and confessed; and that this corrupt and desperate practice alarmed them the more, because it had not transpired as a crime to be punished, but had been openly avowed as an instrument of government to be again resorted to. 14. That such exercise of influence had not only been confessed, but defended on a principle most offensive to the feeling, and derogatory from the condition of his majesty's subjects of Ireland. 15. That when they sought the same securities and provisions for the liberties of the people, which Great Britain had adopted against the cor-

rupt influence of the minister, they had been told, that such provisions, however proper in Great Britain, were not calculated for the meridian of Ireland; for that the government in that country should be stronger than the government in Great Britain, and of course the influence and authority of the people of Ireland comparatively weaker in the balance of the constitution. 16. That such wild and unconstitutional distinction, construing the people of Ireland out of the benefit of equal liberty, to introduce among them a superior degree of corruption and profligacy, called forth from his majesty's faithful commons of Ireland, the warmest protestations, and they did protest against it accordingly. And further, they did, in the name and on behalf of the people of that realm, claim and challenge an equal inheritance in the blessings of the British constitution, and an equal right to secure those blessings by every wise and salutary law. 17. That they begged leave further to inform his majesty, that personal as well as political liberty was in danger; that the subject had been imprisoned against law, by being held to arbitrary and excessive bail. The declaration of rights, calculated to secure him against such oppression, had been disregarded and violated; the liberty of the press attacked, and the hopes of the nation in her great inquest of correcting such mischiefs, blasted by the interposition of his majesty's ministers, protecting from inquiry those illegal and arbitrary proceedings, which they could not presume to justify. 18. That they had ventured to lay the above particulars before his majesty, most humbly imploring his majesty's royal interposition, to guard their country against those dangers which then threatened the independence of parliament, and the liberties of the people."

This summary of the grievances which had been the subject of debate during the whole session, met with the same fate as the motions that preceded it. After a very violent debate, which lasted till half-past four o'clock on Sunday morning, Curran's motion was negatived by a hundred and forty-one against ninety; but he gained his object of having this statement of the complaints of the patriots entered on the journals. It was the last attack they made during the session. After a few days of common-place business, which produced no debates of any consequence, the lord lieutenant closed the session on the fifth of

April, merely thanking them for the dispatch with which they had concluded the business of the nation.

Thus ended this session of unusual violence, one of the most harassing that the

court had yet encountered. Three days afterwards, on the eighth of April, the parliament was dissolved, and a new one was immediately elected.

CHAPTER XVII.

NEW PARLIAMENT; CONTINUED EFFORTS OF THE PATRIOTS TO EMBARRASS THE MINISTRY; DISTURBED STATE OF THE NORTH; THE UNITED IRISHMEN; CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION, AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.



HE bitterness of the parliamentary debates during the session just described, and the newspaper paragraphs which had been sent abroad so plentifully by the whig club and other political societies, had produced a deep effect upon people out of doors. In parliament, ministers were omnipotent; they overawed the house of lords by creating numbers of new peers, while they ruled the commons by the distribution of places and money. The more the present government made itself absolute in parliament, the more violent became the popular feeling against it, and the consequent agitation throughout the country afforded a favourable opportunity to the missionaries of the revolutionary principles which at that time triumphed in France, and which soon gained considerable head in Ireland. The ministers and the ministerial writers affected to treat all their opponents as unprincipled revolutionists, and by the persecution which they raised indiscriminately against them, they no doubt drove numbers of the more moderate advocates of liberal principles into the ranks of the violent partisans of French republicanism. A northern whig club had been formed at Belfast, with lord de Clifford as its president, and as lord Charlemont was one of its most zealous members, the volunteers of the north in general supported it. The government organs attacked this club with the bitterest invective, and the whig press retorted with similar asperity. The police bill was obnoxious, because it gave the court an overbearing influence in the corporation of Dublin, and it was proposed

by some of the popular party that the mayor and aldermen should be required to subscribe a test binding them not to accept any appointment under the police; but instead of agreeing to it, they entered into an agreement that no man should be eligible to the board of aldermen who should have signed any declaration or test whatsoever. Among these struggles and disputes in the city, Napper Tandy rose to great popular influence; it was he who headed the opposition party in the corporation, and his efforts to obtain the election of alderman James, one of the patriots, to the mayoralty, led to a violent rupture between the mayor and aldermen and the common council.

The elections of members to the new parliament took place in May, and then the popular ferment broke out into many acts of violence. Very serious riots occurred in many parts of the kingdom. The violence was greatest in Munster; where, colonel Massey being returned for the county of Limerick, the mob attacked him and his friends, and they hardly escaped with their lives. The rioters afterwards razed to the ground the houses of many gentlemen who voted for him; and among others they destroyed the beautiful seat of sir D. Burgh, although his wife, lady Burgh, fell on her knees to the mob, and begged them to spare it. In other places, the violence of party led to quarrels which ended in duels, which had in several cases fatal results. Yet notwithstanding the prevalence of the popular feelings throughout the country, the castle had sufficient interest to hinder any great change in the return of members, and parties in the new parliament remained much the same as before, except that perhaps the

number of the court party was slightly increased.

A quarrel with Spain occurred at this moment, and a war between Great Britain and that country was deemed inevitable, upon which the Irish parliament was called together on the 10th of July, for the purpose of granting extraordinary supplies to meet the emergency. Mr. Foster was again chosen speaker, and a grant of two hundred thousand pounds towards the Spanish war met with no opposition. This short session lasted only a fortnight, and after its close lord Westmoreland, who was alarmed at the spread of revolutionary principles, and was anxious, if possible, to break the unpopularity which attached to his name, made an excursion of nearly nine months through the provinces, visiting the houses of the principal nobility, and adopting various measures calculated to produce an impression on the community. Among other acts, was that of appearing, both himself and lady, always clad in Irish manufactures; and he gave no little satisfaction by authorising at the theatres the performance of the Beggars' Opera, which had been strictly forbidden by his predecessor.

Parliament reassembled again on the 20th of January, 1791. During the preceding autumn secretary Hobart had been in England, consulting with the British ministers on the plans which were to be pursued by the Irish ministers during the ensuing session, which promised to be, as far as the opposition was concerned, a repetition of the last. The lord lieutenant's speech announced that the differences with Spain had been peaceably arranged, and therefore that a great part of the money they had granted in the previous session would be saved. The addresses passed with very little opposition, further than a simple statement, by the popular leaders, of their want of confidence in the administration. One of the first measures proposed by government, a proposal to stop the excessive use of spirituous liquors, which were the bane of the lower orders, was supported by Grattan and his friends. The first direct attack upon government was made on the third of February, when Mr. George Ponsonby again moved for an inquiry into the increase of places and pensions given to members of parliament. The debate was but a repetition of old arguments, on both sides; the ministerial party complained that this session should be dis-

turbed by a revival of the questions disposed of in the last, and the opposition accused them of not meeting questions of difference between them with reasoning and argument, but of carrying everything with "dead majorities." The numbers on this occasion were a hundred and thirty-nine for ministers, and seventy-two against them.

On the seventh of February, a string of resolutions, relating to the revenue, moved by Grattan, were negatived without a division; and, next day, he revived his motion of the former session relating to the corrupt disposal of peerages. "When a right honourable gentleman in the service of government," said Grattan, "was last session asked what redress of grievances was intended, he answered with a blank; but he added, as a compensation for the absence of all good to be demanded of the present government, that at least they would govern according to the law of the land. It is with much regret I am now obliged to inform that right honourable gentleman that the government, for whom he made that engagement, has not governed according to the law of the land, but has, in divers instances, violated that law. I propose three questions for the right honourable gentleman's consideration: First, Is not the sale of peerages illegal? Second, Is it not a high misdemeanour and impeachable offence? Third, Whether a contract to purchase seats for persons named by the ministers of the crown, with the money arising from the sale of peerages, is not in itself an illegal and impeachable transaction, and a great aggravation of the other misdemeanours? I wait for an answer. Does the right honourable gentleman continue in his seat? Then he admits these transactions to be great and flagrant breaches of the law. No lawyer I find so old and hardy—so young and desperate—as to deny it. Thus it appears that the administration of this country, by the acknowledgment of their own lawyers, have in a high degree broken the laws of the land. I will now discuss the nature of transactions admitted to be illegal. I know the prerogative of conferring honours has been held a frugal way of rewarding merit; but I dwell not on the loss of any collateral advantages by the abuse of that prerogative, but on the loss of the essence of the power itself, no longer a means of exalting, and now become an instrument of disgrace. I will

expostulate with his excellency on this subject. I will bring him to an eminence, from whence he may survey the people of this island. Is there, my lord, a man of all who pass under your eye, one man whom you can exalt by any title you may think to confer? You may create a confusion in names, or you may cast a veil over families, but honour, that sacred gem, you have cast in the dirt. I dont ask you merely whether there is any man in the island whom you can raise, but I ask you is there any man whom you would not disgrace, by attempting to give him title, except such a man as would exalt you by the acceptance—some man whose hereditary or personal pretensions would rescue his name and dignity from the apparent blemish and ridicule cast on him by a grant from those hands to whom his majesty has most unfortunately abandoned in Ireland the reins of government. The mischief does not go merely to the credit, but may affect the existence of the nobility. Our ministry, no doubt, condemn the national assembly in extinguishing the nobility of that country, and I dare say they will talk very scrupulously and very plausibly on that subject; they certainly have not extinguished the nobility of Ireland, but they have (as far as they could) attempted to disgrace them, and by so doing have attempted to lay the seeds of their extinction. The Irish ministry have acted with more apparent moderation; but the French democracy have acted with more apparent consistency. The French democracy have at one blow struck from the nobility, power, perquisite, and rank; the Irish ministry have attempted to strike off honour and authority, and propose to leave them their power and their privileges. The Irish ministry, after attempting to render their honours as saleable as the seats of justice were in France at the most unregenerated period of her monarchy—propose to send them abroad to exact deference from the people as hereditary legislators, hereditary counsellors to the king, and hereditary judges of the land; and if hereafter any attempt should be made on our order of peerage, look to your ministry, they are the cause—*they—they—they who have attempted without success, but with matchless perseverance, to make the peerage mischievous, and therefore are guilty of an eventual attempt to declare it useless.* Such a minister is but a pioneer to the

leveller—he composes a part of his army, and marches in the van, and demolishes all the moral, constitutional, and political obstructions of principle, and purity, and all the moral causes that would support authority, rank, and subordination. Such a minister goes before the leveller like sin preceding the shadow of death, shedding her poisons and distilling her influence, and preparing the nectar she touches for mortality. I dont say that such a minister with his own hands strips the foliage off the tree of nobility. No—he is the early blight that comes to the island to wither your honours, in the first blast of popular breath to scatter, so that at last the whole leavage of nobility may descend. This minister, he does not come to the foundations of the house of lords with his pick-axe, nor does he store all their vaults with trains of gunpowder. He is an enemy of a different sort—he does not purpose to blow up the house of parliament, he only endeavours to corrupt the institutions; he only undermines the moral props of opinion and authority; he only endeavours to taint nobility—he sells your lords and he buys your commons. We support the tree of nobility, that it may flourish for ever, and stand the blight of ministers and the blast of popular fury—that it remain in its hill rejoicing, and laugh to scorn that enemy, which in the person of the minister of the crown, has gone against the nobles of the land; that they may survive—survive to give counsel to those very ministers, and perhaps, *to pronounce judgment upon them*—but if ever the axe should go into that forest—if on the track of the merchant, men in the shape of the minister, the political woodman, in the shape of the leveller, should follow—if the sale of peerages, as exercised by the present minister, becoming the ordinary resource of government, should provoke a kindred extreme, and give birth to a race of men as unprincipled and desperate in one extreme as they are in the other, we shall then feel it our duty to resist such an effort, and as we now resist the minister's attempts to dishonour, so shall we then resist the consequence of his crimes—projects to extinguish the nobility."

Instead of denying the charge, the ministerial speakers retorted on their opponents that, under the administration of lord Northington, which the whigs had supported, a person was ennobled, and returned two castle secretaries into that house in

part payment for his honour. On this occasion the numbers were, for ministers a hundred and thirty-five, against them eighty-three.

On the twelfth of February, Curran brought the same question forward again, with merely a slight alteration in the form of the motion. He said that he and his friends were ready to bring forward their evidence, if the house would order an inquiry, and he taunted the ministers with being afraid to place themselves in the hands of justice. "To have claims of alleged right," said he, "continually overborne by a majority, might induce credulous minds to suppose the house corrupt. Another circumstance might contribute to give strength to the suspicion; we had enjoyed our constitution, such as it was, but eight years, and in the course of that time there had been twice that number of attacks made on it; and now those very gentlemen spend their nights in patriotic vigils, to defend that constitution, whose patriotic nights were formerly spent in opposing its acquisition. These circumstances naturally led the public mind to suspicion—they were corroborated by another no less remarkable: an honourable baronet (the allusion was to sir Henry Cavendish), a man fleshed in opposition—one who had been emphatically called the arithmetic of the house—to see such a man march to join the corps of the minister, without any assignable motive under heaven for the transition, as if tired of explaining the order of the house—of talking of the majesty of the people, of constitution, and of liberty—to-day glorying in his strength, rejoicing like a giant to run his course, and, to-morrow, cut down, and nothing left of him but the blighted root from which his honours once had flourished. These were circumstances which, when they happened, would naturally put the people on their guard." He then exhorted the house to consider their dignity, to feel their independence, to consider the charge he laid before them, and to proceed on it with caution and with spirit. "If I charge a member of your house," said he, "with a crime which I am ready to prove, if you give me an opportunity, and am ready to submit to the infamy of a false accuser if I fail; then, to screen such a man, and not permit me to prove his guilt, is yourselves to convict him, and convict him of all the guilt and baseness of a crime, allowing him

no chance of extenuation from the circumstances of the case. Now, I say again, we have full proof to convict. I have evidence unexceptionable; but, if you call on me to declare this evidence, I will not do it till you enter on the inquiry. I have some property in this country—little as it may be it is my all. I have children, whom I would not wish to disgrace. I have hope, perhaps more than I have merit—all these I stake on establishing my charge. I call on you to enter on the trial." After a very long speech, Mr. Curran moved, "That a committee be appointed, consisting of members of both houses of parliament, who do not hold any employment, or enjoy any pension under the crown, to inquire, in the most solemn manner, whether the late or present administration have, directly, or indirectly, entered into any corrupt agreement with any person, or persons, to recommend such person, or persons, to his majesty, for the purpose of being created peers of this kingdom, on consideration of their paying certain sums of money, to be laid out in the purchase of seats for members to serve in parliament, contrary to the rights of the people, inconsistent with the independence of parliament, and in direct violation of the fundamental laws of the land."

Curran's motion was seconded by Grattan. He was still opposed on the ground of want of novelty, to which charge Grattan replied with some acerbity. "Permit me," he said, "to advert to the general dull and empty declamation uttered by the advocates of a corrupt government against the defenders of an injured people. Four times, those advocates tell us, have we brought this grievance forth, as if grievances were only to be matter of public debate when they were matters of novelty, or as if grievances were trading questions for a party or a person to press, to sell, and to abandon [this was another allusion to the desertion of sir Henry Cavendish]; or as if we came here to act farces to please the appetite of the public, and did not sit here to persevere in the redress of grievances, pledged as we are, and covenanted to the people on these important subjects." The house divided at two o'clock in the morning, the numbers being for ministers a hundred and forty-seven, and against them eighty-five.

On the 21st of February Grattan brought before the house a measure calculated to conciliate the merchants to his party: a

motion for a free trade to India; it was opposed by the ministry, and, after a very warm debate, negatived by a majority of a hundred and forty-seven against eighty-six. On the fourth of March, Grattan again attacked the police bill; he and his friends subsequently brought in a place bill, a pension bill, and a responsibility bill; but all these, with one or two other motions of less importance, were negatived with similar majorities, and again the session ended barrenly, except inasmuch as it had offered a fierce battle field to the two contending parties. It was closed on the fifth of May, with a speech in which the two houses were thanked for their unremitting attention to their parliamentary duties.

The northern province had now become more notorious for its turbulence than the south, and the feud between the defenders and the peep-o'-day boys still continued to show itself in a number of savage acts of atrocity, especially in the old scene of these outrages, the county of Armagh. Both parties consisted chiefly of the lowest and most brutal of the peasantry. The defenders had of late increased and become more formidable, and the utmost difficulty was found in bringing any of them to justice. An outrage committed at the end of the January of 1791, affords a striking example of their ferocity. A protestant gentleman of Forkhill, near Dundalk, dying at the beginning of 1787, had left an estate of about four thousand a year in that parish for charitable purposes, ordering that the land, consisting of about three thousand acres, should be colonized by protestants, and that schoolmasters should be established on it to instruct gratuitously children of the poor without regard to their religious persuasion. In 1789, the trustees obtained an act of parliament to carry the provisions of the bill into execution, and they entrusted the management of the estate and charity to the rev. Edward Hudson, rector of Forkhill, who was himself one of the trustees. The catholic peasantry of the surrounding districts were incited to hinder the establishment of this colony, and they held out violent threats against the protestants who might come to reside upon it. Mr. Hudson, as the managing agent, was twice shot at. An assassin on one occasion went from among the congregation assembled in a neighbouring popish chapel, to intercept Mr. Hudson, who was passing by on horse-

back, and concealing himself behind a bush on the road side, he deliberately fired at the clergyman, and killed his horse. The new colonists are described as being hunted like wild beasts, and treated with savage cruelty; their houses were demolished, and their property destroyed. These outrages were usually committed by torch-light. One night the depredators burnt the manor mill, and would have murdered the miller, had he not made his escape naked across the river. At length they determined to wreak their vengeance on the schoolmaster, and on one of the last days of the January of 1791, at seven o'clock in the evening, assembled round the house of one of them, a Scottish presbyterian, named Alexander Barclay. One of the assailants rapped at the door, and when Barclay heard the voice of a neighbour, named Terence Byrne, of whom he had no distrust, asking for admittance, he incautiously opened it to them. The assailants suddenly rushed in, threw Barclay on his face, and three of them stood on him and stabbed him repeatedly. They then put a cord round his neck, which they tightened so as to force out his tongue, which they cut off as far as they could reach, as well as the fore-finger and thumb of his right hand. They then seized upon his wife, who is described as a handsome young woman, upon whom they seem to have exhausted their barbarity. In cutting off her tongue and fingers, they made use of a blunt knife, so that the operation took them above ten minutes, and then they beat her in a dreadful manner, and cut off one of her breasts. The only other person they found was a boy of about thirteen years, the brother of Mrs. Barclay, who had come from Armagh that morning on a visit; they deprived him of his tongue in the same manner as the others, and cut off the calf of his leg. They then decamped, leaving the three miserable creatures in this condition, of which the woman died, after lingering a very short time. Terence Byrne fled, and no more was heard of him; nor would any of the perpetrators of this horrible outrage have been discovered, had not one of them turned approver, and a man named Murphy was convicted on his evidence, corroborated by the fact that part of the stolen property was found in his possession. He was hanged at Forkhill. This outrage produced a great sensation among the presbyterians of the north, and the report that the treatment of the Barclays had been ap-

proved by the popish priests in the vicinity, served to exasperate the two religious parties against each other.

The political feeling was, however, at this moment becoming more prominent than the religious dissensions. The hostility of parties had produced less permanent effect on the population of the south than on that of the north. Among the presbyterians of Ulster republican principles and a feeling of admiration of the French revolution had spread widely, and was fostered rather than suppressed by the mistaken hostility shown by ministers indiscriminately towards every popular question. The agitation among the masses brought into public notice numerous individuals, many of them of very humble extraction, but with more talent than most of their equals, whom a restless spirit, disappointed ambition, or the love of confusion, urged to take the lead in any revolutionary movement; and they were joined by men of better rank and education, whose honest, though perhaps mistaken convictions, or whose broken fortunes, carried them in the same direction. All these grasped eagerly at the example which had been set them in France, either from the delusive hopes of liberty which had been there held out, or for the promise of indulgence which it held out to their ambition or their neediness. This feeling had even found its way into the bosom of the catholic committee, which had for some time, sitting in Dublin, represented rather coldly the interests of the catholics of Ireland. It had been ruled by the representatives of the catholic aristocracy, who formed a large portion of the committee, and who looked with as much jealousy as the Irish government at the democratic movement. At the period of which we are now speaking, the democratic party in the committee was under the management of John Keogh, with Richard M'Cormack, John Sweetman, Edward Byrne, Thomas Braughall, and other persons, who became notorious in the subsequent troubles, as their leaders. A young barrister of considerable talents and of an aspiring disposition, who had hitherto been disappointed in his prospects of ambition, and had gradually become a determined republican, became acquainted with the leaders of the democratic party in the catholic committee, and from that moment devoted himself entirely to the revolutionary cause. This was Theobald Wolfe Tone, who had then just completed his twenty-

eighth year, a period of life when men discontented with their reception in the world, and struggling with narrow circumstances, are easily led into desperate courses. Tone soon formed an extensive acquaintance with the republicans in the north, as well as with those of Dublin, and he became chiefly instrumental in beginning the system of political organization which soon produced such alarming effects. It was under his directions, while on a visit to Belfast, where the French principles of liberty had established themselves more than in any other part of Ireland, that a political society was formed in that city in the autumn of 1791, under the title of *the United Irishmen*. It was the part which he took in the establishment of this society at Belfast that first gave Tone much influence among the republican party. On his return to Dublin, he obtained an introduction to the great agitator in the corporation of that city, James Napper Tandy, and with his assistance succeeded in establishing a similar society of United Irishmen in the capital, of which Mr. Simon Butler was chairman, and Napper Tandy secretary. Branch societies were soon formed throughout the country, and a rage for becoming united Irishmen spread everywhere with extraordinary rapidity.

The ruling principle of the United Irishmen was hatred of England, and admiration of revolutionized France. This they constantly avowed, individually and collectively, and the method by which they proceeded to carry out their principles was, almost from the first, that of arming the populace. These principles and plans were, at first, carried on in secrecy, under some outward show of moderation. The society in Dublin, somewhat in imitation of the French democrats, appointed committees for different special objects, and among these was a corresponding committee, the business of which was to hold constant communications with all who held the same opinions in the provinces. This committee drew up a circular, which, at the close of the year 1791, was circulated throughout Ireland, and which professed to be a declaration of their principles and designs. It ended with proclaiming, that one of the first objects of the society of United Irishmen was to obtain an efficient reform in parliament. Tone, who had been so active in the formation of these societies, appears to have obtained very little influence in

them, and in his autobiography he confesses his mortification at this circumstance. "For my own part," he says, "I think it right to mention that at this time the establishment of a republic was not the immediate object of my speculations. My object was to secure the independence of my country, under any form of government, to which I was led by a hatred of England, so deeply rooted in my nature, that it was rather an instinct than a principle. I left to others, better qualified for the inquiry, the investigation and merits of the different forms of government, and I contented myself with labouring on my own system—which was luckily in perfect coincidence, as to its operation, with that of those men who viewed the question on a broader and juster scale than I did at the time I mentioned. But to return. The club was scarcely formed before I lost all pretensions to anything like influence in their measures; a circumstance which at first mortified me not a little; and, perhaps, had I retained more weight in their councils, I might have prevented, as on some occasions I laboured unsuccessfully to prevent, their running into indiscretions, which gave their enemies but too great advantages over them. It is easy to be wise after the event. So it was, however, that I soon sank into obscurity in the club, which, however, I had the satisfaction to see daily increasing in numbers and consequence."

When parliament reassembled on the 19th of January, 1792, Grattan again raised his powerful voice against the administration of lord Westmoreland, in a long and eloquent analysis of the grievances of the nation. "It is now ten years," he said, "since you recovered your constitution, and three since, in the opinion of some, you have lost it. Your present ministers made two attempts on your liberties; the first failed, and the second has succeeded—you remember the first—you remember the propositions: the people of Ireland would not consent to be governed by the British parliament; an expedient was devised—let the Irish parliament govern the people of Ireland, and Britain govern the Irish parliament. She was to do so specially in those subjects in which she had been most oppressive—monopolies of commerce east and west. We were to put down the Irish constitution, in order to put up British monopoly against Irish commerce. The ministry who conducted this trick, took

care to make the Irish advance by a certain number of propositions, under an assurance that the British cabinet would to an iota accede, and they made the Irish parliament give an additional revenue on the faith of that accession. They then suffered the propositions to be reversed—turned them against the country from which they were supposed to proceed, and made them fatal at once to her constitution, and to her commerce. The individuals concerned in this business, some of them had pledged themselves against an iota of alteration; they broke their honour. The Irish minister was pledged to a specific system, he prevaricated; in the attempt on her liberty he was a violator—in taking her taxes a swindler. This measure was defeated by the influence principally of that part of the aristocracy who refused to go through the bill, and who *have been dismissed*. They who made the attempt have been advanced, and rewarded. The path of public treachery in a principal country leads to the block, but in a nation governed like a province, to the helm. The second attempt, was modelling of the parliament; in 1789 fifteen new salaries, with several new pensions to the members thereof, were created at once, and added to the old overgrown parliamentary influence of the crown. In other words, the expenditure of the interest of half a million to buy the house of commons—the sale of the peerage, and the purchase of seats in the commons—the formation of a stock-purse by the ministers to monopolize boroughs, and buy up representation. This new practice, whereby the minister of the crown becomes the common borough-broker of the kingdom, constitutes an offence so multitudinous, and, in all its parts, so criminal, as to call for radical reformation, and exemplary punishment. Whether the persons concerned, be lord Buckingham, or his secretary, or those who became the objects of his promotion, because they had been the ministers of his vices, it was a conspiracy against the fundamental laws of the land, and sought to establish, and has established, in the place of a limited monarchy, a corrupt despotism; and if anything rescues the persons, so concerned, from the name of traitors, it is not the principle of law, but its omission, that has not described by any express provisional statute, that patricide of which these men, in intention and in substance, are guilty. They have

adopted a practice which decides the fate of our parliamentary constitution. In vain shall we boast of its blessings, and of its three estates—the king, the lords, and the commons—when the king sells one estate to buy the other, and so contaminates both. The minister has sent one set of men packing into the peers, and another set of men packing into the commons; and the first he calls the hereditary council, and the latter the grand council of the nation, and both—that once great and august institution—the parliament. Such a condition, I say, puts the constitution of Ireland not below a republic, but any other form of genuine and healthy government; it is not mixed monarchy, with parts happily tempered, and so forth—the cant of grave and superannuated addresses—but a rank, and vile, and simple, and absolute government, rendered so by means that make every part of it vicious and abominable—the executive who devours the whole, and the other two parts which are thus extinguished—of such a constitution, the component parts are debauched by one another. The monarch is made to prostitute the prerogative of honour by the sale of honours—the lords by the purchase, and the commons prostitute their nature by being the offspring, not of the people, but of the traffic; and prostitute themselves again by the sale of their votes and persons. I allow the British constitution the best, and I arraign this model as the worst, because practically and essentially the opposite of that British constitution. The British minister has given an account of the English constitution, which he wishes to extend to the Irish constitution. ‘Aristocracy,’ says he, ‘reflects lustre on the crown, and lends support and effect to democracy, while democracy gives vigour and energy to both, and the sovereignty crowns the constitution with dignity and authority—aristocracy is the poise,’ says he: ‘give an infusion of nobility.’ The minister here can answer him. He who sold the aristocracy and bought the democracy—he who best understands in practice what is this infusion of nobility. He who has infused poison into this aristocratic and this democratic division of power, and has crowned the whole with corruption. He well knows all this, as far as Ireland is concerned, to be theatric representation, and that the constitution of the country is exactly the reverse of those scenes and farces which are acted on the public stages—

of imposture and hypocrisy. By this trade of parliament the king is absolute—his will is signified by both houses of parliament, who are now as much an instrument in his hand, as a bayonet in the hands of a regiment. Like a regiment, we have our adjutant, who sends to the infirmary for the old, and to the brothel for the young; and men thus carted, as it were, into this house, to vote for the minister, are called the representatives of the people. Suppose general Washington to ring his bell, and order his servants out of livery to take their seats in congress. You can apply this instance. We have read a description of the late national assembly of France. I can suppose something more degrading even than this picture—suppose an assembly, not ruled, as it was suggested, by a club of Jacobins, but by a Swiss major, who robbed the treasury of France, and bought the assembly. You can apply this instance.”

On the very first day of the session sir Hercules Langrishe gave notice of his intention to bring forward a bill for the relief of the catholics, and it was announced that it would be supported by the ministers. It appears that they considered it a matter of some consequence at this moment, when the mass of the catholic population seemed to be rushing into the hands of the revolutionists, to conciliate the more influential members of that persuasion. The catholics in general, had been actively agitating during the preceding year, and the republican party early adopted the policy of professing toleration towards them, and the desire to fraternize with them, and join in obtaining their emancipation. The spread of the new opinions among the catholics had given rise to a division in the catholic committee, where the democratic party carried on a constant warfare against the aristocracy, until the latter left the committee in a body, and from that time it became a mere ally of the United Irishmen. The noblemen and other leaders of the Irish catholic body having declared and shewn by their acts a determination to support the government, it was but just to show them some indulgence, and the English ministers, partly at the instigation of Edmund Burke, determined that they would give them some relief, and had entrusted to Langrishe, the friend of Burke, and always the consistent supporter of their claims, the task of bringing in a bill for that purpose. This he did on the 25th of January, when after stating that

the question he was bringing forward had not received the special attention of parliament for ten years, he proceeded to show that the time was then not unfavourable to its consideration. "The good offices we owe one to another," he said, "the indulgence which is due to fellow subjects, recommended and endeared by the unimpeachable conduct of a century, the consideration that we owe to the national prosperity, all unite in calling our attention to the revision of this subject, at a time when the public mind is becoming more enlightened, and prejudices and jealousy are every day yielding to confidence and affection. It is not without much satisfaction, and I may be allowed to say, with some little pride too, that I take a part in this grateful duty; as I consider, amongst the few honours of my humble life, that of being almost the first member of the Irish parliament who ventured to state to you the imprudence and immorality of what were then the popery laws; as a system of jurisprudence, subversive of integrity, and as a scheme of government, which, whilst by its severity it alienated the body of the people, by its impolicy forbade them to vest in the state any hostage for their fidelity. I own, sir, I was not able in my researches into Holy Writ, to meet with that particular passage of the Scripture, that gives an authority to propagate the faith by a perversion of morals—or from a principle of piety, to prohibit the exercise of religious worship. I could not presume to think that it was ever justifiable for the sake of civil or ceremonial conformity, to build a code of religious laws on the ruins of almost every moral virtue and obligation; to sport with the most sacred feelings, and violate the fondest prepossessions of the human heart—to rob youth of education, and age of authority—to seduce the son to become an interested informer against the piety of the father, and so break the bonds of all domestic fidelity and affection. I know very well, that the state has a right to impose conditions on those who are to become the state itself. But to be entitled to common benefits, and equal protection, I know of no qualification but allegiance, a peaceable demeanour, and obedience to the laws."

After tracing briefly the history of what had been done for the relief of the catholics, and pointing out their merits, while he repudiated the imputations which had been

cast upon them, sir Hercules proceeded:—"Therefore, sir, I must freely confess, that notwithstanding my prepossessions in favour of the Roman catholic (which I shall always be proud to acknowledge, as they are justified by their conduct), though I can number some of them among my ancestors; though I love many of them as my friends, and embrace all of them as my countrymen, I was yet for some time checked in my ardour, and interrupted in the progress of my services to them, by reading of late a multitude of publications and paragraphs in the newspapers, and other prints circulated gratis, and communicated to every body, with every degree of industry, purporting to convey the sentiments of the catholic body of Ireland. If these were their sentiments, they were such as could not recommend them to the further favour of the state; they were such as must alienate their old friends, and could not get them new ones, if they would choose their friends from amongst those who are friends to the constitution. What was the import? They were exhortations to the people never to be satisfied at any concession, until the state itself was conceded; not only that, but until a new constitution should be made for their present accommodation, and future entertainment; they were precautions against public tranquillity; they were invitations to disorder, and covenants to discontent; they were ostentations of strength, rather than solicitations for favours; rather appeals to the powers of the people, than applications to the authority of the state; they involved the relief of the catholic, with the revolution of the government, and were dissertations for democracy rather than arguments for toleration; they seemed the projects of some bold theorists, whose principle was to divide man from man, and whose politics was to separate great Britain from Ireland; they seemed to be the effusions of some rash philosopher, ignorant of our system, who would set loose and adrift the little planet we inhabit, and commit it to the vortex of a vain and exploded philosophy, to range the universe without attraction, connexion, or relation to any greater or other body. Was there a man who felt the blessings of regulated rights and settled government; who knew the value of peace and the comforts of property?—Was there a man who preferred order to outrage, and happiness to speculation? or who looked at the growing pros-

perity of the country, whose mind must not have revolted at the tendency of such doctrines? or who must not have felt an accumulated concern and disappointment if he could for a moment suppose that they had originated with our catholic brethren? that they were the growth of that soil which we had so lately and so liberally cultivated?"

The motion was seconded by Mr. secretary Hobart, and a bill was accordingly brought in on the fourth of February. It allowed catholics to practise at the bar, to intermarry with protestants, to keep schools and educate their children, and to follow any trade or craft. Although the more respectable and influential catholics had expressed their satisfaction at these concessions, it was soon known that a large portion of the catholic body, and especially those who acted in confederacy with the United Irishmen, were not contented with them, and demanded nothing less than a total enfranchisement. After the nature of the bill had been made known, several petitions were presented in favour of the catholics, not only from members of their own body, but from protestants, and even one, on the 8th of February, from the presbyterians of Belfast, who, as we have already seen, had rendered themselves notorious by their zeal for the republican doctrines of France. Sir Hercules Langrishe expressed somewhat strongly his suspicions of the motives which could lead the presbyterians to make common cause with the catholics, and said that such a petition was calculated to hurt the catholics rather than otherwise. "I shall not object," he said, "to this petition being received from so respectable a member of this house,"—it was presented by Mr. John O'Neill—"but I have seen some treasonable productions from the same town that merit the severest punishment." Sir Boyle Roche went further; he said, "The question is, whether we will receive the insidious petition of a turbulent, disorderly set of people, whom no king can govern, or no God can please—or whether we shall treat it with its merited contempt. For my part, I call upon you to dispose of it as it deserves, by tossing it over the bar, and kicking it into the lobby; and I am determined to divide the house upon it, even if I should stand alone in so just a cause." Sir Boyle did stand alone, for no other member of the house partook in the violence of his sentiments.

On the 13th of February, Mr. Egan pre-

sented a petition which was understood to come from the catholic committee, but which professed to be from certain Roman catholics of the city of Dublin, praying that members of their persuasion should be admitted to the elective franchise. Their allegation was, "That as the house has thought it expedient to direct their attention to the situation of the Roman catholics of Ireland, and to a further relaxation of the penal statutes still subsisting against them, they beg leave, with all humility, to come before the house, with the most heartfelt assurance of the wisdom and justice of parliament, which is at all times desirous most graciously to attend to the petitions of the people; they therefore humbly presume to submit to the house their entreaty, that they should take into their consideration whether the removal of some of the civil incapacities under which they labour, and the restoration of the petitioners to some share in the elective franchise, which they enjoyed long after the revolution, will not tend to strengthen the protestant state, add new vigour to industry, and afford protection and happiness to the catholics of Ireland; that the petitioners refer with confidence to their conduct for a century past, to prove their uniform loyalty and submission to the laws, and to corroborate their solemn declaration, that if they obtain from the justice and benignity of parliament, such relaxation from certain incapacities, and a participation in that franchise which will raise them to the rank of freemen, their gratitude must be proportioned to the benefit, and that enjoying some share in the happy constitution of Ireland, they will exert themselves with additional zeal in its conservation."

The reading of this petition called up Mr. Ogle, the great opponent of the catholics in the house of commons, who said, "Sir, I do not rise to oppose the introduction of this petition, humble in its words, but bold in its tenor; but I rise to say that the claims that are every moment making on the protestant ascendancy must be met; a line must be drawn somewhere, beyond which we must not recede, and I will caution gentlemen to be upon their guard. It is my intention, when the bill goes into committee to move to expunge the present preamble, and introduce another for the purpose of maintaining the protestant interests of Ireland, and to prevent those new claims which every day produces. Every thing which you grant in compliance with those

claims of the Roman catholics is just so much lost to the protestants who have sent us here; as one, I am determined to maintain their rights; and I think it my duty, even in these critical times, to shew that I am not afraid to meet and to repel claims injurious to their interests, and destructive of their ascendancy.—Sir, I have said this is a petition humble in its words, but bold in its tenor; and I now add, it means much more than it professes; it is signed by certain individuals, but it comes indeed from a Roman catholic convention sitting in Dublin. It is true their claims are not so strongly expressed as when they told you they must have every thing, and that they would persevere till they had totally overthrown your ascendancy; but such as it is, it must be met and opposed at any risk. It is impossible to grant Roman catholics what they demand, if we at all regard the protestant safety. My honourable friend will see by the debate of this night, before tomorrow's sun shall dawn he will be convinced of what I say: I do therefore call upon gentlemen to agree to a preamble which I intend to offer to the bill, and which will pledge them no farther than to maintain that constitution obtained for us by the virtue and valour of our great and good deliverer, king William the Third."

This was the night of the grand debate on the catholic bill, which was supported by the influence of the ministers, and by the eloquence of Grattan and Curran, and it was passed into the committee without a division. On Monday, the 20th, occurred a long and warm debate on the motion to reject the petition of the catholic committee, which had been presented on the previous Saturday. In the course of the debate several allusions were made to the democratic leaders in the catholic committee and to the united Irishmen. Sir Boyle Roche asked who were they who affected to be the representatives of the Roman catholics of Ireland? Were there amongst them any of the ancient nobility, or of the gentry of Ireland? Was there a single man of respectability or character? No, not one. There was indeed Mr. Edward Byrne, a sugar baker, a seller of wines and other commodities, and he was the first name, and put in the front of the battle. There was another, John Keogh; and who was he? Why, he was a retailer of poplins in Dame-street. These men met over their porter to consider of commanding the government

—they met at a chop-house—at Denham's chop-house in particular, where the former of them in his cups happened to dream that he was a nabob of Ireland. As to the rest of them, they were so obscure, that he could neither recollect nor describe them. This same John Keogh, he said, had distributed several thousands of Payne's pamphlet (*the Rights of Man*), through the country, and they were circulated generally by the petitioners. The solicitor-general spoke temperately on the petition, and was for rejecting it with less harshness. "The petition before you," he said, "and the persons who have subscribed it, are to be treated with respect; they have approached you with decorum, and their conduct should be discriminated, though the amount of what they ask cannot be granted. I would wish to convince them, that it is because we are a protestant house of commons, feeling the tolerant and moderate principles by which only civil liberty has been fostered and matured, that we have attended to and wish to ameliorate their situation, in despite of those officious and presumptuous men who call themselves their advocates, but never were their friends; and who have dared to grasp at them as the instruments of outrage, and involve the country in calamity and confusion. I know the dispositions of my countrymen too well, to suppose that they will hand themselves over to factious men as their directors, and I know the parliament too well to believe that it can be warped by the bugbear of inflammatory publications; I know that you will proceed with firmness and temper, and that you will deliver your thoughts with manly freedom, and without flattery or fear. Of what are you to be afraid? I have heard indeed a language within and without these walls, and I have heard principles declared, in my opinion very desperate, very profligate, and very dangerous, signed by those men who now come forward with a petition, which, though under a very modest guise, considering where it came from, I am inclined to suspect as a piece of the same principles. We are not at this day to be taught by political quacks, who tell us that radical reforms are necessary in parliament. I have seen papers signed Tobias M'Kenna, with Simon Butler in the chair, and Napper Tandy lending his countenance. It was rather odd they could not contrive to set a better face on the matter; but, sir, to use the language of an honourable member behind me on a

recent occasion, such fellows are too despicable for notice, and therefore I shall not drag them from their obscurity. I cannot help joining in the laugh at such ridiculous attempts to alarm your feelings, as if you could be swaggered out of your senses, or bobadilled out of your reason. You have the confidence of the people, and they are conscious of the blessings they enjoy. I tell the Roman catholics, for many of whom I have the most sincere personal regard, that for their sakes, as well as ours, we will preserve that constitution by which they have been, in common with others, protected and secured in the enjoyment of everything that is dear to man. I will tell them that we ought not to suffer a rash and innovating spirit to disturb it; I will invite them to bend their prejudices to the state, but I will not suffer, if I can, the pride of the state to bend to their prejudices." Later on in the debate, when colonel Hutchinson seemed to take some of these observations to himself, the solicitor-general rose to explain, that he did not in any way allude to him, but to "that blasted society called United Irishmen. He was sorry he had sat down without calling those fellows to the bar, but he now pledged himself to the house that he would do it." Grattan opposed the motion, as a hard measure towards the petitioners, but he was supported by few of his friends. Even George Ponsonby joined in the feeling which prevailed in the house. After expressing the pain which it gave him to differ with Grattan, he proceeded:—"This petition seeks the elective franchise for the Roman catholics; and it has been said in this house, that this franchise shall neither now nor ever be granted them. No man despises the prejudices of popery more than I do, and I confess I do not think that it would be wise to extend to them the elective franchise at this time; but I am far from saying, and I should be very sorry to suppose, that a time would never come when this measure would be both safe and advantageous to this country. I have not divulged my opinion upon this subject to many; I have not communicated with any of the Roman catholics, and I have disclosed my sentiments to a very few protestants. I know if any one of the objects of this bill had been proposed from this side of the house, it would have been said that we were a factious party of desperate men, who, not being able by our own natural strength to force ourselves into power, were

determined at any rate, and by the aid of any kind of men whatever, to carry our measures. I did think that the measure should have proceeded from a prince of the house of Brunswick, and his ministers; but never did I suppose that it could be introduced into this house without consulting those most immediately affected—the protestant gentlemen of Ireland. If it was intended to reconcile the catholics to the protestants, it ought to have been given from the protestants as favour to the catholics, proceeding from the kindness of the protestants, and accepted by the gratitude of the catholics. An honourable member has talked much of the factions of the times, of seditious pamphlets, and of inflammatory hand-bills; if any individual has violated the public peace by such practices, if our constitution has been traduced, and our establishments decried, why does the honourable gentleman content himself with scolding here? Why does he not drag the offender before the insulted majesty of the laws? Why does he not prosecute him in the court of king's bench, and exact the penalty of his transgressions? If any have suffered by these publications, so alarming in their tendency, it is this side of the house. Administration has not been injured; we only have experienced their ill effects, for the audacious spirit of these books has driven men of sense and weight into the arms of government, who would otherwise have opposed and reprobated their corruption. I do not think that rejecting this petition will be an insult to the Roman catholics. I would insult no man, but I think it is necessary for parliament to grant, and to define, the extent of their concessions. Ireland, last of all nations of Europe, felt the hand of civilization; there are parts of Ireland, of which we can hardly say that they are yet completely civilized; shall we impart the British constitution to men who cannot speak the British language? Shall we offer the privileges of perfect society to those who are hardly in the first stage of civilization? It is true, part of the Roman catholics, and a large part, must be exempt from this charge, but you must grant to all or to none. We should wait till our laws have operated, to see their effects; to interest the catholics in the settlement of property, we have given them the power of purchasing lands; by allowing them education, we will enlighten them; and by intermarriage, we

will increase our connection and render our interest the same; by admission to the bar, their minds will become liberal; but because we give them these privileges, we must not therefore give what should follow their effect; for all those causes should operate before we give them the elective franchise, the ultimatum of power. Parties are necessary in a free state; but religion, when brought into party, has always been destructive; it has been too long so in Ireland; I wish we could forget its consequences, and I hope the time will come, though I may not live to see it, when there will be no difference amidst Irishmen, but that of good and bad citizen."

The petition of the catholic committee was rejected by a majority of two hundred and eight, against twenty-three; and then the petition which had been presented on a former evening, and which had come from the society of United Irishmen of Belfast, was rejected with only two or three negatives.

The contemptuous terms in which the solicitor-general (Toler) spoke of the society of United Irishmen, moved the anger of its leaders, who seized upon it as an occasion of increasing the notoriety at which their vanity aimed. The morning after the debate, Napper Tandy, who had been specially alluded to, sent a hostile message to the solicitor-general, which was followed by a second. At night this insolent attack on their privileges was reported to the house of commons, and a warrant was issued to arrest Tandy, but he made his escape from the custody of the messenger. A resolution was then passed against him, and a proclamation was issued, offering a reward for his apprehension. This incident gave Wolfe Tone the occasion of recovering what he considered his position in the society of which he had been one of the founders, and he tells his story with no small degree of self-complacency. It seems that Simon Butler, the chairman of the United Irishmen, had also thought proper to withdraw himself from public attention. "Under these circumstances," says Tone, "I cast my eyes on Archibald Hamilton Rowan, a distinguished member of the society, whose many virtues, public and private, had set his name above the reach of even the malevolence of party; whose situation in life was of the most respectable rank, if ranks be indeed respectable; and above all, whose

personal courage was not to be shaken; a circumstance, in the actual situation of affairs, of the last importance. To Rowan, therefore, I applied; I shewed him that the current of public opinion was rather setting against us in this business, and that it was necessary that some of us should step forwards, and expose ourselves, at all risks, to show the house of commons, and the nation at large, that we were not to be intimidated or put down so easily. I offered, if he would take the chair, that I would, with the society's permission, act as secretary, and that we would give our signatures to such publications as circumstances might render necessary. Rowan instantly agreed; and accordingly, on the next night of meeting, he was chosen chairman, and I pro-secretary, in the absense of Tandy; and the society having agreed to the resolutions proposed, which were worded in a manner very offensive to the dignity of the house of commons, and in fact amounted to a challenge of their authority, we inserted them in all the newspapers, and printed five thousand copies, with our names affixed. The least that Rowan and I expected, in consequence of this step, which, under the circumstances, was, I must say, rather a bold one, was to be committed to Newgate for a breach of privilege, and perhaps exposed to personal discussions with some of the members of the house of commons; for he proposed, and I agreed, that if any disrespectful language was applied to either of us in any debate which might arise on the business, we would attack the person, whoever he might be, immediately, and oblige him either to recant his words or give battle. All our determination, however, came to nothing. The house of commons, either content with their victory over Tandy, who was obliged to conceal himself for some time, or not thinking Rowan and myself objects sufficiently important to attract their notice; or perhaps, which I rather believed, not wishing just then to embroil themselves with a man of Rowan's firmness and courage, not to speak of his great and justly merited popularity; took no notice whatsoever of our resolutions."

Napper Tandy was eventually arrested in consequence of the proclamation against him, but the magistrates before whom he was taken suffered him to go at large. He was, however, again taken into custody on the speaker's warrant, and brought before the bar of the house of commons, whence he

was committed to Newgate. This occurred on the last day of the session, the 18th of April; and almost directly after Tandy's committal the house was summoned before the lord lieutenant, who prorogued the parliament. As soon as the prorogation had taken place, Tandy, as a matter of course, was liberated; the society had accompanied him in a body since his arrest, and they now carried him home in triumph.

The catholic bill passed the commons without farther opposition on the 24th of February, and eventually passed into a law. It was the principal measure of the session; for the opposition had become much less active, and the ministerial speakers taunted them with having lost their popularity out-of-doors. A disastrous accident occurred during this session. During the sitting of the commons in committee on the 27th of February, the business of the house was interrupted by the sudden intelligence that the house had taken fire, from some accident caused by plumbers, then at work on the roof, and the clerk brought intelligence that the progress of the flames had been so rapid, that the dome would probably fall within five minutes. The speaker instantly resumed the chair, and put the question of adjournment, which passed, and the members hurried out of the house. In less than two hours the Irish house of commons, which had long been an object of admiration for its architecture and arrangements, was burnt to the ground.

The principal feature of the lord lieutenant's speech at the close of the session, was the paragraph in which he informed the parliament he had "his majesty's commands to express his approbation of the wisdom that has guided your proceedings during the present session, especially in the liberal indulgences you have afforded to your Roman catholic brethren, by establishing the legality of intermarriage, by admitting them to the profession of the law and the benefits of education, and by removing all restrictions upon their industry in trade and manufactures."

While the measure of catholic relief which government thought proper to grant, was passing quietly through parliament, the question was agitated with much more violence out-of-doors. The government relief bill gave but partial satisfaction; the more violent part of the catholics declared that they looked forward to an entire emancipation, and that they would be con-

tent with nothing less; and then inclined more and more to make common cause with the presbyterians, for they began to partake in the same wild revolutionary visions which had been spreading among the latter since the overthrow of the throne in France. The watchword of protestant supremacy had been too openly and perpetually sounded in their ears, and they were ready to do anything to overthrow it.

After the democratic party had gained the upper hand in the catholic committee, they determined to new-model the committee itself, and under pretence of a desire to make known the feelings of the catholic population on the subject of emancipation, they proceeded to form a sort of catholic convention, in imitation of what was going on in France. They took Wolfe Tone into their full confidence, and made him their paid agent, and, though he no doubt exaggerates a little his own importance, his account of their proceedings is the most authentic we possess. "It is," says Tone, in his autobiographic sketch, "to the sagacity of Myles Keon, of Keonbrook, county Leitrim, that his country is indebted for the system on which the general committee was to be framed anew, in a manner that should render it impossible to bring it again in doubt whether that body were or not the organ of the catholic will. His plan was to associate to the committee, as then constituted, two members from each county and great city, actual residents of the place which they represented; who were, however, only to be summoned upon extraordinary occasions, leaving the common routine of business to the original members, who, as I have already related, were all residents of Dublin. The committee, as thus constituted, would consist of half town and half country members; and the elections for the latter he proposed should be held by means of primary and electoral assemblies, held, the first in each parish, the second in each county and great town. He likewise proposed that the town members should be held to correspond regularly with their country associates, these with their immediate electors, and these again with the primary assemblies. A more simple, and at the same time more comprehensive organization could not be desired. By this means the general committee became the centre of a circle embracing the whole nation, and pushing its rays instantaneously to the remotest parts of the cir-

cumference. The plan was laid in writing, before the general committee, by Myles Keon; and after mature discussion, the first part, relating to the association and election of the country members, was adopted with some slight variation; the latter part, relating to the constant communication with the mass of the people, was thought, under the circumstances, to be too hardy, and was accordingly dropped *sub silentio*."

Tone proceeds to state that "the publication of the plan for the new organizing of the general committee gave an instant alarm to all the supporters of the British government, and every effort was made to prevent the election of the county members; for it was sufficiently evident that, if the representatives of three millions of oppressed people were once suffered to meet, it would not afterwards be safe or indeed possible to refuse their just demands. Accordingly, at the ensuing assizes, the grand juries universally, throughout Ireland, published the most furious, I may say frantic, resolutions against the plan and its authors, whom they charged with little short of high treason. Government, likewise, was too successful in gaining over the catholic clergy, particularly the bishops, who gave the measure at first very serious opposition. The committee, however, was not daunted; and satisfied of the justice of their cause, and of their own courage, they laboured, and with success, to inspire the same spirit in the breast of their brethren throughout the nation. For this purpose, their first step was an admirable one. By their order I drew up a state of the case, with a plan for the organization of the committee annexed, which was laid before Simon Butler and Beresford Burston, two lawyers of great eminence, and, what was of consequence here, king's counsel, to know whether the committee had in any respect contravened the law of the land, or whether, by carrying the proposed plan into execution, the parties concerned would subject themselves to pain or penalty. The answers of both the lawyers were completely in our favour, and we instantly printed them in the papers, and dispersed them in hand-bills, letters, and all possible shapes. This blow was decisive as to the legality of the measure. For the bishops, whose opposition gave us great trouble, four or five different missions were undertaken by different members of the sub-committee, into the provinces, at their own expense, in order to hold confer-

ence with them; in which, with much difficulty, they succeeded so far as to secure the co-operation of some, and the neutrality of the rest of the prelates."

The resolutions of the grand juries spoke generally of the plan of the catholic committee as an attempt to overawe parliament; that of Roscommon compared it to the national assembly of France; while that of Leitrim stigmatized the printed declaration of it, "an inflammatory and dangerous publication," and said "that they felt it necessary to come forward at that period to declare, that they were ready to support with their lives and fortunes, their present most valuable constitution in church and state; and that they would resist to the utmost of their power, the attempts of any body of men, however numerous, who should presume to threaten innovation in either." They all exclaimed against the danger of making further concessions to the catholics, and more especially against granting them the elective franchise.

"All parties," says Tone, "were now fully employed preparing for the ensuing session of parliament. The government, through the organ of the corporations and grand juries, opened a heavy fire upon us of manifestoes and resolutions. At first we were like young soldiers, a little stunned with the noise; but after a few rounds we began to look about us, and seeing nobody drop with all this furious cannonade, we took courage, and determined to return the fire. In consequence, wherever there was a meeting of the protestant ascendancy, which was the title assumed by that party, we took care it should be followed by a meeting of the catholics, who spoke as loud and louder than their adversaries; and as we had the right clearly on our side, we found no great difficulty in silencing the enemy in this quarter. The catholics likewise took care, at the same time that they branded their enemies, to mark their gratitude to their friends, who were daily increasing, and especially to the people of Belfast, between whom and the catholics the union was now completely established. Among the various attacks made on us this summer, the most remarkable for their virulence were those of the grand jury of Louth, headed by the speaker of the house of commons; of Limerick, at which the lord chancellor assisted; and of the corporation of the city of Dublin; which last published a most furious manifesto, threatening us, in so

many words, with a resistance by force. In consequence, a meeting was held of the catholics of Dublin at large, which was attended by several thousands, where the manifesto of the corporation was read and most ably commented upon by John Keogh, Dr. Ryan, Dr. McNevin, and several others; and a counter-manifesto being proposed, which was written by my friend Emmett, and incomparably well done, it was carried unanimously, and published in all the papers, together with the speeches above mentioned; and both the speeches and the manifesto had such an infinite superiority over those of the corporation, which were also published and diligently circulated by the government, that it put an end effectually to this warfare of resolutions."

The union between the catholic committee and the United Irishmen was now complete, and they acted together with the utmost unanimity. To forward the cause, twelve of the principal United Irishmen of Belfast subscribed two hundred and fifty pounds each to set on foot a newspaper, to which they gave the title of the *Northern Star*, which was edited by Samuel Neilson, and soon obtained a large circulation.

The catholic delegates were duly elected throughout the country, and they held their first meeting on the second of December, 1792, in Taylors' Hall, Dublin, and, from the street in which they thus assembled, they obtained the popular name of the Back-lane parliament. They met and deliberated with closed doors, and one of their first measures was to frame a petition to the king, in which they made a bold declaration of their grievances. Five delegates were chosen to present this petition to his majesty; the choice falling upon sir Thomas French, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Keogh, Mr. Devereux, and Mr. Bellew. Since the new modelling of the committee, extraordinary activity had been shewn in agitating the country, by every means possible; continual public meetings, votes of thanks

to, and confidence in, one another; the distribution of pamphlets and papers, and the celebrating of recent events in France, and other revolutionized countries. Every opportunity was taken to conciliate the volunteers, and a new body of volunteers, which assumed the French title of national guards, was arrayed and disciplined in Dublin. These wore green uniforms, with buttons engraved with a harp under a cap of liberty, instead of a crown. Their leaders were Rowan and Napper Tandy; and in their affected imitation of the French, they addressed each other by the title of citizen. These national guards, with the volunteer corps of Dublin, were summoned to meet on Sunday, the ninth of December, to celebrate the triumphs of liberty in France; but government interfered, and by a proclamation on the previous day forbade the assembly. The only members of the new body of national guards who appeared on parade, were Rowan, Tandy, and Carey, the printer. The fears of government had been excited by rumours of intended insurrection. They were understood to have information of the particular night fixed for the rising; and the magistrates were ordered to patrol the streets with bodies of horse. It was even given out, that the custom house, the post-office, and the gaol, were to be first attacked, and that the signal was to be given by pulling down the statue of king William, on College Green.

The petition to the king was itself made the instrument of parade and popular shew. The five delegates passed by Belfast to Donaghadee, the object of popular demonstrations on the way, and they passed from thence to the coast of Scotland, and so on to the English metropolis. The petition was presented to the king, at St. James's, on the second of January, was received graciously, and produced a recommendation of further indulgence to the catholics in the lord lieutenant's speech, at the opening of parliament.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE INCREASE OF DEFENDERISM; SESSION OF 1793; THE SECRET COMMITTEE; PARLIAMENTARY REFORM; FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO THE CATHOLICS; TRIAL OF ROWAN.



MID the agitation we have just been describing, the defenders increased in numbers and ferocity, not only in their old haunts, the counties of Armagh and Louth, but they began to overrun the county of Meath, particularly the part bordering on Cavan. Here they came in contact with a population of Scots, who regarded the catholic population with peculiar animosity, and who took up arms against the insurgents. The defenders, who now marched about in open day, assembled to the number of about a hundred and fifty, some with fire-arms, and the rest with such weapons as they could procure, near Petersville, the seat of a Mr. Tucker, with the avowed intention of rescuing some of their fellows, who had been captured by the Scots, and were prisoners in the little town of Bailieborough. On their way they learnt that the Scots, accompanied with a few military, and headed by the magistrates, were marching thither, and they placed themselves in ambush behind a wall to attack them. When their opponents approached, the defenders fired upon them, but they handled their arms so awkwardly as to do little hurt, and on the first fire from the military and Scots they fled with the utmost precipitation. A few of them, more closely pursued than the rest, took refuge in Mr. Tucker's house, and some of that gentleman's own labourers, who had been mere lookers-on, in their terror fled into the house with them. The victorious Scots made their way into the house, dragged the fugitives, guilty or innocent from their hiding-places, and in spite of the exertions of the military who acted with humanity, put them to death with circumstances of considerable cruelty. Excited by this victory, some of the peep-o'-day boys overran the country, attacking the houses of catholics indiscriminately, plundering and burning, till they were with considerable difficulty brought under restraint. In the counties of Louth and Armagh, the defenders

made great havoc, plundering the houses of the protestants, and committing other outrages, and even murders; and towards the end of the year a considerable number were brought to trial, and many of them condemned and executed.

The turbulence of the defenders was injurious to the catholic cause, and it was found necessary to discountenance them, which was done by printed notices of the catholic committee or convention. But the agents of the government, and all who were opposed to the granting indulgence to the catholics, professed to believe that the insurrection of the defenders was but a parcel of the joint agitation of the catholic committee and the United Irishmen, and they used it as an argument against concession. The leaders of the United Irishmen, on their side, began to negotiate with the defenders, in order to turn them to their own purposes. All things seemed to announce the imminence of some great convulsion.

The government was, indeed, at this moment seriously alarmed. The ministers were astonished at the rapid spread of the threatening system of the United Irishmen, and at the enemies which appeared to be rising on every side. They seemed at first rather stunned, but, soon recovering their courage, they proceeded to take active measures of resistance. All parties looked forward with anxiety to the opening of parliament, which met on the tenth of January, 1793. The speech from the throne expressed concern "that various attempts should have been made to excite a spirit of discontent and disturbance, and that appearances should have manifested themselves, in any part of this kingdom, of a design to effect, by violence, an alteration in the constitution." The result of the petition of the catholic committee appeared in another paragraph of the speech. "His majesty," said the lord lieutenant, "has the fullest confidence that you will, on all occasions, show your firm determination to enforce due obedience to the laws, and to maintain the authority of government, in which you may depend upon his majesty's cordial co-operation and

support; and I have it in particular command from his majesty, to recommend it to you to apply yourselves to the consideration of such measures as may be most likely to strengthen and cement a general union of sentiment, among all classes and descriptions of his majesty's subjects, in support of the established constitution; with this view, his majesty trusts that the situation of his majesty's catholic subjects will engage your serious attention, and, in the consideration of this subject, he relies on the wisdom and liberality of his parliament."

The address was debated rather warmly, and produced one of Grattan's eloquent and severe philippics against the conduct of the administration, but it was agreed to without a division. Most of the speakers expressed their alarm at the threatening attitude of the political societies, and more especially of the United Irishmen, and the necessity of resistance. The violence without had so far strengthened ministers within-doors. They thought it necessary, however, to conciliate the opposition, by making some popular concessions, and they surprised them on the fourteenth of January, by so far admitting the principle of parliamentary reform as to agree to refer the subject to a committee of the house of commons. On the 16th of January, they announced their intention of relieving the lower classes from, at least, a portion of the hearth-tax; and, the same day, leave was given to bring in a responsibility bill, and a pension bill, as well as some other popular measures. In return, the opposition assisted government in carrying through an alien bill, and an indemnification bill.

The 31st of January witnessed a somewhat warmer debate than the session had yet had, on the order of the day, for taking into consideration the proclamation of the eighth of December, for dispersing all unlawful assemblies, and for preventing seditious associations. It will be remembered that this proclamation was issued to prevent the meeting of the so-called national guards, at the instigation of the United Irishmen. The only discussion, on the question, arose from the wish to exonerate the volunteers from the censure which this proclamation seemed to convey. The chancellor of the exchequer deprecated all discussion on the subject, and a loud cry of question took place, which, however, ceased, when Mr. Grattan rose, and said:

"I approve of the proclamation as much as I condemn the use which the minister now attempts to make of it. The proclamation arraigned a certain body of men, whom it describes to be an association assuming devices and emblems of disaffection. The minister applies that to the volunteers of the city and the county; under that colour proposes to disperse them; and in order to justify that project, he produces a formal charge; that charge is confined to two heads: first, a summons, purporting to be that of the corps of goldsmiths, reciting that the delegates of the corps were to assemble to celebrate the retreat of the duke of Brunswick, and the French victory in the low countries, and inciting the goldsmith's corps to attend. I do not ask how far it was perfectly discreet to celebrate such an event, particularly if we consider the consequences to which such an event might possibly lead; but I ask, was it a ground for dismissing the volunteers? Do ministers mean to say, that they will disperse all the volunteers of Ireland, who celebrate the French victories in Brabant? I ask, also, of any man who can read, whether such a celebration brings these obnoxious corps within the description of the proclamation? Whether such a celebration was assuming the ensign of devices of disaffection? And it is more obvious, that such an event was not judged by the council who signed the proclamation a good reason for including the corps of the city, because, after that event had taken place, it expressly excepted them; it has saved the laudable associations, under the description of the old volunteers, and has confined the proclamation to the national guard. The style of the summons has given offence, if ministers do not approve of it; it begins, citizen soldiers: they are French terms, or rather, terms of French foppery, below our imitation. The date has, also, given offence; the last year, or the last moment, of slavery! Here again is French style, or frippery, introduced; but is that, or the other expression, or both, sufficient ground for the minister to disperse the corps, or is it such an offence as comes within the description of the proclamation? No man, who reads, can say it is. The minister himself, aware that his first charge was insufficient, has produced another. He has read a long address from a society, called the United Irishmen, inviting the people of Ireland to assemble in a national convention, and containing an

abundance of other matter; and he then produces a succession of resolutions from some of the corps of Dublin, one of which resolutions returns thanks to the society of United Irishmen. Without giving any kind of approbation of the matter of that address, I must say, that I think a minister would be highly indiscreet and presumptuous who should say, that the volunteers had, by those thanks, brought themselves within the description of the proclamation, or that they were guilty of assuming emblems and devices of disaffection; as little should I think him justified in dispersing them merely on account of those thanks. If so, you give the minister a right to disperse every volunteer corps in the city and county, if he do not approve of their politics. Now, though in the many resolutions which young men may adopt, some will be, and many were, exceptionable, yet I would not wish to establish over them, in the minister, an authority to take away their arms, if he disapproved of their politics. I know the evil use that he will make of that power, and the dangerous consequences and confusion to which it leads."

This debate was principally remarkable for the indiscreet heat of a young nobleman who afterwards rose to melancholy celebrity. Lord Edward Fitzgerald suddenly rose and said in a very vehement tone, "I give my most hearty disapprobation to that address"—the address approving of the proclamation—"for I do think that the lord lieutenant and the majority of this house are the worst subjects the king has." A loud cry of "to the bar!" and, "take down his words," was immediately echoed from every part of the house, which was cleared instantly, and a debate of three hours with closed doors followed, which ended in his being admitted to explain, and in a subsequent resolution, carried unanimously, "that the excuse offered by the right honourable Edward Fitzgerald, commonly called lord Edward Fitzgerald, for the said words so spoken, is unsatisfactory and insufficient." It was ordered that he should attend at the bar the day following, when another debate of two hours with closed doors ended in a resolution that his apology then given should be received.

On the fourth of February, the case of the catholics was brought before the house of commons by ministers, in conformity with the recommendations of the speech from the throne, and leave was given to bring in a bill

for their further relief. This further relief admitted the Roman catholics to vote at elections for members of parliament, to act as grand jurors, to endow a university and schools, to bear arms under certain restrictions, and to be admitted to bear commissions in the army and navy. It was opposed by Dr. Duigenan in a long and violent speech, but two hands only were raised against the introduction of the bill. A bill founded on these principles was accordingly brought in on the 18th of February, and was read a second time on the 22nd. It was opposed principally on the old general grounds of resistance, but on the 27th of February, when the house was in committee on this bill, Dr. Duigenan moved an amendment to the clause granting catholics the elective franchise, which limited that franchise to catholics possessing a freehold of twenty pounds a year value, or property to the amount of a thousand pounds. This motion gave rise to a debate, in which the longest speech was that made by the speaker, who had taken so prominent a part in the anti-catholic demonstrations of the preceding summer, and who rose in the chair and said, "When a bill is introduced in this house for changing the constitution under which we have lived in happiness and prosperity, and under which we have seen this kingdom gradually rise to a state of affluence, and to an extent of trade and manufacture, of freedom and independence, beyond the most sanguine expectation of its warmest advocates; when this change has been suggested to this kingdom from abroad, without any internal cause requiring its introduction, at a time of the most perfect content and unanimity, religious animosities at rest, and every man contributing his industry and exertions to the public weal—little as he was in the habit of speaking, he could not forbear to request the indulgence of the house while he should deliver his sentiments on so great a subject. However, before he entered into it, he would notice some of the transactions of last summer; this he wished to have avoided, but the manner in which the conduct of grand-juries had been mentioned, by two or three gentlemen in that house, made it absolutely necessary for him, and he would say their conduct had not only been proper, but necessary, and perfectly constitutional. Soon after the rising of parliament, last year, and after this house had almost unanimously rejected the petition of the catholics, for

granting a qualified franchise, a letter, signed Edward Byrne, had been circulated with a very suspicious secrecy, but was however publicly known before the summer assizes. This letter was full of sedition; he thought so from the moment he first saw it, and he thought so still. It told the catholic they were slaves; there can be no slaves, if there be no tyrants. To whom did it mean that they were slaves? To the protestants, who were then pointed out to them as tyrants and oppressors; an insinuation so notoriously false, that but for the remainder of the letter it might have passed unnoticed. It next endeavoured to poison the catholic mind against the protestant, by asserting that Roman catholic tenants were turned out of their lands to beggary, to make room for protestant freeholders. He now spoke in the hearing of the greatest part of the landed property in the kingdom, and he appealed to their knowledge whether such assertion was founded in fact, in any part of Ireland. It was not; and he would answer for the county in which he lived, and which he had the honour of representing, that no man in it made any distinction among his tenants for religious opinions, nor did he ever hear or believe, that any one catholic was ever turned out of his farm to make room for a protestant. The letter, with a view to further inflammation, tells them, they are not secure of an impartial administration of justice; thereby suggesting, that both grand and petty juries were so bigotted, so forgetful of their oaths, and magistrates so corrupt, that no impartial justice could be expected from them, and that a change of the law was essential to their protection. For what purpose was a statement so notoriously false made to the public, but to mislead and inflame the papists; to rouse their discontent against the protestants, and fire their passions to support a parliament of their own; which it was the great object of the letter to convene, and to convene in a manner the most obnoxious, after the French model and on French principles; a convention which was to pass by the parliament; to pass by the government, and transmit a petition to the throne, by deputies of their own; as if they would say to his majesty, 'you can put no confidence in your parliament, nor in your Irish government, they have acted wrong; we only can tell you the wishes of the nation; we are the proper judges of what ought to be the

constitution.' Some gentlemen had asserted the legality of their convention; he pretended not to much skill in law or knowledge of the constitution, but he challenged the boldest lawyer to meet him on that ground. He asserted it before them all, to be an illegal meeting. It is true he had seen opinions to the contrary, one of them given by a gentleman for whom he had the highest respect as a lawyer and a man, but the case was not fully stated, nor were the answers fully made to the queries. He would not say that the catholics, or any subjects, had not a right to meet and to form petitions by committees or deputies to his majesty or either house of parliament. He agreed to it in the fullest extent, but this was not the plan of the convention; it was not to be assembled for one particular object, but to be a permanent body, to watch over the interests of a class of his majesty's subjects. In that respect it partook of the nature of parliament; it took upon itself the duties of parliament, and could not be justified in a country where parliament formed part of the constitution. That it embraced more objects than one is evident, for the attendance of its members was expressly stated, not to be required except on important occasions."

The speaker then stated his objections to the clause giving the elective franchise to the catholics, and to the bill in general, which he urged the house to postpone till after the next assizes, in order that members might consult their constituents. The result of this debate was that Dr. Duigenan's amendment was negatived without a division. It passed the house on the 7th of March.

This bill was the most important business of the session. It was soon found that the ministry was not sincere in the encouragement given at first to other popular measures; the inquiry into the state of the representation came to nothing, and all Grattan's attempts to draw the house of commons into a pledge that it would take the subject of parliamentary reform into serious consideration were negatived, yet opposition had been so far thrown asleep, that ministers were allowed to carry several strong bills, the most important of which was the convention bill, which was intended to hinder the repetition of such proceedings as the catholic convention being applied to other political objects, and was especially

aimed at such a convention threatened to be held at Athlone. This bill recited that the election or appointment of assemblies, purporting to represent the people, or any description of the people, under pretence of preparing or presenting petitions, complaints, remonstrances, and declarations, and other addresses to the king, or to both or either houses of parliament, for alteration of matters established by law, or redress of alleged grievances in church and state, might be made use of to serve the ends of factious and seditious persons, to the violation of the public peace, and the great and manifest encouragement of riot, tumult, and disorder; and it enacted that all such assemblies, committees, or other bodies of persons elected, or otherwise constituted or appointed, are unlawful assemblies, and that all persons giving or publishing notice of the election to be made of such persons or delegates, or attending or voting or acting therein by any means, were guilty of high misdemeanour. This bill was warmly opposed by Grattan and the more stanch patriots, but in vain, for the alarm had become so great that many of the opposition voted for it.

This session was a long one, for it was not brought to a close till the 16th of August, when the lord lieutenant stated the king's satisfaction at the passing of the catholic relief bill, his concern at the disturbed state of the country, and the necessity he had been under of calling out the militia.

In the house of lords the catholic claims were treated with more asperity than in the house of commons, especially by the lord-chancellor and the archbishop of Cashel, who spoke against the relief bill with great heat. The lords were more alarmed even than the commons at the spread of political societies; and early in the session they had appointed a secret committee to inquire into the causes of the disorders and disturbances which prevailed in several parts of the kingdom. They made a hasty report, which is said to have been drawn up in part under the influence of the lord-chancellor, the principal object of which seems to have been to trace a connection between the outrages of the defenders and the proceedings of the catholic convention in Dublin. "The people at this time called defenders," says this report, "are very different from those who originally assumed that appellation, and are all, as far as the committee could discover,

of the Roman catholic persuasion; in general poor ignorant labouring men, sworn to secrecy, and impressed with an opinion that they are assisting the catholic cause; in other respects they do not appear to have any distinct particular object in view, but they talk of being relieved from hearth-money, tithes, county cesses, and of lowering their rents. They first appeared in the county of Louth in considerable bodies in April last; several of them were armed; they assembled mostly in the night, and forced into the houses of protestants, and took from them their arms. The disorders soon spread through the counties of Meath, Cavan, Monaghan, and other parts adjacent; at first they took nothing but arms, but afterwards they plundered the houses of everything they could find. Their measures appear to have been concerted and conducted with the utmost secrecy, and a degree of regularity and system not usual in people in such mean condition, and as if directed by men of a superior rank. Sums of money to a considerable amount have been levied, and still continue to be levied, upon the Roman catholics in all parts of the kingdom by subscription and collections at their chapels and elsewhere." The report then proceeded to show that the subscriptions were collected under the authority of the catholic committee, and adduced evidence which seemed to prove that money was expended by the catholic committee to conduct the defence of such of the insurgents as had been arrested and brought to trial. It then proceeded to state that, "an unusual ferment had for some months past disturbed several parts of the north, particularly the town of Belfast and the county of Antrim; it is kept up and encouraged by seditious papers and pamphlets of the most dangerous tendency, printed at very cheap and inconsiderable rates in Dublin and Belfast, which issue almost daily from certain societies of men or clubs in both those places, calling themselves committees under various descriptions, and carrying on a constant correspondence with each other. These publications are circulated amongst the people with the utmost industry, and appear to be calculated to defame the government and parliament, and to render the people dissatisfied with their condition and with the laws. The conduct of the French is shamefully extolled, and recommended to the public view as an example for imitation; hopes and expectations have been

held up of their assistance, by a descent upon this kingdom, and prayers have been held up at Belfast from the pulpit for the success of their arms in the presence of military associations which have been newly levied and arrayed in that town. A body of men associated themselves in Dublin under the title of the first national battalion, their uniform is copied from the French, green turned up with white, white waistcoat, and striped trowsers, gilt buttons impressed with a harp, and letters importing '*first national battalion*;' no crown, but a device over the harp of a cap of liberty upon a pike; two pattern coats were left at two shops in Dublin. Several bodies of men have been collected in different parts of the north, armed and disciplined under officers chosen by themselves, and composed mostly of the lower classes of the people. These bodies are daily increasing in numbers and force; they have exerted their endeavours to procure military men of experience to act as their officers, some of them having expressly stated that there were men enough to be had, but that officers were what they wanted. Stands of arms and gunpowder to a very large amount, much above the common consumption, have been sent within these few months to Belfast and Newry, and orders given for a much greater quantity, which it appears could be wanted only for military operations. At Belfast, bodies of men in arms are drilled and exercised for several hours almost every night by candle-light, and attempts have been made to seduce the soldiery, which, much to the honour of the king's forces, have proved ineffectual. The declared object of these military bodies is to procure a reform of parliament, but the obvious intention of most of them appears to be to overawe the parliament and the government, and to dictate to both."

The publication of this report increased the general alarm, and gave great umbrage to the United Irishmen and the catholic convention. The latter published a statement of their accounts, to show that none of their money had been applied to the purposes intimated in the report; but from which it appeared that the sum of fifteen hundred pounds, together with a gold medal, had already been voted to Theobald Wolfe Tone, in gratitude for his services. Declarations of loyalty were also published by different bodies of catholics, and urgent appeals to the populace were made by many

of the catholic clergy. Among other manifestations intended to counteract the belief that the defenders were countenanced by any of the respectable catholics, a meeting of the sub-committee of the catholic convention, was held as early as the 2nd of January, Denis Thomas O'Brien, esq. in the chair, at which the following address to the catholics of Ireland was agreed to, and ordered to be published, and it was now widely circulated:—"The sub-committee, appointed by the general committee of the catholics of Ireland to transact such business as may be necessary during the adjournment of the latter, feel it their indispensable duty to warn the body at large against any attempts of pretended friends or declared enemies to mislead them, to drive them into a violence derogatory to their unspotted character of loyalty and obedience to the laws, or subversive of the unanimity which ought to subsist amongst every description of Irishmen; they beg leave to recommend to the serious consideration of their catholic brethren, how unnecessary it is for them to attend meetings convened for the purpose of expressing their allegiance, since that purpose is answered in a more dignified, solemn, and authorized manner by their delegates, who are sent to lay their grievances at the foot of the throne; declarations, therefore, however respectably brought forward by name, ability, or property, can add no weight to those expressions of attachment to the king and constitution, which the catholic petition to our most gracious sovereign contains, but must rather take from its efficacy and consequence by useless repetition, and by frittering down a great national act into partial and local exertion. The committee are grieved to hear of the success of designing men in agitating the minds of the lower order of their persuasion in a part of this country, and filling them with apprehensions of danger from their protestant brethren, a circumstance which has prompted these unhappy men to arm and stand on their defence. They would wish to impress upon their mind, in indelible characters, that it is the most ardent desire, and the object nearest the heart of every individual in the general and sub-committees, that all animosity between protestants and catholics should cease, and lie buried in the graves of their ancestors; that inhabiting one common country, and adoring the same God, the united charities of religion and

country may melt us down into one people, and for ever establish a reciprocity of interests and a community of rights. The committee trust that the catholics of Ireland never will, nor ever can forget their obligations to their protestant brethren, who have stood forward as their advocates and protectors. Should any of their persuasion have well-grounded cause to fear for their lives or liberties, it is their duty to state it, and solicit the protection of government; should they request the subcommittee to state their situation, the subcommittee will not be wanting. But they earnestly recommend to the catholics in general the continuation of that dutiful and exemplary conduct, which under circumstances of unprecedented hardship, has for a century made them the admiration of all who can do justice to and feel for the adversities and virtues of mankind. The world will now see their conduct, and unquestionably their king and country will reward it; for he is a just and a gracious king, and protestants must at last see, that nothing but union at home, a union arising from equal law and equal liberty, can guard the island from domestic or foreign foes. In this sanguine and well-founded hope, the committee conjure their catholic brethren to rest upon their arms, the only arms the hostility of the law cannot take away,

* This ill-advised young nobleman at this time made no secret of his opinions. In a letter from Paris to his mother, since published, he wrote: "I lodge with my friend Paine; we breakfast, dine, and sup together. The more I see of his interior, the more I like and respect him. I cannot express how kind he is to me; there is a simplicity of manner, a goodness of heart, and a strength of mind in him, that I never knew a man before possess. I pass my time very pleasantly—read, walk, and go quietly to the play. I have not been to see any one, nor shall I. I often want you, dearest mother; but I should not have been able to hear Tunbridge for any time. The present scene occupies my thoughts a great deal, and dissipates unpleasant feelings very much. Give my love to Ogilvie and the girls. I think he would be much entertained and interested if he was here. I can compare it to nothing but Rome in its day of conquest; the energy of the people is beyond belief. There is no news that the *Morning Chronicle* does not tell you, so I won't repeat. I go a great deal to the assembly: they improve much in speaking. God bless you, my dearest mother. Believe me your affectionate, &c. Let me know if I can do anything for you here. Direct, Le citoyen Edward Fitzgerald, Hotel de White, au Passage des Petits, pres du Palais Royal." Soon afterwards the following announcement made its appearance in the papers of Paris and London: "Paris, Nov. 19th. Yesterday the English arrived in Paris, assembled in White's Hotel, to celebrate the

the arms of reason and justice, and patiently wait the decision of their fate, the fate of three millions of aggrieved and loyal subjects. Signed by order, JOHN SWEETMAN, sec."

Although the united Irishmen themselves professed the same loyalty as the catholic convention, the avowals of many of their leaders, at a later period, shows that much of the statement of the secret committee of 1793 was founded in truth, and that that body was secretly training the peasantry to arms, in support of French revolutionary principles, and was looking forwards to assistance from France, to assist in carrying their designs into effect. Several of the societies corresponded with similar societies in France, and some of their chiefs repaired to France to strengthen the fraternity which they now courted. Among these was lord Edward Fitzgerald, who had passed the latter part of the year 1792 in Paris, in the closest intercourse with the revolutionists.* It is no less true, that the United Irishmen were already tampering with the defenders, and they were probably well acquainted with their leaders. At a later period, the United Irishmen avowed their connection with them, and boasted of the skill with which they had moulded them to their own purposes.† The negotiators between the United Irishmen and the de-

triumph of victories gained over their late invaders by the armies of France. Though the festival was intended to be purely British, the meeting was attended by citizens of various countries, by deputies of the convention, by generals, and other officers of the armies then stationed or visiting Paris. J. H. Stone, in the chair. Among the toasts were, 'The armies of France: may the example of its citizen soldiers be followed by all enslaved countries, till tyrants and tyranny be extinct.' An address proposed to the national convention. Among several toasts proposed, by the citizens sir R. Smith, and lord E. Fitzgerald, were the following: 'May the patriotic airs of the German Legion (Ca Ira, the Carmagnole, Marseillaise March, &c.), soon become the favourite music of every army, and may the soldier and citizen join in the chorus.' General Dillon proposed, 'the people of Ireland: and may government profit by the example of France, and by reform prevent revolution.' Sir Robert Smith and lord E. Fitzgerald renounced their titles; and a toast, proposed by the former, was drunk, 'The speedy abolition of hereditary titles and feudal distinctions.'

† "After the defenders had spread into different counties, they manifested a rooted, but unenlightened, aversion, among other things, to the same grievances that were complained of by the union [the United Irishmen]. They were composed almost entirely of catholics, and those of the lowest order, who, through a false confidence, were risking them-

fenders were not without danger; and during the spring of 1763, one of the most prominent of the former was under the necessity of flying from his country. This was no less a person than Napper Tandy, who had been prosecuted on the charge of distributing a seditious publication in the county of Louth. Tandy was to have been tried at the Dundalk assizes, on the sixteenth of February, and he was proceeding to Louth for that purpose, when his attorney, the notorious Matthew Dowling, discovered that bills had been found against him, on another charge of a more serious nature, that of holding communication with the defenders at Castle-Bellingham, in the county of Louth, and there taking their oath. Napper Tandy made his escape from Ireland, and, proceeding to America, established himself at Wilmington, in Delaware, where he remained till he embarked for France, with other Irish refugees, at the beginning of 1798.

The new grant of relief to the catholics did little towards allaying the revolutionary flame which had now spread through Ireland, although it was accepted with every demonstration of gratitude by the respectable body of the catholics. The government itself, in many cases, showed a feeling towards the catholics, which gave grounds for saying that they had only passed the bill because it was forced upon them by the British ministry, and that their inclinations did not go with it. On the other hand, the United Irishmen were enraged at the proceedings of the secret committee of the house of lords, and, in their anger, they drew up an indiscreet protest against its powers, which exposed them to the resentment of that house. Simon Butler, and Oliver Bond, who signed this document as chairman and secretary at the meeting where it was passed, were committed to Newgate, and fined five hundred pounds each. Their imprisonment was a continual festival, and made their cause more popular. The society made four hundred tickets, a certain number of which were blanks, while the remainder were

marked with the dates of the days that the prisoners were to remain in confinement. Each person who drew one of the latter, was obliged to provide a dinner, with twelve covers, on the day specified in his ticket. Each of the prisoners invited three persons, and the person whose turn it was to furnish the repast invited three, and thus a dinner party, of twelve United Irishmen, was held daily in Newgate.

The hostility of the government towards the catholics was shown in the calling out of the militia, according to the act just passed for that purpose. Great difficulty was at first found in raising the different regiments; for, although catholics had been rendered capable of serving in them, no catholic officers were appointed, a circumstance which excited so much distrust, that the militia corps could not be completed, until a few catholic officers had been reluctantly named. The difficulty of raising the militia was increased by false reports spread abroad by the enemies of government. In the American war, some corps had been raised under the pretence of serving as militia, who were immediately placed under coercion, and shipped off for service in the West Indies, whence few returned; these had been popularly designated by the title of green linnetts. The catholics called upon to serve in the militia were now told that they were to be duped in the same manner, and that the government plan was merely a trick to get them together, and send them off to Botany Bay. This report was the cause of very serious riots. In the neighbourhood of Athboy, the common people rose in a tumultuous manner, and overrun the surrounding country, robbing the gentlemen and peaceable inhabitants of their arms. They swore people not to act against them, and set all the forges to work in making warlike weapons. One only of the magistrates showed any activity, and, though not seconded by the others, he sent for a military force from Kells, Navan, and Trim; when the insurgents were informed of this, they assembled to the number of

selves, and the attainment of redress, by premature and unsystematic insurrection. In the north they were also engaged in an acrimonious and bloody struggle with an opposite faction, called peep-o'-day-boys. The advantage of reconciling these two misguided parties, of joining them in the union, and so turning them from any views they might have, exclusively religious, and of restraining them from employing a mutually destructive exertion of force, most powerfully struck the minds of several United

Irishmen. For that purpose, many of them in the northern counties went among both, but particularly the defenders—joined with them—showed them the superiority of the union system, and gradually—while government was endeavouring to quell them by force—melted them down into the United Irish body. This rendered their conduct infinitely more orderly, and less suspicious to the government.”—*Memoir on the Irish Union delivered by Emmett, O'Connor, and M'Nevin.*

about a thousand, entered the town of Athboy, forced many of the inhabitants to join them, and appointed one of the most violent of their party to be their commander. This ruffian immediately marshalled his men in military array, and, billeting them through the town for breakfast, promised them they should have better fare in the evening. His deluded followers now talked of attacking property and of dividing the spoils of the country; and, in their confidence, they drew up in battle array to await the approach of the military. The magistrate just mentioned, at the head of a company of foot from Kells, arrived long before the other troops, and rashly and in-

cautiously attacking the insurgents, they were surrounded, and it was not without difficulty that they extricated themselves, after four or five of the mob, and two of the military, had been killed. So far it was a drawn battle, for the military retreated as well as the mob; but the latter, terrified at the mischief which had been done, immediately dispersed in all directions, so that when the cavalry arrived, only a few stragglers could be picked up.

All this agitation was favourable to the defenders, whose outrages at this time became insupportable, yet they were allowed to over-run the country almost without control.* They assembled in large

* The following list of the more remarkable outrages, committed by the defenders during the year 1793, taken from sir Richard Musgrave's *Memoirs of the Rebellions in Ireland*, will give the best notion of the melancholy condition of Ireland at this time.

On the twenty-second of January, 1793, a numerous body of them, well armed, wantonly attacked a detachment of the forty-first regiment, near Petersville, in the county of Meath, and had a severe conflict with them; and on that occasion the presbyterians, who live in that county, aided the king's troops with great zeal. About the same time the defenders, in great numbers, furiously assaulted a company of the same regiment, commanded by major Grey, when on their march, at Manor-Hamilton, in the county of Leitrim, and destroyed their baggage, though they were ultimately repulsed; and on that occasion the defenders charged the soldiers, and wrenched their bayonets from their muskets.

A proclamation, issued on the thirteenth of February, 1793, against them, stating that outrages had been committed by them in the counties of Louth, Meath, Cavan, Dublin, Monaghan, and the county of the town of Drogheda; and it alludes to enormities perpetrated by them in the preceding year.

In the same month, a large mob of people assembled at Woodford, in the county of Galway, declaring they would pay no more taxes, and swore numbers of people to be true to them and their cause. They were incited to this by inflammatory hand-bills.

In the same month, a party of them attempted to carry off four pieces of cannon from Garretstown, in the county of Meath, but were prevented by the volunteers of Ardeath. In the same month, they committed dreadful outrages in the barony of Innishowen, in the county of Donegal. Such as burning houses, destroying corn, houghing cattle, extorting money, and writing threatening letters. At last, the protestant inhabitants assembled, and offered a reward of two hundred guineas to any person who would enable their committee to prosecute them.

In the same month, justice Graham seized eight of them near the Naul, and found on Joseph Corbally, their leader, a list of sixty-six persons who had enrolled themselves as defenders. In the same month, a numerous body of them forcibly entered and plundered the house of Mr. Mark Cassidy, of Derry, in the county of Monaghan, of arms, and other valuable articles. The same month, a party

of them, well armed, attacked and fired on a body of the king's troops, near Ardee, who killed seven, and wounded a great number of them. For some time after the inhabitants of that town were so much afraid of being massacred, that they, headed by the magistrates, kept guard by night.

In the beginning of the year 1793, they often assembled in great numbers at Moneymore, in the county of Derry, and assumed the title of green-cockade men, because they wore that badge in their hats; they paraded in arms, and exercised in a public manner; and at last they became so formidable, that general White was sent there with a body of troops to suppress them.

In the month of May, 1793, there was a general rising of them in the counties of Sligo, Mayo, Leitrim, and Roscommon; and they shewed great eagerness to procure the fire-arms of protestants. They destroyed several gentlemen's houses; they plundered and demolished Coalville, the seat of Mr. Tennison, valued at six thousand pounds. Mr. Tennison, with a party of soldiers, took some of them prisoners, but the mob, supposed to be six thousand, rushed on them, killed three of the soldiers, and rescued the prisoners.

They robbed, of arms and ammunition, captain Ormsby's seat of Castle-dangan, Mr. Johnson's, of Addersaid, and his son's, and captain Carter's, of Drumlease. Mercury, the seat of Mr. Cooper, member for the county of Sligo, they plundered of fifty muskets, and various other articles; broke all his windows, and drank or spilled all the liquors in his cellars: most of the gentlemen in that county were obliged to fly from their houses.

In the month of June, a body of insurgents burned the house of Mr. Wilson, of Castlecomer, and assassinated Mrs. Wilson, as she endeavoured to escape from the flames.

This year we find them in a state of insurrection in the four quarters of the kingdom. Swearing the defender's oath took place very generally in the beginning of the year 1793, in the county of Wexford.

In the month of July, a number of them assembled near Enniscorthy, and after threatening to break open the gaols, they proceeded in immense numbers to Wexford, to liberate the prisoners confined there; and the brave major Vallaton, having led out a detachment of the fifty-sixth regiment to oppose them, and while humanely expostulating with them,

bodies by night, and went through military evolutions under their captains, mostly infamous individuals who were obliged to conceal themselves from the laws of their country. As their necessities increased, they indulged in every sort of crime, talked of establishing liberty and equality, and threatened all who opposed them with slaughter and destruction. In many parts of the country society seemed totally disorganized, and it became a matter of astonishment that such a state of things should be allowed to continue for months without some more vigorous measure of suppression.

At length a meeting was held at Navan to consult on the best measures to repress the outrages of the defenders. A secret committee was formed, subscriptions were entered into, and rewards were offered for the discovery and conviction of the disturbers of the public peace. This was what the United Irishmen already stigmatized as a system of treachery and spies; they gave him some desperate wounds, of which he died soon after. Great numbers of the insurgents were killed and wounded.

There was a dreadful spirit of insurgency in various parts of the county of Limerick, in the month of July, which lasted some days. Near Limerick, the insurgents had an engagement with part of the thirty-eighth regiment, who killed and wounded some of them; however, the same party, afterwards burned the house of Mr. Oliver, who narrowly escaped with his life. At Bruff, in that county, they fired treacherously from the windows of that town on a party of the king's troops, commanded by captain Forbes, which occasioned a dreadful conflict, and in which some lives were lost.

In the month of May, 1793, a large body of them, after committing various outrages at Boyle, in the county of Roscommon, attacked a party of the king's troops, who killed nineteen of them.

In the month of May and June, 1793, the county of Kerry was a good deal agitated; the pretext of the disaffected was a determination to oppose the raising the militia; but it was discovered to arise from a deeper and more malignant source, as the insurgents openly declared that nothing would satisfy them but a division of property, and an abolition of tithes and taxes.

Early in the month of June, they attacked and dispersed the deputy-governors, who had assembled at Dingle, to confer on raising the militia.

A week after, about four thousand assembled and entered the town for the purpose of swearing the inhabitants to abide by their laws. The gentlemen of the county having had notice of their intention, united to the number of twenty-five; but found themselves unable to withstand so numerous a mob, of whom many were well appointed with arms. They, therefore, retreated to the house, and defended themselves till night, when the insurgents dispersed. A fortnight before St. John's day, the twenty-fourth of June, they proclaimed at their

but its result was the capture of most of the ringleaders in that district, and the flight of their followers. Of those taken, some turned approvers, and the information they gave led to further arrests, and the country about Navan was soon effectually tranquillized. One of the magistrates most active in suppressing this insurrection, was the reverend Mr. Butler, the chaplain of the bishop of Meath, a man respected for his private virtues, but firm and skilful in pursuing the ends of justice. His activity had at a critical moment so effectually checked the spirit of defenderism in its progress to the west, that it scarcely appeared beyond the Boyne and the Blackwater. He continued his exertions, and proceeded against the insurgents in those parts where their chief strength lay, arresting several persons against whom he had informations in the baronies of Slane and Morgallion, till at length his exertions were brought to a tragical close. He had often been warned of danger, but he always treated the threats of

chapels, and by notice posted in all public places, that they would meet in great numbers on that day, at Dingle, and carry all their plans into execution. In consequence of their declaration, Mr. Mullins got seventy soldiers from Limerick, who marched into Dingle the day preceding the intended meeting; and he gave public notice that he would oppose them. However, not deterred by the army, they entered the town in immense numbers, armed with guns, pistols, swords, pikes, and scythes mounted on poles. Mr. Mullins, desirous to prevent the effusion of blood, remained in the barrack with the troops till three o'clock, though the insurgents were two hours in possession of the town; but when they began to commit acts of violence on the inhabitants, and their houses, he marched out, when the mob fired on them, and pelted them with stones, on which, having ordered the troops to fire, they killed fourteen of the insurgents, and wounded many of them; after which they dispersed and fled, and did not stop until they arrived at some cliffs over the sea, which were ten miles off; and they would not return till they made peace with the magistrates. Most of them gave information one against another, and they swore that their intention was to have killed all the protestant gentlemen, and to have confiscated their estates. It was proved afterwards, that this plot was general in the county of Kerry; and that it extended over to the county of Limerick, for there were persons stationed at Tralee, and Tarbert, and in the intervening space, ready to convey the event of their attack on Dingle; that all the inhabitants of that immense tract of country might have risen at the same moment, and have acted in concert with them. The exemplary punishment of these insurgents has kept the county of Kerry peaceful ever since; for, though it was organized in 1797, no outrages were committed but in one place. That salutary act of severity probably saved many hundred lives afterwards.

his enemies with contempt, until the 25th of October, 1793, on which day, at about eight o'clock in the evening, he was shot through the body by some ruffian who lay in wait for him behind a hedge near Ardbraccan, the seat of the bishop of Meath.

This atrocious act roused a general feeling of indignation and horror. A public meeting was called at Navan, at which among the gentlemen present were the earl of Bective, the right honourable Burton Conyngham, Mr. Foster (the speaker of the house of commons), and the bishop of Meath. Foster had always distinguished himself by his hostile feeling towards the catholics, and his spirit seemed to have governed all the proceedings on the present occasion. Subscriptions were entered into to a very large amount, and a considerable reward was offered for the discovery of those concerned in the murder of Mr. Butler, as well as smaller rewards for the discovery of arms in the possession of catholics who were not legally entitled to possess them. This led to domiciliary visits of the military, which were almost as formidable to the catholic inhabitants as the outrages of the defenders had been to the protestants. Navan was chiefly inhabited by catholics, one of whom, named John Fay, a man of some consideration among his fellow-townsmen, was for some reason or other suspected of being an accomplice in the assassination of Butler. It was said that the charge against him was brought merely for the purpose of throwing odium on the catholics at large. He was arrested in the open street, on a public market-day, and hurried under military escort to the county gaol. An arrest so unexpected, and conducted with so much mystery and severity, created a general alarm, the catholics imagining that they were going to be involved in a general

proscription, while the protestants believed that a plot had been discovered to massacre them. There was thus much excitement on both sides, and there seemed little probability of a fair trial. Yet Fay and some other persons attempted to be implicated were honourably acquitted; the evidence brought against them was shown to be of the most infamous description; and the judge himself expressed his disgust at the attempt to ruin an honest man for party purposes. Some months afterwards, a man condemned at Trim for a robbery, confessed before his execution that he was the murderer of Mr. Butler.

The next trial of public interest, involved more especially the United Irishmen. After their success in parliament, the Irish ministers proceeded to act with more rigour against the obnoxious societies, and prosecutions for political offences began soon to multiply. A rather violent address to the volunteers, calling on them to arm for the preservation of the liberties of the people, was printed by the society of United Irishmen; and Archibald Hamilton Rowan, who had signed it as chairman of the society, having been active in distributing it, an information, *ex officio*, was filed against him by the attorney-general. The trial came on on the 29th of January, 1794, and ended in a verdict of guilty against Rowan, to the great disappointment of his friends, who appealed against the judgment, but without success. The sentence against Rowan was to pay a fine of five hundred pounds, be imprisoned two years, and find security for his good behaviour for seven years, himself in two thousand pounds, and two securities in one thousand pounds each. Similar prosecutions were instituted against Simon Butler, and Oliver Bond

CHAPTER XIX.

SESSION OF 1794; INSURRECTION SPREADS TO THE SOUTH; TRIAL OF JACKSON;
ADMINISTRATION OF EARL FITZWILLIAM.



THE session of 1793 had been an unusually long one, that of 1794 was remarkably short, nor was it distinguished by any important measures.

It was opened on the 21st of January, with a speech in which the lord lieutenant spoke of the spirit of insurrection as being in general suppressed, and assured the house, that no exertion should be wanting on his part to bring the offenders to a due sense of order and subordination, and to prevent and punish the machinations of those who might aim to seduce them from their accustomed loyalty into acts of sedition and outrage. The addresses produced very little discussion, and the only debate, of any consequence, during the whole session, was that on Mr. Ponsonby's reform bill, on the fourth of March. The ministerial opposition to this bill was led by sir Hercules Langrishe, who opposed reform as being but one step in the march of revolution, and he pointed out the convulsions which were then tearing neighbouring nations, as the natural consequences of, what he termed, a "reforming spirit." He referred to recent declarations of the United Irishmen, as proofs of the ultimate objects at which the reformers aimed, or at least to which their views led. In reply to such arguments, the supporters of the measure represented, that the character of the French revolution sprang from circumstances and causes which did not exist to the same degree in this country; that the French revolution ought to be a warning to those who would drive the populace to desperation, by denying them just redress of grievances; and that restoring the constitution to its purity was not innovation. Very little was said on the ministerial side; the speaking was almost all on the side of the bill; yet the alarm caused by the proceedings of the United Irishmen, and other societies, and the turbulence of the provinces, had so far broken up the ranks of the opposition, that on a division there were only forty-four votes in favour of the bill, to a hundred and forty-two against it.

On the 25th of March, after an adjournment of some days, the session was closed with a speech full of declarations of satisfaction, with a passing expression of regret for the disturbed state of the county of Cork.

The spirit of insubordination had, indeed, been increasing rather than otherwise during the winter, and had spread into the south. There the old insurrection of the right-boys was renewed. A numerous body of these misguided people assembled, in the month of February, near Bandon, in the county of Cork, and swore the inhabitants of the district not to pay tithes, taxes, or hearth-money. They soon became so bold, that they dispersed a body of police, attacked a party of the Carlow militia, and threatened to attack the town of Bandon. The lawless banditti of the north, who, under the name of defenders, had made such havoc during the preceding year, now carried their depredations through the counties of Dublin, Kildare, Westmeath, Longford, Cavan, Leitrim, and part of Down, and had increased in boldness and ferocity. Government seemed so negligent of the internal peace of the country, that the gentlemen and yeomanry, in the disturbed counties, found it necessary to associate together in self-defence, and the animosity of the different parties was thus increased. The arrest and condemnation of Rowan had irritated the united Irishmen, and made them throw aside the little moderation which they had before observed, and they now published sweeping plans of radical reform, declared that they had no hopes of redress from English supremacy, and entered less cautiously into negotiations with the French republicans.

The government, meanwhile, continued their prosecutions for political offences, one of which, that took place about this time, threatened to compromise, much more seriously than anything which had yet been discovered, some of the leaders of the United Irishmen. A clergyman, the rev. William Jackson, who had been private secretary to the notorious duchess of Kingston, and who appears to have deeply imbibed French principles, and to have made

some residence in France, accepted a mission from the French government to negotiate with the discontented party in Ireland. He received his instructions from an Irishman, named Madgett, who had been long settled in France, and then held a place in the ministry of foreign affairs. On his arrival in London, Jackson renewed an intimacy with an attorney, named Cockayne, to whom he owed money, and to whom he very imprudently communicated the object of his mission. Cockayne immediately carried this communication to Mr. Pitt, who bribed him to accompany Jackson to Ireland in the quality of a government spy. On their arrival in Dublin, Jackson was duly introduced to the chiefs of the united Irishmen, to Rowan in his prison, to lord Edward Fitzgerald, and subsequently to Simon Butler, Wolfe Tone, a Dr. Reynolds (a violent revolutionist and partizan of the doctrines of Thomas Paine), and others. Wolfe Tone drew up, for Jackson's use, a report on the condition of Ireland. Jackson appears to have been, like many of those engaged in the same cause, a vain ambitious man, with no great talent or discretion, and his behaviour so far alarmed the Irish leaders, that they thought it best to break off all farther communication with him. The government, finding this to be the case, and that nothing could be gained by farther delay, caused Jackson to be arrested in April, on a charge of high treason, but he was not brought to trial till the 23rd of April, 1795. The government had conclusive evidence against him, not only in the testimony of Cockayne, but in his own letters, which they had seized in their passage through the post-office; but he had the firmness not to say anything to compromise the persons with whom he had negotiated in Ireland—although four days were given him to consider, after the verdict of the jury against him. When, at last, he was brought into court to receive sentence, he expired suddenly in the dock, it was generally understood from the effects of poison, which he had taken to forestall the execution of the law. The Irish leaders were in the utmost consternation and alarm: Tone was to a certain degree inculpated by the paper on the state of Ireland, which he had given to Jackson, but he was screened for the present by the compassion of some in power; Dr. Reynolds fled to America; and Rowan, against whom

an indictment for high treason was preparing, made his escape from prison during the night of the first of May, and, in spite of a reward of a thousand pounds offered for his apprehension, succeeded in reaching the continent. The leaders of the catholic party, and some men of influence in parliament, exerted themselves in favour of Wolfe Tone, and succeeded in effecting an agreement with government, by which, on his engaging simply to leave Ireland, as soon as he could settle his private affairs, no proceedings were to be taken against him.

The boldness of the United Irishmen at this time, and their activity in spreading sedition by hand-bills and circulars, determined the government to take some direct proceedings against them. Their committee had assembled at their usual place of meeting in Dublin, Taylor's Hall, in Back-lane, on the night of the 23rd of May, when the sheriffs, with a body of constables, suddenly broke in and dispersed them, and seized their papers. They were, however, not discouraged by this mark of activity on the part of their enemies; but, from this time, they met in greater secrecy, and the danger which they knew hung over them, seems to have hurried them into more desperate measures. They still talked of parliamentary reform, and catholic emancipation, as the ultimate objects of their aim; but, under these pretences, they were following fast in the track of the wildest political speculators of the age.

It was during this year that, in England, a large part of the old Rockingham party, alarmed by the revolutionary movement in Europe, decided on joining Pitt's administration, and among the accessions to the ministerial party by this act were the duke of Portland and earls Fitzwilliam and Spencer in the house of lords, and Burke, Wyndham, and others, in the commons. It was understood that one consequence of this new coalition was to be a change of policy in Ireland, and, while the catholics looked forwards to the completion of their emancipation, the patriotic party in the parliament were overjoyed at the prospect of the recall of the chief governor, whose administration they had so bitterly censured. The duke of Portland was appointed to the office of a secretary of state in England, with the special care of Irish affairs, and it was understood that earl Fitzwilliam would take the lord lieutenancy. Ponsonby and

Grattan, the two leaders of the Irish whigs, were called over to England, and held consultations both with the duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt, and it was generally understood that the entire emancipation of the catholics was a condition of the new appointment. At length, on the 10th of December, earl Fitzwilliam's appointment was officially announced, and on the 4th of January, 1795, he landed in Ireland and took possession of his government. Considering it necessary to secure his own influence by some changes in the Irish ministry, the new lord lieutenant proceeded at once to displace the attorney and solicitor-general (Wolfe and Toler), and Mr. Beresford, whose influence was especially obnoxious to the catholic party. One of these offices was to be given to Mr. Ponsonby, and Grattan supported the ministry without taking office.

The arrival of earl Fitzwilliam was a subject of general rejoicing. On the 7th of January the catholics of Dublin presented a congratulatory address, which was followed by others from bodies of catholics in different parts of the country. It was remarked by many that these addresses expressed much less gratitude for the concessions already granted than expectation of further emancipation; but they certainly exhibited an entire confidence in the good intentions of the new administration. It was also remarked that among the signatures to some of them were those of men who had been the most active in spreading sedition, and some of whom lay under strong suspicions of treasonable practices. All eyes, however, were turned towards the opening of parliament, which took place on the 22nd of January, 1795. The lord lieutenant's speech exceeded the usual length of such documents; it related chiefly to foreign affairs, and to the war in which England was then engaged with France. "We are engaged," he said, "in an arduous contest; the time calls not only for great fortitude and an unusual share of public spirit, but for much constancy and perseverance. You are engaged with a power which, under the ancient forms of its internal arrangement, was always highly formidable to the neighbouring nations. Lately this power has assumed a new shape, but with the same ambition, with much more extensive and systematic designs, far more effective, and without comparison more dreadful in the certain consequences of its eventual success;

it threatens nothing less than the entire subversion of the liberty and independence of every state in Europe; an enemy to them all, it is actuated with a peculiar animosity against these kingdoms, not only as the natural protection of the balance of power in Europe, but also because, by the possession of a legal, humane, and rational freedom, we seem to reproach that false and spurious liberty, which in reality is an ignominious servitude, tending to extinguish all good acts, to generate nothing but impiety, crime, disorder, and ferocious manners, and to end in wretchedness and general desolation. To guard his people from the enterprises of this dangerous and malignant power, and for the protection of all civilised society against the inroads of anarchy, his majesty has availed himself of every national aid, foreign and domestic; he has called upon the skill, courage, and experience of all his subjects, wheresoever dispersed. And you must be duly sensible, in such a crisis as the present, which rarely occurs in the course of human affairs, of the advantage of thus endeavouring to profit by the united strength and zeal of every description of his subjects. I have to assure you of his majesty's most cheerful concurrence in every measure which your wisdom and comprehensive patriotism shall point out for this salutary purpose."

Grattan undertook a task to which, of late years, he had not been accustomed, that of moving the address. He spoke principally on the necessity of joining heartily in the war, and of the dangers which were to be apprehended from France and its mistaken views of liberty. "No nation," said he, "understands liberty, perhaps, better than you do. Did you in your struggles ever imagine such a species of liberty? Her liberty is death, and her state bedlam. Where the sceptre is broken into ten thousand scorpions in the hands of ten thousand maniacs, scourging one another for offences that are only exceeded by the barbarity with which they are punished; however, that is not now the question, nor is the question on the causes of the war, but the actual state of it—the danger of Europe; the danger of Ireland; and as formerly you struggled for the British constitution in opposition to the claim of the British parliament, so now you contend in conjunction with Great Britain for that constitution against France, and for that constitution with everything beside in-

cluded, you fight for your island. The principles of such a revolution, the active nature of its framers, the natural genius of the people, the hopes of acquisition, and the love of intrigue, the doctrines they promulgate, and the alarms they give, find or make an enemy of the rest of Europe. Such a revolution must be a war. The energy of a republic, the mass of her people opposed to the redundancy of the population of other nations, and the mass of her property opposed to the redundancy of the riches of other nations, accompany her to the field. The depreciation of their credit, the accumulation of their debt, the loss of their people—things which in ordinary estimation sink a nation—have no effect to diminish her exertion, or, I know not what to call them, her agonies or her convulsions. The throne of Spain flies before her—the petty princes of the German states disappear—the Prussian retires, and the Hollander negotiates. Thus the question, instead of being one affecting her own existence, goes to the existence of Europe; she finds one empire, and one empire only, that stops her progress—Great Britain. She alone is capable to inspire the mass of the other states of Europe, and bring into action their chaos of forms without force, troops without resources, and discipline without enterprize. Against her is directed all the force of France. The British empire therefore was to be humbled on the banks of the Thames, and the sea was to be eased of her fleet. Thus you see the war goes to the accomplishment of universal empire on the ruins of the empire of Great Britain, and the question before you is, what part shall be taken by Ireland? The question is, not whether in every war you will take part with England, but whether there is any in which you will stand by her; for if you fail her now, she will probably have no other opportunity to want, now you desert her. Vulnerable in Flanders, vulnerable in Holland, she is mortal here. Here will be the engines of war—the arsenal of French artillery, the station of the French navy—and through this wasted and disembowelled land will be poured the fiery contents of their artillery. As the British empire must be saved on the continent, so it may be overthrown in Ireland."

The addresses passed without a division. It was generally understood that the grand measure of the session was to be a bill to complete the emancipation of the catholics

by qualifying them to sit in parliament; and lord Fitzwilliam afterwards declared that he had been sent over with full authority to pass such a measure. The catholics throughout the kingdom were in the highest spirits, and petitions supporting their claims crowded into the house of commons daily. The lord lieutenant had entrusted the management of this final measure in the commons to Grattan, and on the 12th of February that gentleman obtained leave to bring in his bill. This step had scarcely been taken, when earl Fitzwilliam received intimation that the British ministers were displeased at the dismissals with which he had thought it necessary to commence his Irish administration, and that they disapproved of the granting further relief to the catholics. Almost at the same moment rumours were diligently spread abroad that the new lord lieutenant was about to be recalled.

The real motives for the recal of earl Fitzwilliam remain still involved in considerable mystery; but, all circumstances considered, we can hardly believe that his appointment was ever designed to be a permanent one. He was sent over at a critical moment, perhaps to amuse parties whilst the government consolidated its strength. He declared himself that he had done nothing which was not fully justified by his instructions, and ministers sheltered themselves from giving any explanation of their conduct under the cloak of official secrecy. From this moment earl Fitzwilliam remained lord lieutenant only in name, until the 24th of March, when he resigned the government of Ireland into the hands of the archbishop of Armagh and lord Fitzgibbon, as lords justices, and returned to England, where his recal was the subject of warm debates in both houses of parliament, as it had already been in the parliament of Ireland. Out of the house, the general feeling of regret and alarm at the recal of earl Fitzwilliam was too strongly expressed to be mistaken. On the day of his departure the shops in Dublin were shut, and the whole city put on mourning. His carriage was drawn to the water-side by some of the most respectable citizens. Five days after, earl Camden, who had been appointed his successor, arrived in Dublin, and it was found necessary to call out the military to repress the rage of the populace.

In spite of the change in the government, Grattan's catholic relief bill was duly brought on, and the second reading fixed

for the 4th of May. On that day the opposition to the bill was led by the solicitor-general, who described it as a plan to overthrow entirely the constitution established by the revolution of eighty-eight. His motion, that the bill should be rejected, was seconded by lord Kingsborough, who said, "This bill is to take the power from the protestants to give it to catholics. For nineteen years that I have sat in parliament, I have voted for every indulgence being granted to the catholics except the elective franchise, to which I objected upon account of its conferring political power. I have been a steady friend to the catholics; but I never would give up the protestant interest, or take any step to destroy the church of Ireland. I own, sir, that the conduct of many of the catholics has been such of late as not to encourage any man to grant them any further concessions; not that I mean to cast reflections upon the whole body, for I have the honour of being acquainted with many catholics of most reputable character, and who would be an ornament to any nation; but of late the country has been disturbed, and I think those disturbances arise from the conduct of persons belonging to the catholic committee; I allude particularly to their clubs and meetings, and to a circular letter of Mr. Edward Byrne, about two years ago, informing the catholics, 'that they were to be turned out of their farms to make room for protestants,' so great was the spirit of electioneering. The poor people in Connaught, thus deceived, in order to prevent this, attacked the protestants, robbed them of their arms, plundered and murdered them. In the south some disturbances took place on the same account; some of the rioters acknowledged, that persons had come from Dublin swearing them to rise and punish the protestants for intending to turn them out of their farms. The United Irishmen, and the catholic committee, who are, I believe, one and the same body, joined in exciting mischief in the country, by publications and speeches, endeavouring to raise rebellion. What was their language in Francis-street chapel? 'to separate the two countries—that Ireland, but for the British connection, would be happy, and of some consequence in the world,' &c. They called on the soldiers to desert their king and country, and support them. When the common people hear such language from those from whom they expect truth, is their

conduct surprising? I have attended the assizes in some of the disturbed counties, and I have there become acquainted with some of the efforts used to inflame the minds of the people, by hand-bills and emissaries sent down for the purpose, informing them of grievous taxes which were to be laid on; that never existed but in those publications, and in the minds of those incendiaries (the committee-men and the United Irishmen who framed them). These are the causes of the disturbances. I should be sorry to give up the power of the protestants to such attempts to bully the legislature; I would cheerfully lose my life and property in support of the constitution in church and state, and I do not desire to live longer than they exist."

Sir Hercules Langrishe supported the bill, as he had hitherto supported every measure of relief to the catholics. He expressed his belief that the alarm which this bill had excited was unfounded, and not justified either by the character of the catholics or by the danger of the protestant establishment. "As to the general system of the popery laws," he said, "so long as I have been able to form an opinion on the subject, they have appeared to me to be neither sound in policy, nor justified in principle; inconsistent with the spirit of equal benefit and equal control, which is the perfection of all human government, and the peculiar pride of our happy constitution; and if my humble efforts in their mitigation have at any time been limited in their extent, if they did not at all times satisfy the impatience of pursuit, it was because I thought it necessary to compromise with the temper of the times; to consult conciliation rather than contest, accommodation rather than achievement; for I always thought (and I think so still) that we should assimilate, in order to incorporate; and that concession and conciliation should go hand in hand; and therefore, sir, when the Roman catholics came forward, under the title of loyalty and obedience to the laws, to solicit a participation of common privilege and common condition, it is with no small degree of indignation that I see any part of their body, however small, however inconsiderable, betrayed into an intemperance that may appear to justify their former opponents, or tend to alienate their old friends; if not to alienate, to render them impotent in their service. For myself, I declare, if I thought some of their recent

publications were a faithful representation of their principles or their purposes; if I were not convinced that that is not the fact, I should not think myself justified in standing up their advocate at this day; but I am convinced that they have been traduced by some of their orators, and some of their historians, and under that conviction, and that only, I act. Certainly, sir, the laws, so far as is consistent with subordination and the order of good government, should in their operation be equal and indifferent; if possible, like the sun they should 'shine upon all alike.' However, where there has been a long privation of light, prudence requires that the restoration of it should be administered by gradual proportions, otherwise it might operate rather to dazzle than to direct; rather to wound the organ, than illuminate the object. But after eighty years of general enforcement, and twenty years of gradual relaxation, it is reasonable that we should consider at least with a temperate mind, whether any just cause subsists which should induce us to retain even a remnant of this system. At the same time that I express (as I have always done) my disapprobation of these laws, it is but just that we should look to their origin, as well as their operation: in which view, although I disapprove the principle, I cannot censure or animadvert on our ancestors for having adopted them. There was something singular and critical in the conjuncture that pressed forcibly on the temper and condition of their time, which was their apology, if not their justification."

After having taken a rapid survey of the history and character of the penal laws against the catholics, sir Hercules reverted to the democratic principles which it had been urged were connected with the bill now before the house. "It has been said, that a parliamentary reform (as it is called) must be the consequence of your agreeing to this bill. If I could foresee such a consequence; if I could be persuaded that this measure would be auxiliary to that tremendous notion of innovation; that rash experiment on established rights and settled happiness; that delusive project of a representation unknown to our constitution, and subversive of its principles; if I could consider this measure as conducing to such an event, I would not hesitate a moment to give it my decided opposition. But I cannot see how admitting some of the Roman catholic aristocracy into the foremost ranks of the con-

stitution, should inspire them with a wish to alter or to subvert it. If the Roman catholic gentlemen were admitted to an equal capacity of sitting in parliament with the protestant, I cannot see what should induce a discrimination of sentiment between them concerning this subject; but if they were to be deluded into such an enterprise, their energy would be lost. When the Roman catholics, under the title of their loyalty and submission to the laws, solicit to be received into the bosom of the constitution, they have great weight from the reasonableness of their pretensions; but if afterward they were to come forward, desiring that the constitution, which had just embraced them, should be altered, or accommodated to their fancy, their demand would be so unjustifiable, that with all their numbers, they would be impotent. I know very well that some men, more devoted to turbulence than toleration, have by a suspicious connection, affected to make common cause with the Roman catholics, in order to apply the authority of their numbers, and of the justness of their cause, to their own dangerous projects. I know very well too, that in the great body of the catholics themselves, some may be found of such a turbulent spirit as concession would not conciliate, as privilege would not satisfy, or tranquillity delight; but in the former instance, the artifice is too obvious to be dangerous; in the latter, it would be unfair to judge the many for the crimes of the few. I have addressed myself to every argument which has occurred to me; and I have expressed my sentiments with impartiality at least on this great subject. I cannot be alarmed by dangers that have long since passed away, nor will I combat superstitions, which I know are obsolete. We have nothing to fear from the people; we have already placed them in such a situation, as that they must perceive (if they are not blind to the condition of the world) that no political alteration can improve their condition; that no part of the terraqueous globe can furnish them with so good or happy a government as their own. As an enthusiast to the English constitution, I would pursue the spirit of equal benefit and equal control, that rational principle of English equality, to the utmost extent of speculation, that the people may be led, by the comparison, the more to detest the equality of the French democracy; to which, if they turn their eyes, they will see not equal rights but equal wrongs—an

equality, not of property, but of poverty. There is not a man in France, nor in any country which they have conciliated or conquered, whom it has not impoverished; the rich are plundered and the poor are not enriched; the fountains are dried up that used to supply the wages of industry, the speculations of commerce, the recompense of industry, or the endowment of genius. The common beggar has lost his inheritance in the bounty of the affluent; the whole is general depression—universal degradation.”

The new feature in this long debate, was the frequent reference to the political agitation of the day, for democracy and republicanism were now the great bugbears held up to enforce every ministerial measure, or oppose every popular motion. The connection between the catholics and the United Irishmen was the chief topic of a long speech against the bill by Mr. R. Johnson (member for Hillsborough). After speaking of the proceedings of the United Irishmen, the participation in them by the catholic committee, and of the equivocal position between them of Theobald Wolfe Tone, he proceeded to ask, “Can the papists deny a knowledge of the acts flowing from these principles? The flight and outlawry of Mr. Rowan and Mr. Tandy, were public; the imprisonment of the others, and the dispersion of the society, were public; that Mr. Tone was involved in the treason of Doctor Jackson, was public; since the month of June last, the indictment against Jackson, containing the paper of information to France, drawn by Tone, was public; yet it is this very Mr. Tone, the papists, in the month of April last, attempt to adorn by their thanks, and actually rewarded with their money. But with a pretended three millions in the train of their committee, with a junction in persons and in principles with the United Irishmen, with defenders rising in every quarter of the kingdom, the wealthy plundered, the feeble and unresisting slaughtered, this papist committee were not hardy enough to venture the present proposition to parliament! They desired no more than the elective franchise; and in their proceedings of October, 1792, they avowed that ‘they would satisfactorily acquiesce in having the king, the house of peers, the house of commons, and the church of Ireland, exclusively protestant!’ To sustain them in the boldness of the present attempt, they wanted one junction more—they wanted a junction with a lord lieu-

tenant, who would be ready to agree with the king’s ministers to postpone a question which his friends here fomented and brought forward; they wanted a junction with a minister who would be ready to bring down the whole artillery of government, plant it on the walls of Francis-street chapel, and by the hands of a mob, batter the parliament of the kingdom; they sought for that junction and they found it! The men, whom (in their own words) I have described to you, you have seen seated at the table, and known to be closeted in the counsels, of the very person whom you have clothed in the robes and seated on the throne of your sovereign. In reviewing thus the facts and circumstances which have occurred from the year 1791 to this time, in comparing their connection and their tendencies, you arrive at the true ground of this question; you discover the characters of the persons who urged it forward, and the ends to which their labours have been directed. It appears that the year 1791 was a period when the nation was powerful and the government without embarrassment; the tone of the papists was then modest, their object was moderate, and they gave the instance of their having chosen a period of prosperity to urge their pretensions, as the evidence of the justice of their claim, of their loyalty, and of their integrity. They were not even contented with a general evidence of their conduct; they added a solemn declaration of their principles. They entered into an awful contract with their king and his parliament, and declared ‘that they ought to be considered as public foes who should urge such a claim at any other time than a time of public tranquillity.’ They went still further; lest any doubt should be entertained of the extent of their views and the purity of their intentions, they published a solemn declaration of their wishes. On the 4th of February, 1792, they bounded by specific lines, and defined by specific terms, the extent and nature of their object; they closed with their fellow-subjects and with the legislature for ever. But the splendid sun of imperial prosperity which had called forth this harvest of honour, generosity, and good faith, was soon to set—the night of foreign war and domestic treason, overspread the land; then, in the hope that the darkness would conceal the crime, was this wholesome crop trodden under foot; then was sought for, with a profligate industry, every poisonous weed that the wealth and

luxuriance of the times had unhappily given vigour to ; then, instead of humble petitions and appeals to the liberality and wisdom of the legislature, were heard and seen illegal conventions illegally summoned ; then did those conventions publish saucy invectives against that constitution, of whose blessings they at the same instant sought the benefit ; then did they call that corrupt by the intermixture with which they desired to purify and adorn themselves ; then did they fling with a vulgar malignity, opprobrious epithets at the heads of those very ministers whose wisdom they had before applauded ; and to whose liberality they had bowed as grateful debtors ; then, and, not till then, was seen the horrible audacity of men, daring enough with one hand to hold out an humble petition beseeching the favour of a beneficent sovereign, and in the other hand grasping an union with the imprisoned libeller, the outlawed felon, and the convicted traitor ; the horrible audacity of men claiming a right to repose in the arms of the constitution, and at the same instant applauding the disturbers of our peace, and consoling the traitor of our king ! You have now seen the popish committee connected with the ministers of the crown and leaders in parliament ; you have seen that popish committee connected with the popish convention, and both connected with the United Irishmen and Mr. Tone ! Trained within the body of the United Irishmen, and issuing forth in substantial treason, you have seen those ‘clamorous harbingers of blood and death,’ Mr. Hamilton Rowan, Mr. Tone, and Mr. Jackson ; you have seen the sufferings of some criminals alleviated, and the talents of others rewarded by subscriptions raised by the efforts of those committees and conventions ; you have seen the accomplice of treason secretary to popish delegates, laying a popish petition at the foot of the throne ; thus connected by one unbroken chain, you perceive, sir, the minister and the traitor. It may be said, though, that their intentions were not similar ; I am bound to hope it and to believe it. But these who admit the intimacy of connection, yet deny the similarity of intention, should be reminded of the common experiments made on the subtilty of the electric fluid, which, when the bar is charged, if an hundred men were to join hands, will communicate the shock from the first to the last. Modern patriotism is to the mind as the elemental fire is to the

body ; and that shock which commences in the cell of Newgate, may terminate at last within the walls of parliament ! But am I bold enough to accuse three millions of the king’s subjects with cultivating such principles and holding such conduct ? God forbid ! human nature, sir, is not so depraved, as that you could find in any climate, or under any government, three millions so lost to all sense of goodness. The million is always honest, always simple ; it means its own happiness. But to be led and to follow is the inevitable nature of the million. The conduct and the designs of the leaders, therefore, are the only sources of true information to the legislator. The wretched peasant, whose head is counted to swell this awful number, knows nothing of the means to be used, or the ends to be obtained. He is called upon by his priest to subscribe, and he is told that Mr. Grattan is to relieve him from rent and wretchedness ; the innocent man blesses Mr. Grattan, and subscribes the little produce of his sweat. The miserable dupe, plundered of his scanty earning, returns to his cottage, and sunk in repose, dreams of nothing but less labour for himself, and more food and raiment for his children. But this innocent man, sir, is, under the guidance of such leaders, the more dangerous as he is the more innocent. I therefore deem it inexpedient to admit such leaders to any share of power ; we should be the more careful, sir, in a country where government seems to be the science of all, and obedience the habit of none. But we are told by lord Fitzwilliam, that ‘these men will rebel if we do not comply.’ Why, sir, if they will rebel, if their loyalty is so loose a cloak as to be thrown off in every contest for rank and power—let them rebel ! Is it not better they should rebel as they are, than we should admit them to draw their swords in the presence of the throne itself, and let treason stalk within the walls of parliament.”

Perhaps the most brilliant speech of this eventful evening, was that of Arthur O’Connor, who sat as member for Philipstown, in King’s county, for which place he was brought in by his uncle, lord Longueville, a staunch supporter of government. It was his first speech in parliament, and his last ; for his uncle was so offended at the liberal sentiments he then avowed, that next morning he sent for him, and desired him to resign his seat, and the nephew

immediately obeyed. O'Connor applied himself particularly to shew that the total emancipation of the catholics was no attack on the protestant constitution, and that it did not imply the triumph of republicanism, and he urged the necessity of giving satisfaction to a whole people, who were suffering. "Be assured," he said, "the people of this country will no longer bear that their welfare should be made the sport of a few family factions; be assured they are convinced their true interest consists in putting down men of self-creation, who have no object in view but that of aggrandising themselves and their families, at the expense of the public; and in setting up men who shall represent the nation, who shall be accountable to the nation, and who shall do the business of the nation. And if I could bring my mind to suspect that my catholic countrymen, after they had been embodied in the constitution, amidst their protestant and presbyterian fellow-citizens, would basely desert the common cause of our general freedom, by enlisting under the banners of this or that family monopolist, I should conceive that, in having been the advocate for their emancipation, I had been the advocate for their disgrace. But honour, interest, and the rising spirit of the nation, forbid such unworthy suspicions. If I were to judge by the dead silence with which this is received, I should suspect what I have said was not very palatable to some men in this house. But I have not risked connexions endeared to me by every tie of blood and friendship, to support one set of men in preference to another. I have hazarded too much, to allow the breath of calumny to taint the objects I have had in view, from the part I have taken. Immutible principles, on which the happiness and liberty of my countrymen depend, convey to my mind the only substantial boon for which great sacrifices should be made. I might allay the fears of the protestant monopolists for what, in the true spirit of political bigotry, they call their protestant ascendancy, by stating, that as the boroughs continue in the hands of protestant proprietors, centuries must pass away before the catholics can participate, in any considerable portion, of the political power of their country. But I am contending for the purity of the constitution—not for its abuses. I disclaim contending for catholic freedom, in the

hope that the grant may be a dead letter. I disclaim contending for catholic freedom, in the hope that the rights and liberties of my country may continue to be monopolized, in the same manner, after their emancipation, as they were before. But I here avow myself the zealous and earnest advocate for the most unqualified emancipation of my catholic countrymen, in the hope and conviction, that the monopoly of the rights and liberties of my country, which has hitherto effectually withstood the efforts of a part of the people, must yield to the unanimous will, to the decided interest, and to the general effort, of a whole united people. It is from this conviction, and it is for that transcendently important object, that while the noble lord (Kingsborough), and the right honourable secretary, are offering to risk their lives and fortunes, in support of a system that militates against the liberty of my countrymen, I will risk everything dear to me on earth. It is for this great object I have, I fear, more than risked connections dearer to me than life itself. But he must be a spiritless man, and we must be a spiritless nation, if we do not resent the baseness of a British minister, who has raised our hopes, in order to seduce a rival to share with him the disgrace of this accursed political crusade, and blasts them after, that he may degrade a competitor to the station of a dependent; and, that he may destroy friendship his nature never knew, he has sported with the feelings of a whole nation; raising the cup with one hand to the parched lip of expectancy, he has dashed it to the earth with the other, in all the wantonness of insult, and with all the aggravation of contempt. Does he imagine that the people of this country, after he has tantalized them with the cheering hope of present alleviation, and of future prosperity, will tamely bear to be forced to a re-endurance of their former sufferings, and to a re-appointment of their former spoilers? Does he, from confidence of long success in debauching the human mind, exact from you, calling yourselves the representatives of the people of Ireland, to reject a bill, which has received the unanimous consent of your constituents? or, does he mean to puzzle the versatile disposition of this house, on which he has made so many successful experiments already, by distracting you between obedience to his imperious mandates, and obedience to the will of the

people you should represent; or does he flatter himself that, because he has succeeded in betraying his own country into exchanging that peace, by which she might have retrieved her shattered finances, for a war, in which he has squandered twenty times a greater treasure, in the course of two years, than with all his famed economy he had been able to save in the course of ten, for a war, in which the flower of the youth of the world have been offered up, victims to his ambition and his schemes, as boundless and presumptuous as ill-concerted and ill-combined; for a war, in which the plains of every nation in Europe have been crimsoned with oceans of blood; for a war, in which his country has reaped nothing but disgrace; and which must ultimately prove her ruin? Does he flatter himself, that he will be enabled, satan-like, to end his political career, by involving the whole empire in a civil war, from which nothing can accrue, but a doleful barren conquest to the victor? I trust the people of England are too wise, and too just, to attempt to force measures upon us, they would reject with disdain themselves; I trust they have not so soon forgotten the lesson they so recently learned from America, which should serve as a lasting example to nations, against employing force to subdue the spirit of a people determined to be free! But, if they should be so weak, or so wicked, as to suffer themselves to be seduced by a man, to whose soul duplicity and finesse are as congenial as ingenuousness and fair dealing are strangers, to become the instruments of supporting a few odious public characters in power and rapacity, against the interest and against the sense of a whole people. If we are to be dragooned into measures against our will, by a nation that would lose her last life, and expend her last guinea, in resenting a similar insult, if offered to herself, I trust in God, she will find in the people of this country a spirit in no wise inferior to her own. You are, at this moment, at the most awful period of your lives; the minister of England has committed you with your country, and, on this night, your adoption or rejection of this bill, must determine, in the eyes of the Irish nation, which you represent—the minister of England, or the people of Ireland! And, although you are convinced you do not represent the people of Ireland—although you are convinced, every man of you, that

you are self-created, it does not alter the nature of the contest—it is still a contest between the minister of England and the people of Ireland; and the weakness of your title should only make you the more circumspect in the exercise of your power. Obey the British minister—disregard the voice of the people. France must have lost her senses if she hesitates what part she shall take; it is not an eighty-fourth department you will have moulded to her wishes; it is not simply a La Vendée you will have kindled in the bosom of your country; for, if you shall have once convinced the people of this country that you are traitors to them, and hirelings to the minister of an avaricious domineering nation, under the outward appearance of a sister country; if you shall have convinced the people of this country that the free national constitution, for which they were committed, and for which they risked everything dear to them in 1782, has been destroyed by the bribery of a British minister, and the unexampled venality of an Irish parliament—if you shall have convinced them that, instead of rising or falling with England, they are never to rise, but when she has been humbled by adversity, and that they must fall, when she becomes elated by prosperity—if you shall have convinced the people of this country that, instead of reciprocal advantage, nothing is to be reaped from their connexion with England, but supremacy and aggrandizement on the one side, and a costly venality, injury, insult, degradation, and poverty on the other; it is human nature, that you shall have driven the people of this country to court the alliance of any nation able, and willing, to break the chains of a bondage not more galling to their feelings, than restrictive of their prosperity. The gentlemen at the opposite side of the house have attempted to influence you by the mention of Jackson. So will I. Read the correspondence of that traitor with your enemy, and you will find a volume of instruction in every line that he has written. If the people of this country do enjoy the constitution in church and state, why has that traitor found the people of the one country free from that oppression which goads nations into all the horrors of revolution? Why has he found the people of the other so highly sublimated to his purpose? Examine the whole of his intelligence, and you will find the weakness of your country

in the conduct you have pursued, and in the converse of that conduct only you can establish her strength. Do not depend on the bayonet for the support of your measures; believe me, that in proportion as your measures require force to support them, in an exact proportion are they radically and mischievously bad. Believe me, there is more strength in the affections and confidence of the people, than if you were to convert every second house in the nation into barracks for your soldiery. And when the gentlemen (Cusse and Kingsborough) whom I have heard this night, tell you, that to act in contempt of the public opinion is spirit and firmness; and that to act with a decent respect for that opinion, is timidity and cowardice; they make the character of the legislator to merge into the character of the duellist; and they set you upon splitting points of honour with your constituents. Is it not enough that you live in the age, and in the midst, of the horrors of revolution, to deter you from acting in contempt of the public opinion? Have you not had examples enough to convince you that men, in throwing off the russet frock for the uniform of the soldier, do not at all times throw away the ties of kindred and of blood? Have you not had examples enough to convince you that even soldiers cannot, at all times, be brought to shed the blood of their parents, their kindred, and their friends? And have you not had a great and memorable example to convince you, that the soldiers of an odious government may become the soldiers of the nation? If these are plain truths, this is the time to tell them. If I speak daggers to you, it is that neither you nor my country may ever feel them. But if you wish to be deceived, hearken to those men who are interested in risking everything, that they may continue to monopolize the whole political power of your country. Hearken to those men who are interested in risking everything, that they may continue to draw their better inheritance from the sale of the welfare of your country—but, let me caution you, whose property is too considerable to be hazarded in the bare pursuit after the rights and property of your enslaved and impoverished countrymen, to take care what part you act on this night; let me caution you, that the decision of this night goes much farther than the important bill under your consideration. You, none of you, can be

ignorant that the British minister has designs in procrastinating this question, to procure advantages for his own country, at the expense of yours, greater than she was capable of receiving since the revolution—at least since the union. And so strongly impressed is this on the public mind, that you who shall, on this night, vote for the rejection of the bill, will appear in the eyes of the Irish nation, not only as men voting in obedience to the British minister, against the voice of the people, but as men voting for an union with England, by which this country is to be everlastingly reduced to the state of an abject province. Fortunately, the views of the British minister have been detected. Fortunately, the people of this country see him in his true colours; like the desperate gamester, who has lost his all, in the wildest schemes of aggrandizement, he looks round for some dupe to supply him with the further means of future projects; and, in the crafty subtleness of his soul, he fondly imagines he has found that easy dupe in the credulity of the Irish nation. After he has exhausted his own country, in a crusade against that phantom, political opinion, he flatters himself he will be enabled to resuscitate her at the expense of yours."

Grattan spoke warmly in favour of the bill, and summed up the arguments which had previously been advanced for and against it. He also dwelt upon the arguments which had been taken from the circumstances of the time, and the incompatibility of catholics and protestants sharing in the same rights without the risk of a revolution; and he especially controverted the argument now first advanced by ministers, that to give further emancipation to the catholics would be a breach of the king's coronation oath. "I find," said he, "that catholic emancipation is held incompatible with our monarchy. What! his majesty, the head of a catholic league—the king of Corsica—the lord of the Canadas—the great ally of the emperor—the grand confederate of the king of Spain—the protector of the pope! The king of England, whose armies are catholic, whose European connections are catholic—are his Irish subjects the only catholics in whom he wont confide? Has he found religion make the emperor false or the Prussian faithful? Such were not the sentiments of the speeches from the throne in 1793 and 1795, where his majesty calls on all his subjects to defend their

religion and their constitution. What religion?—a religion of disabilities. What constitution?—a constitution of exclusion. Am I to understand that his majesty called forth his catholic subjects to fight for a constitution which was to be shut against them, and for a religion which was dangerous to the king, and penal to the catholic? No, it was not the pope, nor yet the pretender; it was Paine, it was the French republic, against which you called for the zeal of your people, and held out the blessings of the constitution. But now it seems it is the antichrist against whom you place your batteries, the virgin, and the real presence; and in that strain of grave and solemn raving a right honourable gentleman proposes to take up arms against the grave of popery, which is shut, and to precipitate into the gulf of republicanism, which is open; perfectly safe for the king, had those who joined him thought it, to affront the catholic subjects by gross suspicions; others have proceeded to the grossest invectives; perfectly safe, they think it, to banish them from all places at court and seats in parliament; to tell catholic virtue, catholic talents, catholic ambition, you must not serve the king. You may have property, influence, but you must not act in constituted assemblies, nor in any rank or distinction for the crown. Perfectly safe, they think it, to establish an incompatibility between popery and allegiance. Perfectly safe, they think it, to insulate the throne, and reduce the king of Ireland, like the pope, to protestant guards, instead of a people; and then it is proposed that those protestant guards should monopolize all the power of government and privileges of the constitution, as a reward for their disinterestedness. In support of such a policy, it has been advanced, in a very idle publication, that the Roman catholics, as long as they have the feeling of men, must resist the natural propensities of the human heart, if they do endeavour to subvert a protestant king; but I pass that over with the scorn it deserves. It has been also said, that his majesty's oath is a bar. Oaths are serious things. To make them political pretences is a high crime; to make an obligation, taken for the assurance of liberty, a covenant against it; to impose on conscience a breach of duty; to make the piety of the king the scourge of his people; to make the oath of the king the curse of his people, is an attempt atrocious in the extreme. Ex-

amine the argument, and you find the oath was taken three years before the exclusion of the Irish catholic; the oath is the first of William; the tests that exclude them the third; so that his majesty must have sworn in the strain and spirit of prophecy. Examine a little further, and you will find his majesty swears, not in his legislative, but in his executive capacity; he swears to the laws he is to execute, not against the laws which parliament may think proper to make. In that supposition he would, by his oath, control not himself, but parliament, and swear not to execute laws, but to prevent them. Examine a little further, and you will find the words of the oath cannot support the interpretation:—"I will support the true profession of the gospel, and the protestant religion as by law established." This is the oath. I will perpetuate civil incapacities on catholics: this is the comment. Such comment supposes the true possession of the gospel to stand on pains and penalties, and the protestant religion on civil proscription. Examine the oath a little further, and if the comment is true, the oath has been broken by his majesty's gracious recommendation in favour of the catholics in 1792; broken by the grant of the elective franchise; broken by the Canada bill; broken by the Corsican constitution. Hear the speech of the viceroy of Corsica: his excellency having recommended to parliament the civil and military establishment, proceeds at last to the church, and advises them to settle that establishment with his holiness the pope. Very proper all this, no doubt; but if the interpretation be true, what an outrageous breach all this of his majesty's coronation oath. I should ask whether, in the interpretation of the oath, his majesty has consulted his Irish bishops? and yet he could have found among them men perfectly competent. I will venture to say, that the head of our clergy understands the catholic question better than those consulted; I will add, he does not, I believe, disapprove of their emancipation, nor approve of the arguments against them. But it seems, in matters that relate to the Irish church, the Irish clergy are not to be consulted, and English episcopacy, like an English cabinet, is to determine the destiny of Ireland. I have great respect for the learned prelates of England, particularly for one whose exemplary virtue and apostolic character qualify him to preside over whatever is learned,

pure, or holy; but in Irish affairs, in matters in which our civil as well as our religious interests are implicated, might I say his majesty's counsellors should be his Irish parliament and his Irish bishops. It seems highly prejudicial to the church and the monarchy, that the argument which excludes the catholic under pretence to strengthen both, should be attended with circumstances that bespeak the Irish hierarchy a cypher, the English hierarchy a nuisance, and represents the king a magistrate as sworn against the privileges of his people. So far am I from agreeing to such an argument, that I must here repeat what I advanced before, and say, that I do not dissent, but I contradict. I do not say the catholic emancipation is compatible with the present monarchical government in Ireland, but that it is now become necessary to it; and that as for the preservation of the connection, you must make it compatible with the privileges of three-fourths of your people—so, for the preservation of your monarchy, you must make monarchy also compatible with those privileges; you must make the regal capacity of the king compatible with the civil capacity of the subject."

This debate, perhaps the longest the house had ever witnessed, lasted the whole night, in spite of an attempt at adjournment, and the house did not divide till half-past ten o'clock of the forenoon of the next day. The numbers were then, for the bill, eighty-four; for rejecting it, a hundred and fifty-five.

Thus the question of catholic emancipation was set at rest for the present. Its fate had proved the utter venality of the Irish parliament, for the men who had openly supported it because they knew the lord lieutenant in power supported it, now, within about a month, voted against the measure, because they knew his successor was opposed to it. The other popular measures which had been brought forward by Grattan and his friends suffered a similar fate. This session, which had so great an influence on the subsequent fate of Ireland, was closed on the fifth of June, with a speech of the new lieutenant, lord Camden, who simply thanked parliament for its contributions to foreign war, and recommended the members to hasten home to their different counties, and there exert themselves in endeavouring to preserve domestic peace.

CHAPTER XX.

DISTURBED STATE OF THE COUNTRY; BATTLE OF THE DIAMOND; ORIGIN OF THE ORANGEMEN; FLIGHT OF WOLFE TONE; INCREASE OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN; PARLIAMENTARY SESSION OF 1796.



DOMESTIC peace seemed, indeed, at this moment to have fled from the shores of Ireland. The effect of wantonly raising the hopes of the catholics, and then so abruptly defeating them, was disastrous throughout the country. The recall of earl Fitzwilliam had created a great agitation throughout the kingdom, and meetings were held everywhere to lament over his departure, and pass resolutions expressive of sorrow and indignation at the unpopular change which had been made in the government. The ca-

tholics of Dublin held an extraordinary meeting, at which they resolved on sending three of their body as a deputation to present a petition to the king at his levee, praying, on the part of the catholics of Ireland, that he would continue lord Fitzwilliam as their lord lieutenant. Another meeting of the catholics took place in their chapel in Francis-street, on the 13th of March, when the three delegates announced that they had merely received a formal answer to their petition, though they had been received graciously. A warm debate followed on the critical state of the country, in the middle of which a considerable body of the students of Trinity college, who had been

presenting an address to Grattan, entered the chapel, and were received with the utmost enthusiasm. The students had already begun to join openly in the political feeling, and on the present occasion they took part in the debate which was going on. It was a circumstance much talked of, and gave great offence at the castle.

These sentiments of discontent were shown in a much more violent manner by the mob, and the capital was for some time a scene of continual riot. On the 31st of March, the day lord Camden was sworn into office, the archbishop of Armagh and the lord chancellor were attacked as they returned in their carriages from the castle, by the populace, who threw paving stones at their carriages, one of which struck the chancellor on the head, and inflicted a severe wound. Other mobs assembled in different parts of Dublin, and attacked the houses of obnoxious persons, especially that of John Claudius Beresford, who was believed to have been the chief cause of the recall of earl Fitzwilliam. The same spirit extended into the provinces, and the defenders became everywhere more numerous and outrageous. In some counties, every gentleman was obliged to keep a constant military guard in his house as a protection against plunder and assassination, and dreadful as had been the state of the country during the preceding two years, it became this summer considerably worse.

In some parts these Romanist insurgents assumed the name of Masons, especially about Loughal, Charlemont, Richhill, Portadown, Lurgan, and the Ban-foot and Blackwater-foot, where they were very active in robbing protestants of their arms. In the month of September they assembled in arms in open day, and marched into the parish of Tentaraghan, in the county of Armagh, where they fired into the houses of the protestants. The latter, next day, also assembled in arms, and we are told that, each party occupying the hills at some distance from each other, they kept up a constant discharge of musketry all day, but without doing any mischief. On the 18th of September some of the magistrates of the neighbourhood interfered, and persuaded the leaders of both parties to meet at the house of a man named Winter, near Portadown, where they were persuaded to lay aside their animosity, and sign articles by which they bound themselves to keep the peace towards each other. This pacifica-

tion was, it appears, of very short duration, for one of the protestant leaders was waylaid and fired at on his return from signing it, and this so excited both parties, that they were in arms again next day. Each party now threatened the other with extermination. The catholics are said to have been much more numerous than their opponents, and elated with this circumstance, having received reinforcements from the mountains of Pomeroy and Ballygawly, in the county of Tyrone, they proceeded to attack the protestants in the neighbourhood of a village called the Diamond. The protestants of the surrounding country, ever on the watch, soon collected in arms on the point where the attack had commenced, and a severe conflict took place, in which the defenders were beaten, with a loss of forty-eight killed and a great number of wounded. This engagement, which took place on the 21st of September, 1795, was long celebrated as the battle of the Diamond. The victorious protestants now showed so little moderation that the whole catholic population of this district passed into Connanght, and established themselves in the counties of Mayo and Sligo.

The intensity of these local hostilities had, no doubt, been increased by the unaccountable negligence of government, which left the attacked party to defend themselves, or, in other words, set protestant and papist to fight out their quarrel, thus spreading through the land a local war of the most horrible and sanguinary kind, instead of enforcing the authority of the law. The revolutionary party accused the government of fomenting these disturbances, in order to goad the country into open rebellion, that they might profit by it to carry their own measures. The loyal protestants began to form permanent associations for self-defence, and they assumed the title of orangemen, because they said their cause was that of the glorious revolution of eighty-eight. This was the origin of the orange societies, which occupy so prominent a place in the subsequent history of this unhappy country. The first orange lodge is said to have been formed in the county of Armagh, on the day on which the battle of the Diamond was fought, in the midst of the exultation of the protestants for their victory.

The professed object of the orange lodges was to support the government against all its enemies, catholic agitators, or French

revolutionists—catholic committee-men, and united Irishmen. One of their earliest public declarations, that of the orangemen of Dublin, which was addressed “to the loyal subjects of Ireland,” declared their principles as follows: “From the various attempts that have been made to poison the public mind, and slander those who have had the spirit to adhere to their king, and constitution, and to maintain the laws; we, the protestants of Dublin, assuming the name of orangemen, feel ourselves called upon, not to vindicate our principles, for we know that our honour and loyalty bid defiance to the shafts of malevolence and disaffection, but openly to avow those principles, and declare to the world the objects of our institution. We have long observed with indignation the efforts that have been made to foment rebellion in this kingdom by the seditious, who have formed themselves into societies, under the specious name of united Irishmen. We have seen with pain, the lower orders of our fellow-subjects forced, or seduced, from their allegiance by the threats and machinations of traitors; and we have viewed with horror the successful exertions of miscreants to encourage a foreign enemy to invade this happy land, in hopes of rising into consequence on the downfall of their country. We, therefore, thought it high time to rally round the constitution, and there pledge ourselves to each other to maintain the laws, and support our good king against all his enemies, whether rebels to their God or to their country; and, by so doing, show to the world that there is a body of men in the island who are ready, in the hour of danger, to stand forward in defence of that grand palladium of our liberties, the constitution of Great Britain and Ireland—obtained and established by the courage and loyalty of our ancestors, under the great king William. Fellow subjects, we are accused with being an institution founded on principles too shocking to repeat, and bound together by oaths at which human nature would shudder; but we caution you not to be led away by such malevolent falsehoods; for we solemnly assure you, in the presence of the Almighty God, that the idea of injuring any one, on account of his religious opinions, never entered into our hearts; we regard every loyal subject as our friend, be his religion what it may. We have no enmity but to the enemies of our country. We further declare, that we are ready, at all times, to

submit ourselves to the orders of those in authority under his majesty, and that we will cheerfully undertake any duty which they shall think proper to point out for us, in case either a foreign enemy shall dare to invade our coasts, or that a domestic foe shall presume to raise the standard of rebellion in the land. To these principles we are pledged, and in support of them we are ready to shed the last drop of our blood.”

The shock which public feeling received by the sudden recall of earl Fitzwilliam, tended to consolidate and cement the republican party, and gave more force and decision to its operations. Men of more respectability and talent than its former leaders, such as lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor, in disgust at the scornful manner in which liberal opinions were treated by government, enrolled themselves in the ranks of the United Irishmen, and soon stood foremost as their leaders; and this association received a new organization, adopted secrecy as one of its principles, and thus became more dangerous, and made republicanism its definite aim. They seem from this moment to have cast aside allegiance to the parliament as well as the crown, and, in a new test for the members of the society, where they had formerly declared their object to be the obtaining “a full representation of all the people in the commons’ house of parliament,” they now spoke simply of “a full representation of all the people.” Their leaning to the French republicans became, also, from this moment, more decided. The test of the united Irishmen was now as follows: “In the awful presence of God, I, A. B., do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion; and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full, and adequate representation of all the people in Ireland. I do further declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, or punishments shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform on, or give evidence against, any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation.”

The fate of Jackson, whose trial, as before stated, came on at the end of April, 1795, had also contributed to spread alarm

among the old leaders of the united Irishmen. Theobald Wolfe Tone, who was implicated in Jackson's treason, had been allowed to remain in Ireland undisturbed during earl Fitzwilliam's government, and was appointed by the catholic committee their agent to accompany the three delegates with their petition to the king against lord Fitzwilliam's recall. The circumstance that a man under more than suspicion of treason should be thus employed, was severely commented upon by the enemies of the catholics, and Grattan and the parliamentary whigs expostulated with them on their connection with a man so extensively compromised in sedition. The appointment of lord Camden, and the conviction of Jackson, obliged Tone to consult his immediate safety, by putting in practice his promise to leave the country. The spirit with which he left may be learnt from his own account of it, which will give us the best insight into the sentiments and intention of the extensive society which now assumed the title of the Irish union. After detailing a visit to Emmet at Rathfarnham, in company with Russell, both leaders of the United Irishmen, he says, "As we walked together into town, I opened my plan to them both. I told them that I considered my compromise with government to extend no further than the banks of the Delaware, and that the moment I landed I was free to follow any plan which might suggest itself to me for the emancipation of my country; that, undoubtedly, I was guilty of a great offence against the existing government; that in consequence I was going into exile, and that I considered that exile as a full expiation for the offence, and consequently felt myself at liberty, having made that sacrifice, to begin again on a fresh score. They both agreed with me in those principles, and I then proceeded to tell them that my intention was, immediately on my arrival in Philadelphia, to wait on the French minister, to detail to him fully the situation of affairs in Ireland, to endeavour to obtain a recommendation to the French government, and, if I succeeded so far, to leave my family in America, and to set off instantly for Paris, and apply, in the name of my country, for the assistance of France to enable us to assert our independence. It is unnecessary, I believe, to say, that this plan met with the warmest approbation and support from both Russell and Emmet; we shook hands, and

having repeated our professions of unalterable regard and esteem for each other, we parted, and this was the last interview which I was so happy as to have with those two invaluable friends together. I remember it was in a little triangular field that this conversation took place, and Emmet remarked to us that it was in one exactly like it in Switzerland where William Tell and his associates planned the downfall of the tyranny of Austria. The next day Russell returned to Belfast."

As soon as he had arranged his affairs in Dublin, Tone prepared for his departure. "I have said," he continues, "that after Jackson's death I visited nobody, but all my friends made it, I believe, a point to call on me, so that for the short time I remained in Dublin after, we were never an hour alone. My friends, M'Cormick and Keogh, who had both interested themselves extremely all along in my behalf, and had been principally instrumental in passing the vote for granting me the sum of three hundred pounds in addition to the arrears due to me by the catholics, were, of course, amongst the foremost. It was hardly necessary, to men of their foresight, and who knew me perfectly, to mention my plans; however, for greater certainty, I consulted them both, and I received, as I expected, their most cordial approbation, and they both laid the most positive injunctions upon me to leave nothing unattempted on my part to force my way to France, and lay our situation before the government there; observing, at the same time, that if I succeeded there was nothing in the power of my country to bestow to which I might not fairly pretend. It has often astonished me, and them also, that the government, knowing there was a French minister at Philadelphia, ever suffered me to go thither, at least without exacting some positive assurance on my part that I should hold no communication with him, direct or indirect. So it was, however, that either despising my efforts, or looking on themselves as too firmly established to dread anything from France, they suffered me to depart without demanding any satisfaction whatsoever on that topic; a circumstance of which I was most sincerely glad, for had I been obliged to give my parole, I should have been exceedingly distracted between opposite duties; luckily, however, I was spared the difficulty, for they suffered me to depart without any stipulation whatsoever."

On the 20th of May, Tone and his family left Dublin for Belfast, the scene of his first successful labours in what he considered the cause of liberty, and now the centre of republican agitation in the north of Ireland. "If our friends in Dublin were kind and affectionate," he says, "those in Belfast, if possible, were still more so. During near a month that we remained there, we were every day engaged by one or other; even those who scarcely knew me were eager to entertain us; parties and excursions were planned for our amusement; and, certainly, the whole of our deportment and reception at Belfast very little resembled those of a man who escaped with his life only by miracle, and who was driven into exile to avoid a more disgraceful fate. I remember, particularly, two days that we passed on the Cave-hill. On the first, Russell, Neilson, Simms, M'Cracken, and one or two more of us, on the summit of M'Art's fort, took a solemn obligation, which, I think I may say, I have, on my part, endeavoured to fulfil—never to desist in our efforts, until we had subverted the authority of England over our country, and asserted her independence." Tone embarked on the 15th of June; "before my departure," he tells us, "I explained to Simms, Neilson, and C. G. Teeling, my intentions with regard to my conduct in America; and I had the satisfaction to find it met, in all respects, with their perfect approbation; and now I looked upon myself as competent to speak fully and with confidence for the catholics, for the dissenters, and for the defenders, of Ireland." When Tone reached Philadelphia, early in August, he found there Dr. Reynolds and Hamilton Rowan; and soon after they were joined by Napper Tandy, who had made his way thither from Holland.

These personal anecdotes show us distinctly the real aim of the united Irishmen at this time, and they were more than suspected by the government. Many of the leaders, and among the rest most of those mentioned above by Tone, had become objects of suspicion, and were watched. Lord Camden had already commenced a system of state prosecutions far more extensive than anything of the kind which had been attempted by lord Westmoreland, and the prisons were soon filled with political offenders. The magistrates in some of the disturbed districts also began to act with more energy and severity against the de-

fenders. Lord Carhampton seized upon many of their suspected chiefs, and by way of summary punishment caused them to be pressed as sailors on board his majesty's navy. The formation of orange clubs was carried on extensively towards the close of the year, and the fierce hatred of the orangemen to the catholics provoked a still stronger feeling of animosity on the other side.

When parliament at length assembled on the 21st of January, 1796, the lord lieutenant, after speaking in general terms of the prosperity of the empire, and what he considered the improved condition of Ireland, proceeded to take notice of the disturbed state of the provinces, and spoke especially of the secret and treasonable associations, of the dangerous extent and malignity of which evidence brought forward in the state trials had given some glances. At the same time, he said, it had been a source of great satisfaction to him to observe the successful and meritorious exertions of the magistrates in several parts of the kingdom, and the alacrity which his majesty's regular and militia forces had universally manifested in aid of the civil power, whenever they had been called upon for the preservation of the peace and support of the laws. It remained for their prudence and wisdom to devise such measures as, together with a continuance of these exertions, and the additional powers which, by the advice of the privy council, he had thought it necessary to establish in different counties, would prevent the return of similar excesses, and restore a proper reverence for the laws of the country. It was generally understood that government would during the session apply to parliament for new powers for repressing the revolutionary movement which had gone abroad.

Grattan opposed that part of the address which expressed confidence in lord Camden's administration. He gave a retrospect of the political treatment of Ireland under the government of lord Westmoreland, showing how it had been goaded by a policy of oppression, then under earl Fitzwilliam it had been promised redress, that promise had suddenly been broken, and now a government had been established more oppressive than any it had previously experienced. He moved, as an amendment to the address, a recommendation "that they should pay the utmost attention to every measure for the purpose of preserving the

peace and good order of the country, and to amend the condition of the lower description of the people in this kingdom; with a view to render the connection between the two countries the more endearing, and to enable them more cheerfully to contribute to such burthens as should be imposed upon them, they humbly beseeched his majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to recommend to his parliament in England to adopt such measures for the admission of the manufactures of that kingdom into the ports of Great Britain on terms not less advantageous than what manufactures of Great Britain were admitted into the ports of Ireland." The parliamentary opposition had been greatly weakened by the alarm caused by the proceedings of the United Irishmen, and by the insurrectionary spirit so generally prevalent, and Grattan's amendment was only supported by fourteen votes against a hundred and twenty-two. When, on the 28th of January, Curran moved for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of the poor and the price of labour in that kingdom, he had only sixteen votes against a hundred and thirty-seven. The same proportion of votes appeared on a motion by Grattan for equalizing the channel trade between Ireland and Great Britain.

On this same day, the 28th, the attorney-general obtained leave to bring in a bill "for the more effectual prevention of insurrections, tumults, and riots, by persons styling themselves defenders, and other disorderly persons," as well as a bill "for indemnifying such magistrates and others, who might, since the 1st of January, 1795, have exceeded the ordinary forms and rules of the law for the preservation of the public peace, and suppression of insurrection prevailing in some parts of this kingdom." He said himself that the first of these was a severe and even a sanguinary law, but that the government was convinced of its necessity, and only wished it to be temporary. In pursuance of this announcement, on the 20th of February, the attorney-general proposed four resolutions to the house, in introducing which he gave an historical detail of the outrageous conduct of the defenders. The country had been for a series of years disturbed in various parts; he should not then enter into the causes of those disturbances, but he should take them up at the period of 1790, when those disturbances chiefly raged in the county of Meath. The

object of the defenders then was to plunder the peaceable inhabitants in that county of their fire-arms: they associated together, and bound themselves by the solemn tie of an oath. The defenders, it had since appeared, had their committee-men, and their captains, whom they were bound to obey, and their object was to overthrow the established order of government. Seditious emissaries dispersed themselves among the people in one place, telling the labouring man that his wages would be raised, and in another, working upon their feelings, and enticing them to acts of violence and of outrage. To repress these disturbances, the efforts of government were exerted in 1790, 1791, and 1792; and the consequence was, that a great number were brought to justice, and several were transported. Notwithstanding these examples, the disturbances continued, and they proceeded from the east to the west, and in three counties in Connaught these banditti, in open day, made an attack upon the king's forces; the army always routed them, and in one engagement, forty or fifty of these miscreants fell. There were prosecutions in that province, and several were brought to justice, and a great number were transported. That province then was in a state of tranquillity, thanks to lord Carhampton, through whose exertions, humanity, and good conduct, quiet was restored. Notwithstanding these examples, disturbances continued in other parts of the kingdom. These wretches associated together by night for the purpose of plunder, murder, and devastation. To prevent witnesses appearing against them on trial, they had adopted a system of assassination. He instanced the transaction which took place about ten days before, near Luttrellstown, where the Cornicks who were to prosecute defenders the very next day, at the quarter sessions of Kilmainham, were most inhumanly murdered. Another part of their system was, to put witnesses to death after trial; and he instanced a case where a witness who had prosecuted defenders at the assizes of Dundalk had been murdered after the trial; he instanced many acts of atrocity committed in the county of Longford, particularly the case of Mr. Harman, one of the representatives for the county, and in the county of Westmeath, Cavan, and Meath; under these circumstances, some new scheme was necessary to put an end to such enormities. His first object was, to prevent these risings in

future ; in order to do this, it was proper to enable government, on the petition of gentlemen resident in a county where any rising should be, to send a force to that county sufficient to quell such rising ; another was, to enable the magistrates at sessions to take up at unseasonable hours all persons, who could not give a satisfactory account of themselves, and if they could not find bail at assizes, the justices might send to serve on board the fleet ; another was, to enable magistrates to search houses, and if the persons were not found at home, they might be brought to the quarter sessions, and if they could not give a satisfactory account of the cause of their absence from home, they were to be dealt with as persons found abroad at unseasonable hours ; but previous to that, proclamation should be made, and public and fair notice given, so that no person should have any excuse to plead ; another object was, to enable magistrates to search houses for arms and ammunition. It might be spread abroad by evil and disaffected men, that it was the design of government to disarm the people ; but there was no such design ; it was only to take away arms from improper persons ; but, he said, he should introduce a clause in the gunpowder bill, to make every person, both great and small, to register their fire-arms ; he should propose to make the administering of such oaths, as bound the parties to any treasonable purpose, a capital offence ; there was another measure, which was, that in case of a witness being murdered, his written testimony should be competent to go as evidence to the jury. After some further statements, he read the resolutions which he intended to propose, and he afterwards moved them separately ; they were—

1. Resolved, that the spirit of conspiracy and outrage, which has appeared in certain parts of this kingdom, and has shown itself in various attempts to assassinate magistrates, to murder witnesses, to plunder houses, and seize by force the arms of his majesty's peaceable subjects, requires that more effectual powers should be given to the magistracy. 2. Resolved, that (in such parts of this kingdom, as the said spirit has shown itself, or to which there may be cause to apprehend its being extended) it will be necessary, that the magistracy should have enlarged powers of searching for arms, ammunition, and weapons of offence, and of seizing or securing the same, for the preservation of the peace, and the safety of the

lives and properties of his majesty's peaceable and loyal subjects. 3. Resolved, that from the many attacks which have been made on the houses of individuals, by large bodies of armed insurgents, for the purpose of taking arms and money by force, and murdering those who had the spirit to enforce the laws, or give information against offenders, it will be necessary that the magistracy should have enlarged powers to prevent such bodies hereafter from assembling or meeting, either to plan or to execute such horrid purposes. 4. Resolved, that it will be necessary to give the magistracy further powers with respect to vagabonds, idle and disorderly persons, and to persons liable to be deemed so, or who have no lawful trade, or any honest means to obtain a livelihood."

The only one who opposed these resolutions was lord Edward Fitzgerald, who, however, expressed his objection to them in moderate language. Mr. Vandeleur wished some allusion had been made to the outrages of the peep-o'-day-boys, which were certainly as reprehensible as those of the defenders. But on the next day, when the attorney-general's resolutions were read, Grattan rose ; he said, "that he had heard the right honourable gentleman's statement, and did not suppose it to be inflamed ; but he must observe at the same time it was partial ; he did indeed expatiate very fully and justly on the offences of the defenders ; but with respect to another description of insurgents, whose barbarities had excited general abhorrence, he had observed a complete silence ; that he had proceeded to enumerate the counties that were afflicted by disturbances, and he had omitted Armagh ; of that, neither had he comprehended the outrages in his general description, nor in his particular enumeration ; of those outrages, he had received the most dreadful accounts ; that their object was the extermination of all the catholics of that county ; it was a persecution conceived in the bitterness of bigotry, carried on with the most ferocious barbarity, by a banditti, who being of the religion of the state, had committed, with the greater audacity and confidence, the most horrid murders, and had proceeded from robbery and massacre to extermination ; that they had repealed, by their own authority, all the laws lately passed in favour of the catholics, and had established in the place of those laws, the inquisition of a mob resembling lord George Gordon's fanatics,

equalling them in outrage, and surpassing them far in perseverance and success. That their modes of outrage were as various as they were atrocious; they sometimes forced by terror, the masters of families to dismiss their catholic servants; they sometimes forced landlords, by terror, to dismiss their catholic tenantry; they seized, as deserters, numbers of catholic weavers, sent them to the county gaol, transmitted them to Dublin, where they remained in close prison, until some lawyers from compassion pleaded their cause, and procured their enlargement, nothing appearing against them of any kind whatsoever. These insurgents, who called themselves orange boys, or protestant boys, that is, a banditti of murderers, committing massacre in the name of God, and exercising despotic power in the name of liberty; these insurgents had organized their rebellion, and formed themselves into a committee, who sat and tried the catholic weavers and inhabitants, when apprehended falsely and illegally as deserters. That rebellious committee, they called the committee of elders, who, when the unfortunate catholic was torn from his family and his loom, and brought before them, in judgment upon his case, if he gave them liquor or money, they sometimes discharged him, otherwise they sent him to a recruiting office as a deserter. They had very generally given the catholics notice to quit their farms and dwellings, which notice was plastered on the house, and conceived in these short but plain words—"Go to hell, Connaught won't receive you, fire and faggot—Will. Tresham and John Thrustout." That they followed these notices by a faithful and punctual execution of the horrid threat; they soon after visited the house, robbed the family, and destroyed what they did not take, and finally completed the atrocious persecution, by forcing the unfortunate inhabitants to leave their land, their dwellings, and their trade, and to travel with their miserable family, and whatever their miserable family could save from the wreck of their houses and tenements, and take refuge in villages, as fortifications against invaders, where they described themselves, as he had seen in their affidavits, in the following manner: "We (mentioning their names), formerly of Armagh, weavers, now of no fixed place of abode, or means of living," &c. In many instances this banditti of persecution threw down the houses of the tenantry, or what they called racked

the house, so that the family must fly or be buried in the grave of their own cabin. The extent of the murders that had been committed by that atrocious and rebellious banditti, he had heard, but had not heard them so ascertained as to state them to that house, but from all the inquiries he could make, he collected, that the catholic inhabitants of Armagh had been actually put out of the protection of the law; that the magistrates had been supine or partial, and that the horrid banditti had met with complete success, and with very little discouragement from the magistracy. This horrid persecution, this abominable barbarity, and this general extermination, had been acknowledged by the magistrates, who found the evil had now proceeded to so shameful an excess, that it had at length obliged them to cry out against it. On the 28th of December, thirty of the magistrates had come to the following resolution, which was evidence of the designs of the insurgents, and of their success: 'Resolved, that it appears to this meeting, that the county of Armagh is at this moment in a state of uncommon disorder; that the Roman catholic inhabitants are grievously oppressed by lawless persons unknown, who attack and plunder their houses by night, and threaten them with instant destruction, unless they abandon immediately their lands and habitations.' It was said by the mover of the resolution, that of the defenders, multitudes had been hanged, multitudes had been put to death on the field, and that they were suppressed, though they were not extinguished; but with regard to the outrages of the orange-boys, he would make no such boast; on the contrary, they had met with impunity, and success, and triumph; they had triumphed over the law, they had triumphed over the magistrates, and they had triumphed over the people. There persecution, rebellion, inquisition, murder, robbery, devastation, and extermination had been entirely victorious."

Grattan ended his speech by moving the insertion of certain words which would apply more especially to the protestant insurgents. His amendment, however, was rejected, and the insurrection bill was brought in and read a first time. The second reading took place next day, when the bill was warmly opposed by sir Lawrence Parsons; but the only vote against its committal was that of lord Edward Fitzgerald. On the 29th of February, when the report from the com-

mittee on this bill was before the house, Grattan wished that the bill should be recommended, in order that he might move an amendment to compel the county to pay the countryman, whether labourer or manufacturer, full compensation for his damage and losses to his person, family, or dwelling, suffered in consequence of violent mobs; that he was apprehensive that if the compensation were left optional to the grand jury, nothing would be done, that the grand jury would readily present for damages suffered by magistrates or witnesses, but they probably would not, in the county of Armagh particularly, give any adequate, or indeed any, satisfaction for losses suffered by the catholic weaver or peasant, and therefore it was not enough that grand juries should have the power, it was indispensable to impose the obligation. Government trifled with the northern weaver; when he sent him for satisfaction to a grand jury, composed of those very magistrates, whose supineness, or partiality, or bigotry, had been the cause of his losses and his emigration. He said he therefore had formed a clause, which he would read, and by which it was rendered obligatory on the county, to indemnify the countryman for the injury he received when beaten or abused, or driven from his land and habitation. He said he had read the bill, that he could find no remedy whatever in the bill, as at present formed, for such a case, that in the different preambles the grievance was not set forth, and in the various provisions it was not comprehended; that the bill complains of violence to magistrates, of the murder of witnesses, of illegal oaths, &c., but of the threats, and force, and violence offered to certain of his majesty's subjects, whereby they have been forced to quit their trades, their lands, and their tenements, outrages of which the governor of a northern county had complained as unexampled in history, and to which violence and atrocity the magistrates of that county had borne their testimony by a formal resolution; there was in the bill complete silence and omission. "The bill proposed to give extra power to magistrates, but what was the grievance of Armagh? That the magistrates had not used the ordi-

nary powers, and in some cases had abused those powers in such a manner, that the subject had not been protected, and the rioter had been encouraged; that the bill, as it appeared without that clause, was not faithful to its own principle, it was a bill, unless amended, of partial coercion, and partial redress; it punished (as it stood) disturbance in one part of the kingdom; it compromised with disturbances in another; it protected the magistrates of the west and left exposed the poor of the north; it says, if you murder a magistrate, you shall pay his representatives; but if you drive away whole droves of weavers in Armagh, you shall pay nothing, except those persons please, by whose fault they have been driven away, and scattered over the face of the earth."

On this occasion the whole bill was again warmly debated, but it finally passed without a division. It was the only important business of the session, which was closed on the 15th of April.

While parliament was sitting, and after its adjournment, the distractions of the country increased, and defenders on one side, and orangemen on the other, seemed bent upon tearing it to pieces. The hatred of these two parties had assumed a character which was deadly and implacable, and public justice seemed to have vacated her throne. The magistrate who prosecuted, or the witness who bore testimony against a catholic insurgent, were visited with the extremities of fire and slaughter, and as the latter at least were generally defenceless, it became now almost impossible in any case to obtain evidence sufficient to convict; while the man who committed his outrages in the name of loyalty was allowed to pass with impunity. The county of Armagh remained as yet the head-quarters of the orangemen, and they conducted themselves there as if they were resolved to justify the report spread among their enemies that they were bound by a secret oath—their *purple* oath, as it was called—to exterminate the catholic population; and unfortunately their conduct was seized upon as a provocation to, and a justification of the rebellious spirit spread abroad by the United Irishmen.*

* The notoriousness of these mutual outrages, and the different lights in which they were viewed by the different parties, may be exemplified by the following extract from the *Dublin Evening Post*, of the 24th of September, 1796.—"The most severe stroke made against the character and conduct of the viceroy, as a moral man and first magistrate of a

free people, who ought not to hold the sword *in v. in*, nor to exercise it *partially*, has been in *Faulkner's Journal* of this day. That hiring print is undeniably in the pay of his lordship's administration; and what administration permits, it is supposed to prompt or patronise. In that print, the blind fury of the banditti, which usurps and dis-

The latter were now carrying on their organisation secretly and rapidly. The whole association had assumed a military character, and they were rapidly arming the population. This military organisation was brought into effect in the autumn of 1796, and, as we learn from documents of the time, was conducted in the following manner. To avoid giving alarm, it was engrafted as nearly as possible on the civil organisation, and was concealed as much as possible under the usual denominations. The secretary of a society of twelve was usually the petty officer; the delegate of five societies to a lower baronial society, when the population required such an immediate step, was the captain, and the delegate from the lower to the upper baronial the colonel. All officers, up to the colonel, were indispensably elected by those they were to command, but at that point the interference of the societies ceased, and every higher commission was in the appointment of the consecutive; except that as soon as sufficient numbers of regiments were organized in any county, the colonels were directed to transmit to the executive the names of three persons fit, in their opinion, to act as adjutants-general for that county, out of which three the executive chose one; and through this organ all military communications were made to the several counties. By this arrangement, not more than one of the executive need ever be committed with any county, and that only to a person of his own choice from among the three. Every man who could afford it was directed to provide himself with a musket and a bayonet, and as much ammunition as he could; every man who could not buy a musket, was to procure a pike, and, if he could, a case of pistols. Considerable sums of money seem to have been expended in purchasing arms for distribution. In many instances the lower orders went about to private houses to rob them of arms. The executive endeavoured to prevent this practice, as one calculated to excite alarm, and lead to suspicions of their designs; and they represented to the people

graces the name of *Orange* in the north, is applauded, and all their bloody excesses justified. Murder in all its horrid forms, assassinations in cold blood, the mutilation of members without respect to age or sex, the firing of whole hamlets, so that, when the inhabitants have been looked after, nothing but their ashes were to be found; the atrocious excursions of furious hordes, armed with sword, fire, and faggot, to exterminate a people for presuming to obey the

that the arms would always be kept in better condition by the gentlemen than by them, and that they could be easily seized whenever necessary. The result of these arrangements was so successful, that in the spring of 1797, according to papers seized at Belfast, the number enlisted in the province of Ulster alone amounted to nearly a hundred thousand, who were largely supplied with fire-arms and pikes, had some cannon and ammunition, and were actively employed in the study and practice of military tactics. Nothing, indeed, was omitted to enable them to take the field, whenever they might receive orders to that effect from their superior officers.

All these preparations indicated the expectation of foreign assistance, and the whole nation was alarmed at this moment by constant reports of the intentions of the French republic to send an expedition against Great Britain. These reports afforded a pretence to the government for the protection given to the orangemen, as well as for encouraging the formation of armed corps of yeomanry to assist in resisting foreign invasion, and these again were represented by the disaffected as steps towards dragooning them into submission, which they ought to be prepared to resist. The same alarm led to the calling of parliament together on the 13th of October, when the speech from the throne informed them that his majesty had required their attendance in parliament thus early in consequence of the enemy's threats of a descent upon that kingdom and Great Britain, and that he appealed to and confided in the spirit, loyalty, and zeal of his faithful people of Ireland to repel such an attack. The lord lieutenant intimated to them the king's intention to send a person to Paris to treat for peace. In alluding to the internal state of the country, he made a slight mention of the orange disturbances in the county of Armagh. Grattan, in the debate on the address, made a long speech, no less eloquent than severe, against the administration. He lamented that the speech contained nothing of a conciliatory nature,

divine command, written by the finger of God himself, 'honour thy father and thy mother,' and walking in the religion which seemed good in their eyes. These are the flagitious enormities which attract the mercenary applause of *Faulkner's Journal*, the literary prop of the Camden administration; these are favourite themes upon which it dilates with the copiousness of a full heart. O shame! where is thy blush?" The picture, no doubt, is exaggerated.

and that the outrages against the catholics in the north had been so slightly dwelt on; and he warned the government against the manner in which they were treating the Irish people. The ministers excused their conduct with regard to Armagh on the ground that the magistrates had done all in their power to suppress the disorders which reigned there, and they protested against the bringing forward of grievances at a moment of danger like this. The debate was carried on with unusual heat and violence till two o'clock in the morning, when, on a

division, there were only twelve votes for Grattan's amendment to the address, and a hundred and forty-nine against it. The second day of the session witnessed another violent debate on the introduction by ministers of a bill for suspending the habeas corpus act, when the opposition showed only seven votes against a hundred and thirty-seven. After this bill had been carried, the parliament was prorogued by successive adjournments to the 6th of January.

CHAPTER XXI.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FRENCH REPUBLIC; WOLFE TONE IN FRANCE; THE BANTRY BAY EXPEDITION.



WE have seen the attempt to establish a direct communication between the republican propagandists of France and the United Irishmen fail, in the person of the agent Jackson. Soon after his death, other attempts seem to have been made, and one of the Irish republican leaders appears to have been sent over to Paris. The history of these transactions is extremely obscure, and, although we know that there was a secret communication between Ireland and France, we neither know how it was carried on, nor what were its precise objects, except that the Irish revolutionists, alarmed by the sudden vigilance of the government, were ready to embrace any alternative rather than relinquish their favourite hopes.

There was one revolutionary agent, however, who proceeded much more directly towards the object just mentioned, and whose efforts led to more important results. This was Theobald Wolfe Tone, who, as he had promised his fellow-conspirators before his exile, no sooner reached Philadelphia, than he called on the French minister there, the "citizen" Adet, to lay before him his plans for introducing a French army into Ireland. The Frenchman treated his pro-

posals with so much coldness, that Tone despaired of bringing his designs for revolutionizing Ireland to any good effect, and he proceeded to purchase a small plantation, with the intention of settling down into the tranquil life of an American farmer. While thus occupied, he received letters from Keogh, Russell, and the two Simmses, whom we have already seen among the most determined of the Irish revolutionists; they informed him that the public mind in Ireland was advancing towards republicanism with extraordinary rapidity—urged him to move heaven and earth to force his way to France, in order to obtain assistance from the government there, and one of the Simmses sent him two hundred pounds. Tone's ambition and vanity thus received a new stimulus; he went again to the French resident at Philadelphia, who was now as warm in his encouragement, as he had been cold before; and he at once prepared for his departure, leaving his family in America. He sent his brother Arthur in a vessel bound to Belfast, to give secret intelligence to Neilson, Simms, and Russell in Belfast, and to Keogh and M'Cormick in Dublin, that he was preparing to fulfil their wishes; and, having obtained from Adet a letter, in cypher, addressed to the *Comité de salut publique* in Paris, he set sail from America on the 1st of January, 1796, in a vessel bound for

Havre, where he landed on the first of February.

We have full information on Tone's negotiations in France, and on the unsuccessful expedition against Ireland, to which they led, in his own private diary, which is written with too much simplicity of style, not to deserve our entire credit. It is the only key we have to this part of Irish history, and we cannot do better than follow the details thus offered to us.

Tone arrived in Paris on the twelfth of February, and after a day or two spent in making himself acquainted with the French capital, he presented his letter to the minister of foreign affairs, De la Croix, by whom he was favourably received, and who caused him to be introduced to Madgett, the Irish employé in Paris who has been already mentioned in connection with the mission of Jackson. Madgett assured him that the French directory was aware who he was, and what were his objects, and that they were fully prepared to espouse the cause of the Irish patriots. Tone enters in his diary, on the 18th of February, "Breakfast at Madgett's. Long account on my part of the state of Ireland when I left it. Madgett assures me again that the government here have their attention turned most seriously to Irish affairs; that they feel that unless they can separate Ireland from England, the latter is invulnerable; that they are willing to conclude a treaty, offensive and defensive, with Ireland, and a treaty of commerce on a footing of reciprocal advantage; that they will supply ten sail of the line, arms, and money, as he told me yesterday; and that they were already making arrangements in Spain and Holland for that purpose. He asked me, did I think anything would be done in Ireland by her spontaneous effort. I told him, most certainly not; that if a landing were once effected, everything would follow instantly—but that that was indispensable; and I begged him to state this as my opinion, to such persons in power as he might communicate with; that if twenty thousand French were in Ireland, we should in a month have an army of one, two, or, if necessary, three hundred thousand men, but that the *point d'appui* was indispensable. I then mentioned the necessity of having a man of reputation at the head of the French forces, and mentioned Pichegru or Jourdan, both of whom are well known by character in Ireland. He told me there was a kind of

coolness between the executive and Pichegru (this I suspected before), but that, if the measures were adopted, he might still be the general; adding, that he was a man of more talent than Jourdan. I answered, either would do. He then desired me to prepare a memorial, in form, for the French executive as soon as possible, which he would translate, and have delivered in without delay." During the three following days Tone was occupied in drawing up this memorial, but he informs us that he called "on Madgett once a day, to confer with him. He says there will be sent a person to Ireland immediately, with whom I shall have a conference; and that it would be desirable he should bring back an appointment of minister-plenipotentiary for me, in order to conclude an alliance offensive and defensive with the republic; in which case I should be acknowledged as such by the French government. Certainly nothing could be more flattering to me; however, I answered, that such an appointment could not be had without communicating with so many persons, as might endanger the betraying of the secret to the Irish government; that I only desired credit with the *directoire exécutif*, so far as they should find my assertions supported by indisputable facts; that the information I brought was the essential part; and the credential, though highly gratifying to my private feelings, would be in fact but matter of form. That when a government was formed in Ireland, it would be time enough to talk of embassies; and then, if my country thought me worthy, I should be the happiest and proudest man living to accept the office of ambassador from Ireland. So there was an end to my appointment. I must wait till the war at least is commenced, if ever it commences, or perhaps until it is over, if I am not knocked on the head in the meantime. I should like very well to be the first Irish ambassador; and, if I succeed in my present business, I think I will have some claim to the office. Madgett says if we succeed, it is part of the plan, but I believe he means his own plan, to demand Jamaica for Ireland, by way of indemnity. I wish we had Ireland without Jamaica." Tone soon found himself destined to undergo disappointments. "February 22—Finished my memorial, and delivered a fair copy, signed, to Madgett, for the minister of foreign relations. Madgett in the horrors. He tells

me he has had a discourse, yesterday, for two hours, with the minister, and that the succours he expected will fall very short of what he thought. That the marine of France is in such a state, that government will not hazard a large fleet; and, consequently, that we must be content to steal a march. That they will give two thousand of their best troops, and arms for twenty thousand; that they cannot spare Pichegru nor Jourdan; that they will give any quantity of artillery; and, I think he added, what money might be necessary. He also said, they would first send proper persons among the Irish prisoners-of-war, to sound them, and exchange them on the first opportunity. To all this, at which I am not disappointed, I answered, that as to two thousand men, they might as well send twenty—that with regard to myself, I would go if they would send but a corporal's guard; but that my opinion was, that five thousand was as little as could be landed, with any prospect of success, and that that number would leave the matter doubtful. I bid him then remember, that my plan was built on the supposition of a powerful support in the first instance; that I had particularly specified so in my memorial; and begged him to apprise the minister that my opinion was so. That, nevertheless, with five thousand men, the business might be attempted, and I did believe would succeed; but that, in that case, we must fight hard for it. That though I was satisfied how the militia and army would act in case of a powerful invasion, I could not venture to say what might be their conduct under the circumstances he mentioned; that, if they stood by the government, which it was possible they might, we should have hot work of it; that, if five thousand men were sent, they should be the very flower of the French troops, and a considerable proportion of them artillerymen, with the best general they could spare. He interrupted me to ask who was known in Ireland after Pichegru and Jourdan. I answered Hoche, especially since his affair at Quiberon. He said he was sure we might have Hoche. I also mentioned, that if they sent but five thousand men, they should send a greater quantity of arms. . . . We then parted. Oh, good God! good God! what would I give to-night, that we were safely landed, and encamped on the Cave Hill. If we ever find our way so far, I think we shall puzzle John Bull to work us out. Surely,

we can do as much as the Chouans, or people of La Vendée!"

Tone was next introduced to the celebrated Carnot, who listened with great patience to his statements, and gave him so much encouragement, that his expectations were now wound up to the highest degree. On the 26th of February, he had another interview with De la Croix, of which he gives the following relation:—"This morning finished an awkward business, that is to say, wrote a long letter to the minister, all about myself; very proper in an ambassador to frame his own credentials. My commission was large, for I made it myself. Read it over carefully; every word true and not exaggerated. Resolved to go at once to the minister and deliver my letter, like a true Irishman, with my own hands. Went to his bureau, and saw Lamare, the secretary, whom I sent in to demand an audience. Lamare returned with word that the minister was just engaged with Neri Corsini, ambassador from the grand duke of Tuscany, and would see me the moment he was at leisure. Neri Corsini being departed, I was introduced: I began with telling the minister, that though I spoke execrable French, I would, with his permission, put his patience to a short trial. I then told him, that, in obedience to his orders, I had finished a memorial on the actual state of Ireland, which I had delivered to Madgett; that I had finished the draft of another, which I would deliver to-morrow, on the means necessary to accomplish the great object of my mission—the separation of Ireland from England, and her establishment as an independent republic in alliance with France. De la Croix interrupted here by saying that I might count upon it, there was no object nearer the heart of the executive directory; that they had that business, at that very moment, before them; and would leave no means consistent with their utmost capacity, untried to accomplish it. And he repeated again with earnestness, 'that I might count upon it.' The minister then asked me what we wanted in Ireland? I answered, that we wanted a force to begin with; arms, ammunition, and money. He asked me what quantities of each would I think sufficient? I did not wish to go just then into the detail, as I judged from Madgett's discourse, that the minister's plan was on a smaller scale than mine, and I did not desire to shock him too much in the outset. I therefore took ad-

vantage of my bad French, and mentioned that I doubted my being able sufficiently to explain myself in conversation, but that he would find my opinions at length in the two memorials I had prepared, and when he had considered them, I hoped he would allow me to wait on him and explain any point which might not be sufficiently clear. He then proceeded to give me his own ideas, which were, as I suspected, upon a small scale. He said, he understood Ireland was very populous and the people warlike, so as soon to be made soldiers, and that they were already in some degree armed. I answered, not so much as to be calculated upon in estimating the quantity of arms wanted, as most of the guns which they had were but fowling-pieces. He then said, he knew they had no artillery nor cannoniers, and that, consequently, it would be necessary to supply them with both; that field-pieces would be sufficient, as we had no strong places; that we should have thirty pieces of cannon, half eight-pounders, and half sixteen-pounders, properly manned and officered; and twenty thousand stand of arms. I interrupted him to say twenty thousand at least, as the only limitation to the numbers we could raise would be the quantity of arms we might have to put into their hands. He then went on to say, that those should be landed near Belfast, where he supposed they would be most likely to meet with early support. I answered, 'Certainly, as that province was the most populous and warlike in the kingdom.' He then produced a map of Ireland, and we looked over it together. I took this advantage to slide in some of my own ideas, by saying, that if we were able to begin in considerable force, we should commence as near the capital as possible; the possession of which, if once obtained, would, I thought, decide the whole business; but if we began with a smaller force, we should commence as near Belfast as we could; and then push forward, so as to secure the mountains of Morne and the Fews, by means of which, and of Lough Erne, we could cover the entire province of Ulster, and maintain ourselves until we had collected our friends in sufficient force to penetrate to Dublin. He liked my plan extremely, which certainly appears to be the only feasible one, in case of a small force being landed. He then mentioned the Irishmen serving in the British navy; and asked me what I thought of sending proper persons amongst them to insinuate the duty

they owed to their country, and whether in such case, they would act against us or not? This is Madgett's scheme; and if it is not followed by very different measures, is nonsense. I answered, that undoubtedly the measure was a good one, if accompanied properly; but to give it full effect, it was absolutely necessary there should be a government established in Ireland, for reasons which he would find detailed in my memorials, and of which I gave him an imperfect abstract. I think he seemed satisfied on that head. The result of this conversation, the principal circumstances of which I have substantially related, is, that the executive directors at present are determined to take us up, but on a small scale; that they will give us thirty pieces of cannon, properly manned, and twenty thousand stand of arms, with some money, of course, to begin with; but I did not collect from the minister that they had an idea of any definite number of troops, at least he mentioned none, and I did not press him on that head, as I wish they should first read and consider my memorials; perhaps what is said in them may induce them to reconsider the subject, and if so, I shall have done a most important service both to France and Ireland."

On the 11th of March, Tone again "went to the minister De la Croix, and had a long conversation. He began by saying, that he had read my two memorials carefully, and that I seemed to insist on a considerable force, as necessary to the success of the measure; that as to that, there were considerable difficulties to be surmounted, arising from the superiority of the English fleet. That, as to twenty thousand men, they could not possibly be transported, unless the French were masters of the channel, in which case they could as easily send forty thousand or sixty thousand, and march at once to London. (N.B. In this De la Croix is much mistaken. It would be, in my mind, just as impossible for France to conquer England as for England to conquer France. He does not know what it is to carry on war in a country where every man's hand is against you, and yet his own country might have given him a lesson; however, it was not my business to contest the point with him, so I let him go on,) As to twenty thousand men, it was thus out of the question. As to five thousand, there would be great difficulties; they would require, for example, twenty ships to convey them; it would not be easy to equip

twenty sail in a French port without the English having some notice, and in that case, they would instantly block up the port with a force double of any that could be sent against them. To this I answered, that I was but too sensible of the difficulty he mentioned; that, however, all great enterprises were attended with great difficulties, and I besought him to consider the magnitude of the object. That as to five thousand, when I mentioned that number, it was not that I thought it necessary for the people at large, but for those men of some property, whose assistance was so essential in framing a government in Ireland, without loss of time; and who might be deterred from coming forward at first, if they saw but an inconsiderable force to support them; that I begged leave to refer to my second memorial, where he would find my reasons on this subject detailed at length; that I had written those memorials under a strong sense of duty, not with a view to flatter or mislead him, or to say what might be agreeable to the French government, but to give them such information as I thought essential for them to know; that as to the truth of the facts contained in them, I was willing to stake my head on their accuracy. He answered, he had no doubt as to that; that he saw as well as I, the convenience of an immediate government, but was it not feasible on a smaller scale than I had mentioned. For example, if they gave us a general of established reputation, an etat-major, thirty pieces of artillery, with cannoniers, and twenty thousand stand of arms, would not the people join them; and if so, might we not call the clubs that I had mentioned in my memorials (meaning the catholic committee and the United Irishmen of Belfast), and frame of them a provisory government, until the national convention could be organized. I answered, that as to the people joining them, I never had the least doubt, that my only fear was, lest the men who composed the clubs of which he spoke might be at first backward, from a doubt of the sufficiency of the force; that I hoped they would act with spirit, and as became them; but that I could not venture to commit my credit with him on any fact of whose certainty I was not positively ascertained. 'Well, then,' replied he, 'supposing your patriots should not act at first with spirit; you say you are sure of the people. In that case, you must only choose delegates from the army, and let them act

provisorily until you have acquired such a consistency as will give courage to the men of whom you make mention.' I answered, that, by that means, we might undoubtedly act with success; that a sort of military government was not, however, what I should prefer to commence with, if I saw any other; but that the necessity of the case must justify us in adopting so strong a measure in the first instance. (N.B. In this I lied a little, for my wishes are in favour of a very strong, or in other words, a military government, in the outset; and if I had any share of influence in such government, I think I would not abuse it; but I see the handle it might give to demagogues, if we had any such among us. It is unnecessary here to write an essay on the subject; but the result of my meditation is, that the advantages, all circumstances considered, outweigh the inconveniences and hazard, and I for one, am ready to take my share of the danger and the responsibility; I was, consequently, glad when De la Croix proposed the measure.) I added, that the means which he then mentioned, undoubtedly weakened my argument, as to the necessity of numbers, considerably. He then said that from Madgett's representations, he had been induced to think that men were not at all wanting. I answered, that was very compatible with my theory, for that certainly if there were any idea of national resistance, five thousand might be said to be no force at all for a conquest. I then shifted the discourse by saying, that, as to the embarkation, on whatever scale it was made, it might be worth consideration whether it could not be best effected from Holland, that their harbours were, I believed, less closely watched than the French; and that, at any rate, England had no port for ships of war to northward of Portsmouth, so that even if she had a fleet off the coasts of Holland, it must return occasionally to refit, and during one of these intervals the expedition might take place. This brought on the old subject of debauching the Irish seamen in the British navy, which seems a favourite scheme of De la Croix, and is, in my mind, flat nonsense. He questioned as before, whether by preparing a few of them, and suffering them to escape, they might not rouse the patriotism of the Irish seamen, and cause a powerful revulsion in the navy of England. I answered, as I had done already, that the measure was undoubtedly good, if properly

followed up; at the same time, that there was great hazard of alarming the British government; that he would see that an Irish government was, in my mind, an indispensable requisite; that I did not build on the patriotism of the Irish seamen, but on their passions and interests; that we could offer them the whole English commerce as a bribe, whilst England has nothing to oppose in return but the mere force of discipline; and I pressed this as strongly on the minister as my execrable French would permit. On the whole, I do not much glory in this day's conversation. If I have not lost confidence, I certainly have not gained any. I see the minister is rooted in his narrow scheme, and I am sorry for it. Perhaps imperious circumstances will not permit him to be otherwise; but if the French government have the power effectually to assist us, and do not, they are miserable politicians. It is now one hundred and three years since Louis XIV. neglected a similar opportunity of separating Ireland from England; and France has had reason to lament it ever since. He, too, went upon the short-sighted policy of merely embarrassing England, and leaving Ireland to shift as she might. I hope the republic will act on nobler motives, and with more extended views."

Three days after this, the would-be Irish ambassador had an interview with Carnot, who introduced him to general Clarke, an officer of the republic, who was Irish by descent, and who was at the head of the war department. To this man Tone was now turned over, and he accompanied him to his bureau, where he recapitulated what he had previously said on the subject of his mission to Madgett and the minister. "He (Clarke) then began to interrogate me on some of the heads, in a manner which showed me that he was utterly unacquainted with the present state of affairs in Ireland, and particularly with the great internal changes which had taken place there within the last three or four years, which, however, is no impeachment of his judgment or talents; there were, however, other points on which he was radically wrong. For example, he asked me, would not the aristocracy of Ireland, some of which he mentioned, as the earl of Ormond, concur in the attempt to establish the independence of their country? I answered, 'Most certainly not;' and begged him to remember that if the attempt were made, it would

be by the people, and the people only; that he should calculate on all the opposition that the Irish aristocracy could give; that the French revolution, which had given courage to the people, had, in the same proportion, alarmed the aristocracy, who trembled for their titles and estates; that this alarm was diligently fomented by the British minister, who had been able to persuade every man of property that their only security was in supporting him implicitly in every measure calculated to oppose the progress of what were called French principles; that, consequently, in any system he might frame in his mind, he should lay down the utmost opposition of the aristocracy as an essential point. At the same time, I added, that, in case of a landing being effected in Ireland, their opposition would be of very little significance, as their conduct had been such as to give them no claim on the affections of the people; that their own tenants and dependents would, I was satisfied, desert them; and they would become just so many helpless individuals, devoid of power and influence. He then mentioned that the volunteer convention in 1783 seemed to be an example against what I now advanced; the people then had acted through their leaders. I answered, they certainly had; and as their leaders had betrayed them, that very convention was one reason why the people had for ever lost all confidence in what was called leaders. He still seemed, however, to have a leaning towards the co-operation of our aristocracy, which is flat nonsense. He asked me, was there no one man of that body that we could not make use of; and again mentioned, 'for example, the earl of Ormond.' I answered, 'not one;' that as to lord Ormond, he was a drunken beast, without a character of any kind, but that of a blockhead; that I did believe, speaking my own private opinion as an individual, that perhaps the duke of Leinster might join the people if the revolution was once begun, because I thought him a good Irishman; but that for this opinion I had merely my own conjectures; and that, at any rate, if the beginning was once made, it would be of very little consequence what part any individual might take. I do not know how Fitzgibbon's name happened to come in here, but he asked me would it not be possible to make something of him. Any one who knows Ireland, will readily believe that I

did not find it easy to make a serious answer to this question. Yes! Fitzgibbon would be very likely, from his situation, his principles, his hopes, and his fears, his property, and the general tenor of his conduct, to begin a revolution in Ireland! At last I believe I satisfied Clarke on the subject of the support to be expected from our aristocracy. He then asked me what I thought the revolution, if begun, would terminate in? I answered, undoubtedly, as I thought, in a republic allied to France. He then said, what security could I give, that in twenty years after our independence, we might not be found engaged as an ally of England against France? I thought the observation a very foolish one, and only answered that I would not venture to foretell what the combination of events for twenty years might produce; but in the present posture of affairs, there were few things which presented themselves to my view under a more improbable shape. He then came to the influence of the catholic clergy over the minds of the people, and the apprehension that they might warp them against France. I assured him, as the fact is, that it was much more likely that France would turn the people against the clergy; that within the last few years, that is to say, since the French revolution, an astonishing change, with regard to the influence of the priests, had taken place in Ireland. I mentioned to him the conduct of that body, pending the catholic business, and how much and how justly they had lost character on that account. I told him the anecdote of the pope's legate, who is also archbishop of Dublin, being superseded in the actual management of his own chapel, of his endeavouring to prevent a political meeting therein, and of his being forced to submit and attend the meeting himself; but, particularly, I mentioned the circumstance of the clergy excommunicating all defenders, and even refusing the sacrament to some of the poor fellows *in articulo mortis*, which to a catholic is a very serious affair, and all to no purpose. This last circumstance seemed to strike him a good deal. He then said that I was not to augur anything either way, from anything that passed on that day; that he would read and consider my memorials very attentively; but that I must see that a business of such magnitude could not be discussed in one conversation, and that the first; that I was not, however, to be discouraged because he did not at present com-

municate with me more openly. I answered, I understood all that; that undoubtedly, on this occasion, it was my turn to speak and his to hear, as I was not to get information, but to give it. I then fixed with him to return in six days (on the 1st of Germinal), and having requested him to get the original memorials, as he was perfect master of the English, and I could not answer for a translation which I had never seen, I took my leave."

Things dragged on slowly for two or three weeks of alternate encouragement and discouragement. Tone was commissioned to draw up a manifesto, to be published by the French commander on landing in Ireland, and he had several interviews with general Clarke, and others, in the course of which it was agreed that the Irish patriot should receive an officer's commission in the French army. On one of those occasions, he was introduced by Madgett to a physician, named Aherne, who was to be sent into Ireland, as a secret agent. At length, on the 20th of April, he "went with Aherne, at one o'clock, to the minister's, in order to see after his instructions. At last there is a prospect of something like business. The minister read the draft of the instructions, in which there is a great deal of trash, mixed with some good sense. Only think of one of the articles, wherein they say, that if Ireland continues devoted to the house of Stuart, one of that family can be found, who will be agreeable to all parties! Who the devil is this pretender *in petto*? It is all one to us, however; for we will have nothing to do with him. I made one or two observations on the instructions to the minister; he acted very fairly, for he gave them to me, and desired me to make what observations struck me; and as to Aherne, he said that he must only be guided by such of them as might apply to the state of things he found there, and disregard those that did not; all which is candid. I see the instructions are written by Clarke, for I find in them his trash about monarchy, the noblesse, and clergy. There is one thing, however, which reconciles me to all this absurdity, which is, that the French government promises us ten thousand men, and twenty thousand stand of arms; with that force I have not the shadow of doubt of our success. It is to be escorted by nine sail of the line (Dutch I believe), and three frigates, and will be ready about the middle

or towards the end of May, which is not more than six weeks off."

Tone was, however, doomed to further disappointments; for the French government went on procrastinating, and when the end of May came, the expedition was no more advanced than in April. It was now, however, stated that a force would not only be sent to Ireland, but that there was to be a contemporaneous invasion of England. His finances now began to run short, and he found it necessary to have recourse to the liberality of the French government. "June 19.—Called on Clarke, by appointment. Found his aid-de-camp copying my proclamation, as abridged. Clarke seemed glad to see me; and begged me to make a copy myself, as he wanted it immediately. I accordingly set myself down at his desk, and he went about his lawful vocations. In about half-an-hour I had finished, and he returned. I told him in three words the position of my affairs; that I had gone on thus far entirely on my own means, and calculated I had about as much as would enable me to carry on the war another month, in which time I should be *a sec*, as the French say; finally, I asked his advice on the premises. He answered me friendly enough; he said they must provide for me in the military line, for which I had expressed an inclination, and in the cavalry, where the pay was most considerable; but added, that the pay of all ranks was below their necessities. He then asked, had I ever served? I answered, no; that I had been a volunteer in the Belfast regiment, which I considered as no service, but was fond of a military life; and, in case of anything being done for Ireland, it would be the line I should adopt. He then said, my not having served might make some difficulty, but that he would see about it, and let me know the result in three or four days; adding, that I might be sure something would be done. He then took me in his carriage to the minister's, with whom he had business. On the way, I told him it was extremely painful to me to apply to the republic for any pecuniary assistance, but that circumstances compelled me; that I was not a man of expense, and that of course a moderate supply would satisfy me; and added, that being engaged here in the service of my country, any sum advanced to me, was to be considered as advanced on her account, and as such to be repaid, with all other expenses, at the conclusion of the business. He laughed at

this, and said we would have no money. I said that was true, or at least we should not have much, but we would have means; and I instanced the quantity of English property which would, in that event, be forfeited to the state; and assured him we would have enough to pay our debts of justice, of honour, and of gratitude."

While Wolfe Tone was thus negotiating in Paris, the French government appears to have had other communications with Ireland, by means of which it was intimated to the leaders of the United Irishmen, that an expedition to assist them was at least contemplated, and they seem to have been informed before Tone that the expedition was to be placed under the command of general Hoche, on which they resolved to send two of their confidential friends to negotiate in person. This dangerous mission was entrusted to lord Edward Fitzgerald, who had recently married Pamela, the natural daughter of the duke of Orleans by Madame de Genlis, and Arthur O'Connor. About the end of May, lord Edward left Dublin, accompanied by his lady, who was near the time of her confinement; this was intended to mask his real intentions. He passed a few days in London, where he mixed in society, and dined in company with Fox, Sheridan, and some of the leaders of the English whigs. He then proceeded to Hamburgh, and had already begun to treat with Reynhart, the French agent in that city, when he was joined by O'Connor. Soon afterwards they discontinued their negotiation with this man, whom they mistrusted, and, leaving lady Edward at Hamburgh, proceeded together to Basle, where, through another French agent, they opened their secret negotiation with the French directory. As Hoche was to command the Irish expedition, it was judged advisable by the French government that he should personally communicate with the Irish agents; but it was signified to the latter, that lord Edward Fitzgerald could not be admitted to the interview, as his marriage might cause it to be suspected in France that his mission had some reference to the Orleans family. Lord Edward accordingly returned to Hamburgh, while O'Connor remained to manage the treaty with Hoche.

All this was kept from the knowledge of Wolfe Tone, who imagined that the whole negotiation rested on his own shoulders, and was surprised at the continued procrastinations in the French preparations.

We take up Tone's journal again at the 12th of July, which he has noted as the anniversary of the battle of Aghrim, and on which he had his first interview with general Hoche. "As I was sitting in my cabinet, studying my tactics, a person knocked at the door, who, on opening it, proved to be a dragoon of the third regiment. He brought me a note from Clarke, informing me that the person he mentioned was arrived, and desired to see me at one o'clock. I ran off directly to the Luxembourg, and was showed into Fleury's cabinet, where I remained till three, when the door opened, and a very handsome, well-made, young fellow, in a brown coat, and nankeen pantaloons, entered, and said, '*Tous êtes le citoyen Smith?*' I thought he was a chef-de-bureau, and replied, '*Oui, citoyen, je m'appelle Smith.*' He said, '*Tous vous appelez aussi, je crois, Wolfe Tone?*' I replied, '*Oui, citoyen, c'est mon véritable nom.*' '*Eh bien,*' replied he, '*je suis le general Hoche.*' At these words, I mentioned that I had for a long time been desirous of the honour I then enjoyed, to find myself in his company; 'Into his arms I soon did fly, and there embraced him tenderly.' He then said, he presumed I was the author of the memorandums which had been transmitted to him. I said I was. 'Well,' said he, 'there are one or two points I want to consult you on.' He then proceeded to ask me, in case of the landing being effected, might he rely on finding provisions, and particularly bread? I said it would be impossible to make any arrangements in Ireland, previous to the landing, because of the surveillance of the government, but if that were once accomplished, there would be no want of provisions; that Ireland abounded in cattle; and, as for bread, I saw by the *Gazette* that there was not only no deficiency of corn, but that she was able to supply England, in a great degree, during the late alarming scarcity in that country; and I assured him, that if the French were once in Ireland, he might rely that, whoever wanted bread, they should not want it. He seemed satisfied with this, and proceeded to ask me, might we count upon being able to form a provisory government, either of the catholic committee, mentioned in my memorials, or of the chiefs of the defenders? I thought I saw an opening here to come at the number of troops intended for us, and replied, that that would depend on the force which might

be landed; if that force were but trifling, I could not pretend to say how they might act; but if it was considerable, I had no doubt of their co-operation. 'Undoubtedly,' replied he, 'men will not sacrifice themselves when they do not see a reasonable prospect of support; but, if I go, you may be sure I will go in sufficient force.' He then asked, did I think ten thousand men would decide them? I answered, undoubtedly; but that early in the business the minister had spoken to me of two thousand, and that I had replied that such a number would effect nothing. 'No,' replied he, 'they would be overwhelmed before any one could join them.' I replied, that I was glad to hear him give that opinion, as it was precisely what I had stated to the minister, and I repeated, that, with the force he mentioned, I could have no doubt of support and co-operation sufficient to form a provisory government. He then asked me what I thought of the priests, or was it likely they would give us any trouble? I replied, I certainly did not calculate on their assistance; but neither did I think they would be able to give us any effectual opposition; that their influence over the minds of the common people was exceedingly diminished of late; and I instanced the case of the defenders, so often mentioned in my memorials, and in these my memorandums. I explained all this, at some length, to him, and concluded, by saying, that in prudence we should avoid, as much as possible, shocking their prejudices unnecessarily, and that, with common discretion, I thought we might secure their neutrality at least, if not their support. I mentioned this merely as my opinion, but added that, in the contrary event, I was satisfied it would be absolutely impossible for them to take the people out of our hands. We then came to the army. He asked how I thought they would act? I replied, for the regulars I could not pretend to say, but that they were wretched bad troops; for the militia, I hoped and believed that when we were once organized, they would not only not oppose us, but would come over to the cause of their country *en masse*; nevertheless, I desired him to calculate on their opposition, and make his arrangements accordingly; that it was the safe policy, and if it became necessary, it was so much gained. He said he would, undoubtedly, make his arrangements so as to leave nothing to chance that could

be guarded against; that he would come in force, and bring great quantities of arms, ammunition, stores, and artillery; and, for his own reputation, see that all the arrangements were made on a proper scale. I was very glad to hear him speak thus; it sets my mind at ease on divers points. He then said there was one important point remaining, on which he desired to be satisfied; and that was, what form of government we would adopt in the event of our success? I was going to answer him with great earnestness, when general Clarke entered, to request we would come to dinner with citizen Carnot. We accordingly adjourned the conversation to the apartment of the president, where we found Carnot, and one or two more. Hoche, after some time, took me aside, and repeated his question. I replied, 'Most undoubtedly a republic.' He asked again, was I sure? I said, as sure as I could be of anything; that I knew nobody in Ireland who thought of any other system, nor did I believe there was anybody who dreamt of monarchy. He asked me, was there no danger of the catholics setting up one of their chiefs for king? I replied, 'not the smallest,' and that there were no chiefs amongst them of that kind of eminence. This is the old business again; but I believe I satisfied Hoche; it looks well to see him so anxious on that topic, on which he pressed me more than on all the others. Carnot joined us here, with a pocket map of Ireland in his hand, and the conversation became pretty general between Clarke, Hoche, and him, every one else having left the room. I said scarcely anything, as I wished to listen. Hoche related to Carnot the substance of what had passed between him and me. When he mentioned his anxiety as to bread, Carnot laughed, and said, 'there is plenty of beef in Ireland; if you cannot get bread, you must eat beef.' I told him I hoped they would find enough of both, adding, that within the last twenty years Ireland had become a great corn country, so that at present it made a considerable article in her exports. They then proceeded to confer; but I found it difficult to follow them, as it was in fact a suite of former conversations, at which I had not assisted, and besides they spoke with the rapidity of Frenchmen. I collected, however, if I am right, that there will be two landings, one from Holland, near Belfast, and the other from Brittany, near Connaught; that there will be, I suppose,

in both embarkations, not less than ten, nor more than fifteen thousand men; twelve thousand was also mentioned; but I did not hear any time specified. Carnot said, 'It will be, to be sure, a most brilliant operation.' And well may he say so, if it succeeds."

On the 18th of July, Tone had an interview with general Clarke, at which he received his commission in the French army, which had been one grand object of his ambition. "Clarke embraced me on giving me the brevet, and saluted me as a brother officer; so did Fleury; and my heart was so full, I could hardly reply to either of them. I am as proud as Punch. Clarke asked me would we consent, in Ireland, to let the French have a direct interference in our government; adding, that it might be necessary, as it was actually in Holland, where, if it were not for the continual superintendence of the French, they would suffer their throats to be cut again by the stadtholder. I answered, that, undoubtedly, the French must have a very great influence on the measures of our government, in case we succeeded; but that I thought, if they were wise, they would not expect any direct interference; adding, that the most effectual way to have power with us, would be to appear not to desire it. I added, that, for that reason, I hoped whoever was sent in the civil department, would be a very sensible, cool man, because a great deal would depend on his address. Clarke replied, 'We intend to send nobody but you.' That stunned me a little. What could he mean? Am I to begin by representing the French republic in Ireland, instead of representing the Irish republic in France? 'I am puzzled in mazes, and perplexed with errors.' I must have this explained in to-morrow's conversation. Clarke then went on to say, they had no security for what form of government we might adopt in case of success. I replied, I had no security to offer but my decided opinion, that we would establish a republic. He objected that we might establish an aristocratic republic, like that of Genoa. I assured him the aristocracy of Ireland were not such favourites with the people, that we should spill our blood to establish their power. He then said, 'perhaps, after all, we might choose a king; that there was no security against that, but information, and that the people of Ireland were in general very ignorant.' I asked him, in God's name, whom would we choose, or where would we go look for a king? He said,

‘maybe the duke of York?’ I assured him, that he, or his aid-de-camp, Fleury, who was present, had full as good, and indeed a much better chance, than his royal highness; and I added, that we neither loved the English people in general, nor his majesty’s family in particular, so well as to choose one of them for our king, supposing, what was not the case, that the superstition of royalty yet hung about us. As to the ignorance of our peasantry, I admitted it was in general too true, thanks to our execrable government, whose policy it was to keep them in a state of barbarism; but I could answer for the information of the dissenters, who were thoroughly enlightened and sincere republicans, and who, I had no doubt, would direct the public sentiment in framing a government. He then asked, was there nobody among ourselves that had any chance, supposing the tide should set in favour of monarchy. I replied, ‘Not one.’ He asked, ‘Would the duke of Leinster, for example?’ I replied, ‘No; that everybody loved and liked the duke, because he was a good man, and always resided and spent his fortune in Ireland; but that he by no means possessed that kind of character or talents, which might elevate him to that station.’ He then asked me again, could I think of nobody? I replied, I could not; that lord Moira was the only person I could recollect, who might have had the least chance, but that he had blown his reputation to pieces by accepting a command against France; and, after him, there was nobody. ‘Well,’ said Clarke, ‘may be you, after all, will choose one of your own leaders; who knows but it may be yourself?’ I replied, we had no leaders of a rank or description likely to arrive at that degree of eminence, and as to myself, I neither had the desire nor the talents to aspire so high. Well that is enough of royalty for the present. We then for the hundredth time, beat over the old ground about the priests, without, however, starting any fresh ideas; and I summed up all by telling him, that, as to religion, my belief was, we should content ourselves with pulling down the establishment without setting up any other; that we would have no state religion, but let every sect pay their own clergy voluntarily; and that, as to royalty, and aristocracy, they were both odious in Ireland to that degree, that I apprehended much more a general massacre of the gentry, and a distribution of the entire of their property, than the establishment of any form

of government that would perpetuate their influence; that I hoped this massacre would not happen, and that I, for one, would do all that lay in my power to prevent it, because I did not like to spill the blood, even of the guilty; at the same time, that the pride, cruelty, and oppression of the Irish aristocracy was so great, that I apprehended every excess from the just resentment of the people.”

Tone was now attached to the army under Hoche, and on the 23rd of July, he had another interview with that personage. His appointment was that of chef-de-brigade, but general Hoche informed him of his intention of procuring his promotion to the rank of adjutant-general, in order that he might be near his person. “I returned him a thousand thanks; and he proceeded to ask me, ‘Did I think it was likely that the men of property, or any of them, wished for a revolution in Ireland?’ I replied, ‘most certainly not, and that he should reckon on all the opposition that class could give him; that, however, it was possible, that when the business was once commenced, some of them might join us on speculation; but that it would be sorely against their real sentiments.’ He then asked me, ‘Did I know Arthur O’Connor?’ I replied, I did, and that I entertained the highest opinion of his talents, principles, and patriotism. He asked me ‘Did he not some time ago make an explosion in the Irish parliament?’ I replied, he made the ablest and honestest speech, to my mind, that ever was made in the house. ‘Well,’ said he, ‘will he join us?’ I answered, I hoped, as he was *foucièrement Irlandais*, that he undoubtedly would. So it seems O’Connor’s speech is well known here. If ever I meet him, as I hope I may, I will tell him what Hoche said, and the character that he bears in France. It must be highly gratifying to his feelings. [Tone was not aware of the interview with O’Connor on the French frontier.] Hoche then went on to say, ‘There is a lord in your country (I was a little surprised at this beginning, knowing, as I do, what stuff our Irish peers are made of), he is son to a duke, is he not a patriot?’ I immediately smoked my lover, lord Edward Fitzgerald, and gave Hoche a very good account of him. He asked me then about the duke. I replied, that I hoped for his assistance, or at least neutrality, if the business were once commenced. He then mentioned Fitzgibbon of all men in the world. I endeavoured to

do him justice, as I had to the others he spoke of, and I believe I satisfied Hoche that we will not meet with prodigious assistance from his majesty's lord high chancellor of Ireland. He then asked me, what quantity of arms would be necessary? I replied, the more the better, as we would find soldiers for as many firelocks as France would send us. He then told me he had demanded eighty thousand, but was sure of fifty thousand. We then spoke of the aristocracy of Ireland; and I assured him, as I had done Clarke, that what I apprehended was, not the aggrandizement, but the massacre of that body, from the just indignation of the people whom they have so long and so cruelly oppressed; adding, that it was what I sincerely deprecated, but what I feared was too likely to happen. He said, certainly the spilling of blood was at all times to be avoided as much as possible; that he did conceive, in such explosions as that which was likely to take place in Ireland, it was not to be supposed, but that some individuals would be sacrificed, but the less the better; and it was much wiser to secure the persons of those I mentioned, or to suffer them to emigrate to England, as they would no doubt be ready to do, than to put them to death; in which I most sincerely agreed; for I am like parson Adams, 'I don't desire to have the blood even of the wicked upon me.' Hoche mentioned also that great mischief had been done to the principles of liberty, and additional difficulties thrown in the way of the French revolution, by the quantity of blood spilled; 'for,' added he, 'when you guillotine a man, you get rid of an individual, it is true, but then you make all his friends and connexions enemies for ever to the government.' A sentence well worth considering. I am heartily glad to find Hoche of this humane temperament, because I hope I am humane myself; and trust we shall be able to prevent unnecessary bloodshed in Ireland, which I shall, most sincerely, exert my best endeavours to do. At twelve I went and saw Clarke, and took him up on our conversation of the 18th, relative to a direct interference on the part of France. I said if he meant by that to admit a representative of the republic into any part of our government, it was what France ought not to expect, nor we to grant. That France would certainly have a great influence; but the surest way to keep it, would be not to assume it. That what he said of Holland did not apply to us. The

French had conquered Holland, and had a right, if they pleased, to throw it into the sea; but it was not so with Ireland. We rather resembled the situation of America in the last war. Clarke seemed satisfied with all this, and I proceeded to ask him, had they thought of a person to reside near the future Irish government. He said general Hoche would be there. I replied, he would be moving about, but I meant a sort of *chargé d'affaires*, who should be stationary. Clarke replied, undoubtedly a proper person would be sent. I said, I hoped the French government would be very delicate in their choice, and send a man of great temper and discretion, as much would depend on his conduct. I then observed, that Clarke had often asked me what security Ireland would give that if her independence was once established, she might not forget her obligation to France, and, perhaps, hereafter be found engaged with her enemies. To which I offered him, as the only security, our honour as gentlemen. Now I begged leave, in return, to ask him what security he had to give us, that if England offered to renounce everything, provided France would sacrifice us, France would not accept the offer? He answered in my own words, 'Our honour as gentlemen;' and assured me in the strongest manner, France would be, as I believe myself, incapable of such conduct."

During the autumn, Tone remained attached to the army of the west. The preparations for the Irish expedition were now carried on with activity, and at the end of October Tone proceeded to Brest, to take his part in it. On the 2nd of November, he writes, "I have been hard at work ever since my arrival, on an address to the Irish people, which is to be printed here, and distributed on our landing. I have hardly time to eat, but I do not work with pleasure, from the reflection which occurs to me every instant, that the men whose approbation I would most covet, are, perhaps, at this moment on trial for their lives. Well, let me, if possible, not think of that longer. I have not yet seen the general. Colonel Shee tells me that general Quantin has been despatched from Flushing with two thousand of the greatest reprobates in the French army, to land in England, and do as much mischief as possible; and that we have three thousand of the same stamp, whom we are also to disgorge on the English coast. It is a horrible mode of making war,

and such as nothing can possibly justify, but the manner in which England has persecuted the republic. Much as I detest the inhumanity of punishing the inhabitants of a country for the crime of their rulers, I cannot blame the French, when I recollect the treachery of England at Toulon; or the miseries which she has caused in that part of the republic through which I have just passed, by her false assignats and counterfeit louis; but, especially, on her most atrocious and unheard-of system of starving the whole French people; a measure so abominable, and which produced such dreadful suffering and misery in France, as justifies any measures of retaliation, however terrible. The English ambassador is arrived at Paris; Spain has at length declared war against England, and began, it is said, by taking a man-of-war of fifty-six guns. Damn them, why are they not to-day in Brest waters? Corsica is evacuated by the British; so all goes on pretty well. November 10.—Saw the *legion noire* reviewed; about eighteen hundred men. They are the banditti intended for England, and sad blackguards they are. They put me strongly in mind of the green-boys of Dublin."

Further delays attended the expedition, and tried Tone's patience, until the weather began to be more threatening even than the enemy. When, at length, they set sail, one of the men-of-war, a seventy-four-gun ship, was lost before they got clear of Brest harbour, with nearly all her men. They reached the Irish coast without any interruption by the English fleet, and the country was on the point of being taken entirely by surprise; but the French fleet itself had been separated and scattered by the stormy weather, and the admiral's ship, with general Hoche on board, was among the missing. The proceedings of the French fleet, in its unlucky visit to Bantry Bay, will be best told in the words of Tone's diary. "December 21.—Last night, just at sunset, signal for seven sail in the offing; all in high spirits, in hopes that it is our comrades; stark calm all the fore part of the night; at length a breeze sprung up, and this morning, at day-break, we are under Cape Clear, distant about four leagues; so I have, at all events, once more seen my country; but the pleasure I should otherwise feel at this, is totally destroyed by the absence of the general, who has not joined us, and of whom we know nothing. The sails we saw last night have

disappeared, and we are all in uncertainty. It is most delicious weather, with a favourable wind, and everything, in short, that we can desire except our absent comrades. At the moment I write this, we are under easy sail, within three leagues, at most, of the coast, so that I can discern here and there patches of snow on the mountains. What if the general should not join us? If we cruise here five days, according to our instructions, the English will be upon us, and then all is over. We are thirty-five sail in company, and seven or eight absent. Is that such a separation of our force, as, under all the circumstances, will warrant our following the letter of our orders, to the certain failure of the expedition? If Grouchy and Bouvet be men of spirit and decision, they will land immediately, and trust to their success for justification. If they be not, and if this day passes without our seeing the general, I much fear the game is up." (Grouchy was Hoche's second in command.)

"December 22.—This morning, at eight, we have neared Bantry Bay considerably, but the fleet is terribly scattered; no news of the *Fraternité*. I believe it is the first instance of an admiral, in a clean frigate, with moderate weather, and moonlight night, parting company with his fleet. Captain Grammont, our first lieutenant, told me his opinion is, that she is either taken or lost; and, in either event, it is a terrible blow to us. All rests now upon Grouchy, and I hope he may turn out well; he has a glorious game in his hands, if he has spirit and talent to play it. If he succeeds, it will immortalize him. I do not at all like the countenance of the *etat-major* in this crisis. When they speak of the expedition, it is in a style of despondency; and when they are not speaking of it, they are playing cards and laughing; they are every one of them brave of their persons; but I see nothing of that spirit of enterprise, combined with a steady resolution, which our present situation demands. They stared at me this morning, when I said that Grouchy was the man in the whole army who had least reason to regret the absence of the general; and began to talk of responsibility and difficulties, as if any great enterprise was without responsibility and difficulties. I was burning with rage; however, I said nothing, and will say nothing until I get ashore, if ever I am so happy as to arrive there. We are gaining the bay by slow

degrees, with a head wind at east, where it has hung these five weeks. To-night, we hope, if nothing extraordinary happens, to cast anchor in the mouth of the bay, and work up to-morrow morning; these delays are dreadful to my impatience. I am now so near the shore, that I can see distinctly two old castles, yet I am utterly uncertain whether I shall ever set foot on it. According to appearances, Bouvet and Grouchy are resolved to proceed; that is a great point gained, however. December 23.—Last night it blew a heavy gale from the eastward, with snow, so that the mountains are covered this morning, which will render our bivouacs extremely amusing. It is to be observed, that of the thirty-two points of the compass, the east is precisely the most unfavourable to us. In consequence, we are this morning separated for the fourth time; sixteen sail, including nine or ten of the line, with Bouvet and Grouchy, are at anchor with us, and about twenty are blown to sea; luckily the gale set from the shore, so I am in hopes no mischief will ensue. The wind is still high, and, as usual, right ahead; and I dread a visit from the English; and altogether I am in great uneasiness. Oh! that we were once ashore, let what might ensue after; I am sick to the very soul of this suspense. It is curious to see how things are managed in this best of all possible worlds. We are here, sixteen sail, great and small, scattered up and down in a noble bay, and so dispersed that there are not two together in any spot, save one, and there they are now so close, that if it blows to-night, as it did last night, they will inevitably run foul of each other, unless one of them prefers driving on shore. We lie in this disorder, expecting a visit from the English every hour, without taking a single step for our defence; even to the common one of having a frigate in the harbour's mouth, to give us notice of their approach; to judge by appearances, we have less to dread here than in Brest water; for when we were there, we had four corvettes stationed off the 'Goulet,' besides the signal posts. I confess this degree of security passes my comprehension. The day has passed without the appearance of one vessel, friend or enemy. The wind rather more moderate, but still ahead. To-night, on examining the returns with Vaudré, chef d'état-major of the artillery, I find our means so reduced by the absence of the missing, that I think

it hardly possible to make an attempt here, with any prospect of success; in consequence, I took Cherin into the captain's room, and told him frankly my opinion of our actual state; and thought it our duty, since we must look upon the main object as unattainable, unless the whole of our friends returned to-morrow, and the English gave us our own time—which was hardly to be expected—to see what could be best done for the honour and interest of the republic, with the force which remained in our hands; and I proposed to him, to give me the *legion des Francs*, a company of the artillery *legere*, and as many officers as desired to become volunteers in the expedition, with what arms and stores remained, which are now reduced, by our separation, to four field pieces, twenty thousand firelocks at most, one thousand pounds of powder, and three million cartridges, and to land us in Sligo Bay, and let us make the best of our way; if we succeeded, the republic would gain infinitely in reputation and interest; and if we failed, the loss would be trifling, as the expense was already incurred; and as for the legion, he knew what kind of desperadoes it was composed of, and for what purpose; consequently, in the worst event, the republic would be well rid of them; finally, I added, that though I asked the command, it was on the supposition that none of the generals would risk their reputation on such a desperate enterprise; and that if another was found, I would be content to go as a simple volunteer. This was the outline of my proposal, which I pressed on him with such arguments as occurred to me; concluding by observing, that as a foreigner in the French service, my situation was a delicate one, and if I were simply an officer, I would obey in silence the orders of my superiors; but from my connections in Ireland, having obtained the confidence of the directory, so far as to induce them to appoint me to the rank of 'chef de brigade,' and of general Hoche, who had nominated me adjutant-general, I thought it my duty, both to France and Ireland, to speak on this occasion; and that I only offered my plan as a *pis aller*, in case nothing better suggested itself. Cherin answered that I did very right to give my opinion; and that as he expected a council-of-war would be called to-morrow, he would bring me with him, and I should have an opportunity to press it.

"December 24.—This morning the whole état-major has been miraculously converted, and it was agreed, in full council, that general Cherin, colonel Vaudré, chef-d'état-major of artillery, and myself, should go aboard the *Immortalité*, and press general Grouchy, in the strongest manner, to proceed on the expedition with the ruins of our scattered army. Accordingly, we made a signal to speak with the admiral, and in about an hour we were aboard. I must do Grouchy the justice to say, that the moment we gave our opinion in favour of proceeding, he took his part decidedly, and, like a man of spirit, he instantly set about preparing the *ordre de bataille*, and we finished it without delay. We are not more than six thousand five hundred strong, but they are tried soldiers, who have seen fire, and I have the strongest hopes that, after all, we shall bring our enterprise to a glorious determination. It is a bold attempt and truly original. All the time we were preparing the *ordre de bataille*, we were laughing most immoderately at the poverty of our means; and I believe, under the circumstances, it was the merriest council-of-war that was ever held; but, *Des chevaliers Français tel est le caractère*. Grouchy, the commander-in-chief, never had so few men under his orders since he was adjutant-general; Vaudré, who is lieutenant-colonel, finds himself now at the head of the artillery, which is a furious park, consisting of one piece of eight, one of four, and two six-inch howitzers; when he was a captain, he never commanded fewer than ten pieces, but now that he is in fact general of the artillery, he prefers taking the field with four. He is a gallant fellow, and offered, on my proposal last night, to remain with me and command his company, in case general Grouchy had agreed to the proposal I made to Cherin. It is altogether an enterprise truly 'unique;' we have not one guinea, we have not a tent, we have not a horse to draw our four pieces of artillery; the general-in-chief marches on foot; we leave all our baggage behind us; we have nothing but the arms in our hands, the clothes on our backs, and a good courage, but that is sufficient. With all these original circumstances, such as I believe never were found united in an expedition of such magnitude as that we are about to attempt, we are all as gay as larks. I never saw the French character better exemplified than in this morning's business. Well, at

last, I believe we are about to disembark; God knows how I long for it. My enemy, the wind, seems just now, at eight o'clock, to relent a little, so we may reach Bantry by to-morrow. The enemy has now had four days to recover from his panic, and prepare to receive us; so much the worse, but I do not mind it. We propose to make a race for Cork, as if the devil were in our bodies; and when we are there, we will stop for a day or two to take breath, and look about us. From Bantry to Cork is about forty-five miles, which with all our efforts, will take us three days, and I suppose we may have a brush by the way; but I think we are able to deal with any force that can at a week's notice, be brought against us. We are not the best dressed body of men in Europe. I think I have seen a captain of the guards in St. James's Park who would burn for as much as one of our demi-brigades. Well, I have worked hard to-day, not to speak of my boating party a-board the admiral, against wind and tide, and in a rough sea. I have written and copied fifteen letters, besides these memorandums; pretty well for one day. I think I will stop here. I have but one observation to add; there is not, I will venture to say, one grenadier in the *compagnie bloom* that will not sleep to-night in his hammock more contentedly than the archbishop of Dublin in a down bed. I presume our arrival has put several respectable characters in no small fuss; but time will show more of that.

December 25th.—Last night I had the strongest expectation that to-day, we should debark, but at two this morning I was awakened by the wind. I rose immediately, and wrapping myself in my great coat, walked for an hour in the gallery, devoured by the most gloomy reflections. The wind continues right a-head, so that it is absolutely impossible to work up to the landing-place, and God knows when it will change. The same wind is exactly favourable to bring the English upon us, and these cruel delays give the enemy time to assemble his entire force in this neighbourhood; and, perhaps (it is, unfortunately, more than perhaps), by her superiority in numbers, in cavalry, in artillery, in money, in provisions, in short, in every thing we want, to crush us, supposing we are even able to effectuate a landing at last; at the same time that the fleet will be caught as in a trap. Had we been able to land the first day, and march directly to Cork, we should have infallibly

carried it by a *coup-de-main*, and then we should have a footing in the country; but as it is, if we are taken, my fate will not be a mild one; the best I can expect is to be shot as an *émigré rentré*, unless I have the good fortune to be killed in the action; for most assuredly, if the enemy will have us, he must fight for us. Perhaps I may be reserved for a trial, for the sake of striking terror into others; in which case I shall be hanged as a traitor and embowelled, &c. As to the embowelling, *je m'en fiche*, if ever they hang me, they are welcome to embowel me if they please—these are pleasant prospects! Nothing on earth could sustain me now, but the consciousness that I am engaged in a just and righteous cause. For my family I have, by a desperate effort, surmounted my natural feelings so far, that I do not think of them at this moment. This day, at twelve, the wind blows a gale, still from the east; and our situation is now as critical as possible, for it is morally certain that this day or to-morrow on the morning, the English fleet will be in the harbour's mouth, and then adieu to every thing. In this desperate state of affairs, I proposed to Cherin to sally out with all our forces, to move to the Shannon, and disembarking the troops, make a forced march to Limerick, which is probably unguarded; the garrison being, I am pretty certain, on its march to oppose us here: to pass the river at Limerick, and by forced marches, push to the north. I detailed all this on a paper which I will keep, and showed it to captain Bedout and all the generals on board, Cherin, Simon, and Chasseloup. They all agreed as to the advantages of the plan; but after settling it, we find it impossible to communicate with the general and admiral, who are in the *Immortalité*, nearly two leagues a-head, and the wind is now so high and foul, and the sea so rough, that no boat can live, so all communication is impracticable, and to-morrow morning it will most probably be too late; and on this circumstance perhaps the fate of the expedition, and the liberty of Ireland depend. December 26.—Last night, at half-after six o'clock, in a heavy gale of wind still from the east, we were surprised by the admiral's frigate running under our quarter, and hailing the *Indomptable*, with orders to cut our cable and put to sea instantly; the frigate then pursued her course, leaving us all in the utmost astonishment. Our first idea was that it might be an English frigate lurk-

ing in the bottom of the bay, which took advantage of the storm and darkness of the night to make her escape, and wished to separate our squadron by this stratagem, for it seems utterly incredible that an admiral should cut and run in this manner, without any previous signal of any kind to warn the fleet; and that the first notice we should have of his intention, should be his hailing us in this extraordinary manner, with such unexpected and peremptory orders. After a short consultation with his officers (considering the storm, the darkness of the night, that we have two anchors out, and only one spare one in the hold), captain Bedout resolved to wait, at all events till to-morrow morning, in order to ascertain whether it was really the admiral who hailed us. The morning is now come; the gale continues, and the fog is so thick that we cannot see a ship's length a-head; so here we lie in the utmost uncertainty and anxiety. In all probability we are now left without admiral or general; if so, Cherin will command the troops, and Bedout the fleet, but at all events, there is an end of the expedition. Certainly we have been persecuted by a strange fatality from the very night of our departure to this hour. We have lost two commanders-in-chief; of four admirals not one remains; we have lost one ship of the line that we know of, and probably many others of which we know nothing; we have been now six days in Bantry Bay, within five hundred yards of the shore, without being able to effectuate a landing; we have been dispersed four times in four days; and at this moment, of forty-three sail, of which the expedition consisted, we can muster of all sizes but fourteen. There only wants our falling in with the English to complete our destruction; and to judge of the future by the past, there is every probability that that will not be wanting. All our hopes are now reduced to get back in safety to Brest, and I believe we will set sail for that port the instant the weather will permit. I confess, myself, I now look on the expedition as impracticable. The enemy has had seven days to prepare for us, and three, or, perhaps, four days more before we could arrive at Cork; and we are now too much reduced, in all respects, to make the attempt with any prospect of success—so all is over! It is hard, after having forced my way thus far, to be obliged to turn

back; but it is my fate, and I must submit. Notwithstanding all our blunders, it is the dreadful stormy weather, and easterly winds, which have been blowing furiously, and without intermission since we made Bantry Bay, that have ruined us. Well, England has not had such an escape since the Spanish armada, and that expedition, like ours, was defeated by the weather; the elements fight against us, and courage is of no avail. Well, let me think no more about it; it is lost—and let it go! I am now a Frenchman, and must regulate my future plans accordingly. I hope the directory will not dismiss me the service for this unhappy failure, in which, certainly, I have nothing personally to reproach myself with; and in that case, I shall be rich enough to live as a peasant. If God Almighty sends me my dearest love, and darling babies, in safety, I will buy or rent a little spot, and have done with the world for ever. I shall neither be great, nor famous, nor powerful, but I may be happy. God knows whether I shall ever reach France myself, and in that case what will become of my family? It is horrible to me to think of. Oh! my life and soul, my darling babies, shall I ever see you again? This infernal wind continues without intermission, and now that all is lost, I am as eager to get back to France as I was to come to Ireland.

“December 27.—Yesterday several vessels, including the *Indomptable*, dragged their anchors several times, and it was with great difficulty they rode out the gale. At two o'clock, the *Revolution*, a seventy-four, made signal that she could hold out no longer, and, in consequence of the commodore's permission, who now commands our little squadron, cut her only cable, and put to sea. In the night, the *Patriot* and *Pluton*, of seventy-four each, were forced to put to sea, with the *Niomedé* flute, so that this morning we are reduced to seven sail of the line, and one frigate; any attempt here is now desperate; but, I think still, if we were debarked at the mouth of the Shannon, we might yet recover all. At ten o'clock the commodore made signal to get under weigh, which was delayed by one of the ships, which required an hour to get ready. This hour we availed ourselves of to hold a council-of-war, at which were present, generals Cherin, and Harty, and Humbert, who came from their ships for that purpose; adjutant-generals Simon, Chasseloup, and myself; lieutenant-colonel

Waudré, commanding the artillery, and Favory, captain of engineers; together with commodore Bedout, who was invited to assist; general Harty, as senior officer, being president. It was agreed, that our force being now reduced to four thousand one hundred and sixty-eight men, our artillery to two four-pounders, our ammunition to one million five hundred thousand cartridges, and five hundred rounds for the artillery, with five hundred pounds of powder—this part of the country being utterly wild and savage, furnishing neither provisions nor horses; and, especially, as the enemy having seven days' notice, together with three more, which it would require to reach Cork, supposing we even met with no obstacle, had time more than sufficient to assemble his forces in numbers sufficient to crush our little army; considering, moreover, that this province is the only one of the four which has testified no disposition to revolt; that it is the most remote from the property which is ready for insurrection; and, finally, captain Bedout having communicated his instructions, which are, to mount as high as the Shannon and cruize there five days; it was unanimously agreed to quit Bantry Bay directly, and proceed for the mouth of the Shannon, in hopes to rejoin some of our scattered companions; and when we are there we will determine, according to the means in our hands, what part we shall take. I am the more content with this determination, as it is substantially the same with the paper I read to general Cherin, and the rest, the day before yesterday. The wind, at last, has come round to the southward, and the signal is now flying to get under weigh. At half after four, there being every appearance of a stormy night, three vessels cut their cables, and put to sea. The *Indomptable* having, with great difficulty, weighed one anchor, we were forced, at length, to cut the cable of the other, and make the best of our way out of the bay, being followed by the whole of our little squadron, now reduced to ten sail, of which seven are of the line, one frigate, and two corvettes or luggers.

“December 28.—Last night it blew a perfect hurricane. At one, this morning, a dreadful sea took the ship in the quarter, stove in the quarter-gallery, and one of the dead-lights in the great cabin, which was instantly filled with water, to the depth of three feet. The cots of the officers were almost all torn down, and themselves and

their trunks floated about the cabin. For my part, I had just fallen asleep when awakened by the shock, of which I at first did not comprehend the meaning; but, hearing the water distinctly rolling in the cabin beneath me, and two or three of the officers mounting in their shirts, as wet as if they had risen from the bottom of the sea, I concluded instantly that the ship had struck, and was filling with water, and that she would sink directly. As the movements of the mind are as quick as lightning in such perilous moments, it is impossible to describe the infinity of ideas which shot across my mind in an instant. As I knew all notion of saving my life was in vain, in such a stormy sea, I took my part instantly, and lay down in my hammock, expecting every instant to go to the bottom; but I was soon relieved by the appearance of one of the officers, Baudin, who explained to us the accident. I can safely say that I had perfect command of myself, during the few terrible minutes which I passed in this situation; and I was not, I believe, more

afraid than any of those about me. I resigned myself to my fate, which I verily thought was inevitable, and I could have died like a man. Immediately after this blow, the wind abated, and, at day-light, having run nine knots an hour under one jib only, during the hurricane, we found ourselves at the rendezvous, having parted company with three ships of the line and the frigate, which makes our 'sixth' separation. The frigate *Coquille* joined us in the course of the day, which we spent standing off and on the shore, without being joined by any of our missing companions.

"December 29.—At four this morning, the commodore made the signal to steer for France; so there is an end of our expedition for the present, perhaps for ever. I spent all yesterday in my hammock, partly through sea-sickness, and much more through vexation. At ten we made prize of an unfortunate brig, bound from Lisbon to Cork, laden with salt, which we sunk."

Thus ended the formidable expedition to Bantry Bay.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALARM CAUSED BY THE APPEARANCE OF THE FRENCH IN BANTRY BAY; DEBATES ON THE DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY; SEIZURE OF PAPERS OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN, AND APPOINTMENT OF A SECRET COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER THEM.



IRELAND was thus exposed without any preparation for defence to foreign invasion, and a formidable hostile fleet remained for several days on its shores,

which were defended only by the unusual inclemency of the season. We can hardly excuse the English ministry of negligence, as they had reasons to be apprehensive of an attack on some part of the British dominions, and they knew by their spies at Brest, of the extensive preparations in that port. These latter persons were evidently baffled by the manœuvres of Hoche, who caused proclamations, intimating that the armament was fitting out for Portugal, to be printed at Paris and

Brest, with the usual precautions to ensure secrecy; copies of these speedily reached England, while the English agents were totally ignorant of the proclamation intended for Ireland, which was printed at the town of Pau, nearly two hundred miles from Brest, by an ordinary printer, without any attempt at secrecy.

Before the French fleet came to anchor, the English brig *Kangaroo*, commanded by the honourable Courtenay Boyle, fell in with it, and immediately proceeded off Crookhaven, a small harbour close to the entrance of Bantry Bay, in order to communicate the intelligence of the appearance of the enemy. On the morning of the 22nd of December, the *Kangaroo* made repeated signals for a boat from the shore, which although they were distinctly seen, yet so high a sea was running at the time,

and the wind was blowing so tremendously, that no boat would venture to put off. At length, however, a Mr. Coghlan, observing the perseverance with which the signal was continued, and deeming it a case of extreme urgency, induced five men to accompany him upon this dangerous service in a pilot boat, although they left the shore with but little probability of reaching the *Kangaroo*, or if they succeeded in doing so, of returning in safety from her. An officer was by this means landed with dispatches for admiral Kingsmill at the cove of Cork, and captain Boyle proceeded in the *Kangaroo* to England. Mr. Richard Edward Hull, a gentleman residing at Leamcon, sent the intelligence to Mr. White, of Seafield park, who was the first to communicate it to the Irish government, and Mr. White's services at this critical moment, were subsequently rewarded by his elevation to the peerage, as baron Bantry. Mr. White had received other information, and he directly called together the corps of yeomanry under his command, and made the necessary arrangements for establishing a chain of out-posts along the mountains down to Sheep-head, the southwest extremity of Bantry Bay, distant from his house twenty-two miles. The winter when the French were in Bantry Bay, was long proverbial for its severity. A heavy fall of snow had rendered the roads, which between Bantry and Cork at this period were rugged, wild, and mountainous, nearly impassable on foot; travelling on horseback was desperate work; and the unabating fury of the wind, which rolled the excited billows of the Atlantic with tremendous swell upon the coast, opposed an insurmountable barrier to any attempt at communication by water. It is however said, that one of Mr. White's men brought the first intelligence of the appearance of the enemy to general Dalrymple, in Cork, on the night of Thursday, December 22nd, and that the messenger "was but four hours going forty-two miles, Irish, on a single horse."

Time was thus given to the government

* The address distributed by Hoehe among the fleet, the day previous to their departure ran thus:—(Device. A lictor's axe with a branch of oak on each side, upon a shield surmounted by the cap of liberty, and supported by various naval and military trophies. At its base, a broken yoke and dis severed chain.)

"*L'armée Française destinée à opérer la révolution d'Irlande.*

"REPUBLICAINS,

FIER de vous avoir fait vainere en plusieurs occa-

to prepare to repel the invasion, while the enemy was hindered day after day from landing by the violence of the tempest. A French boat, sent to reconnoitre, was captured by Mr. O'Sullivan, of Beerhaven, and the lieutenant commanding it was sent a prisoner to Dublin. The whole force stationed at Bantry was not above four hundred men, chiefly of the Galway militia; yet when on the afternoon of the 31st of December, two armed boats put off from the enemy's ships then remaining in Bantry Bay, with the intention, as it was supposed, of landing; this small body of men marched to the beach under their commander, colonel French, to oppose them. The boats, after boarding an American ship, returned without attempting to land. That night the bay was cleared of the enemy, but the day following, which was the first of the year 1797, a division of the dispersed fleet, consisting of four line-of-battle ships, three frigates, two corvettes, and two transports, with about four thousand soldiers on board, returned to Bantry Bay, and remained there two or three days. They had captured two English merchant vessels, which they burnt with their cargoes. A council of war was held on board, at which the military officers, supported by the voices of all the Irishmen present, were desirous of landing their troops, but the naval officers refused to disobey their orders not to land but by direction of their commander-in-chief.

The news of the arrival of a French fleet in Bantry Bay threw the Irish capital into the utmost consternation. In spite of the inclemency of the season, troops were hurried towards the south, and the peasantry exhibited their loyalty, or their fear of the enemy, by the zeal which they displayed in clearing the roads of snow, and the hospitality which they everywhere showed to the soldiers on their march. Indeed, no inclination had been shown by the Irish to join their invaders, and the expectations which the French had been made to cherish in this respect proved totally unfounded.*

sions, j'ai obtenu du gouvernement la permission de vous conduire à de nouveaux succès. Vous commander, c'est être assuré du triomphe.

"Jaloux de rendre à la liberté un peuple digne d'elle, et mûr pour une révolution, le directoire nous envoie en Irlande, à l'effet d'y faciliter la révolution que d'excellents républicains viennent d'y entreprendre. Il sera beau pour nous, qui avons vaincu les satellites des rois armés contre la République, de briser les fers d'une nation amie, de lui aider à recouvrir ses droits usurpés par l'odieux gouvernement anglais.

Fortunately for the English government, the south of Ireland had not yet been organized by the Irish revolutionists, whose greatest force lay in Ulster; and on the first news of the arrival of an enemy, the Roman catholic bishop of Cork, Dr. Moylan, issued an address to his flock well calculated to retain them in obedience to the established government. "At a moment," he said, "of such general alarm and consternation, it is a duty I owe to you, my beloved flock, to recal to your minds the sacred principles of loyalty, allegiance, and good order, that must direct your conduct on such an awful occasion. Charged as I am, by that blessed Saviour (whose birth with grateful hearts we on this day solemnize), with the care of your souls, interested beyond expression in your temporal and eternal welfare, it is incumbent on me to exhort you to that peaceable demeanour, which must ever mark his true and faithful disciples. Loyalty to the sovereign, and respect for the constituted authorities, have been always the predominant features in the Christian character; and by patriotism and obedience to the established form of government, have our ancestors been distinguished at times, and under circumstances very different from those in which we have the happiness to live. For, blessed be God, we are no longer *strangers* in our native land—no longer excluded from the benefits of the happy constitution under which we live—no longer separated by odious distinctions from our fellow-subjects. To our gracious sovereign we are bound by the concurring principles of gratitude and duty, and to all our fellow-citizens by mutual interest and Christian charity. Under these circumstances it is obvious what line of conduct you are to adopt, if the invaders, who are said to be on our coasts, should make good their landing, and attempt to pene-

trate into our country. To allure you to a co-operation with their views, they will not fail to make specious professions, that their only object is to *emancipate* you from the pretended tyranny, under which you groan; and to restore you those rights, of which they will say you are deprived. You, my good people, whom I particularly address, who are strangers to passing occurrences, had you known in what manner they fulfilled similar promises in the unfortunate countries into which, on the faith of them they gained admittance, you would learn caution from their credulity, and distrust men who have trampled on all laws, human and divine; Germany, Flanders, Italy, Holland, to say nothing of their own, once the happiest, now the most miserable country in the world, can attest the irreparable ruin, desolation, and destruction occasioned by French fraternity. Be not deceived by the lure of *equalizing* property, which they will hold out to you, as they did to the above-mentioned people; for the poor, instead of getting any part of the spoil of the rich, were robbed of their own little pittance. Be not then imposed on by their professions—they come only to rob, plunder, and destroy. Listen not to their agitating abettors in this country, who endeavour by every means to corrupt your principles, but join heart and hand with all the virtuous and honest members of the community, who are come forward with distinguished patriotism, as well to resist the invading foe, as to counteract the insidious machinations of the domestic enemies and unnatural children, who are seeking to bring on their native country the train of untold evils that flow from anarchy and confusion. Obey the laws that protect you in your persons and properties. Reverence the magistrate entrusted with their execution, and display your readiness to give him every assistance in

"Vous n'oubliez jamais, braves et fidèles compagnons, que le peuple, chez lequel nous allons, est l'ami de notre patrie, que nous devons le traiter comme tel, et non comme un peuple conquis.

"En arrivant en Irlande, vous trouverez l'hospitalité, la fraternité; bientôt des milliers de ses habitants viendront grossir nos phalanges. Gardons-nous donc bien de jamais traiter aucuns d'eux en ennemis. Ainsi que nous, ils ont à se venger des perfides Anglais; ces derniers sont les seuls dont nous ayons à tirer une vengeance éclatante. Croyez que les Irlandais ne soupirent pas moins que vous après le moment où de concert nous irons à Londres, rappeler à Pitt et à ses amis, ce qu'ils ont fait contre notre liberté.

"Par amitié, par devoir, et pour l'honneur du nom

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français, vous respecterez les personnes et les propriétés du pays où nous allons. Si, par des efforts constants, je pourrais à vos besoins, croyez que, jaloux de conserver la réputation de l'armée que j'ai l'honneur de commander, je punirai sévèrement quiconque s'écartera de ce qu'il doit à son pays. Les lauriers et la gloire seront le partage du soldat républicain; la mort sera le prix du viol et du pillage. Vous me connaissez assez pour croire que, pour la première fois, je ne manquerai pas à ma parole. J'ai dû vous prévenir, sachez vous en rappeler.

Le Général,

L. HOCHÉ.

"Brest le [this blank is in the original] *anné républicaine.*"

your power. Act thus, my beloved brethren, from a principle of conscience, and you will thereby ensure the favour of your God, and the approbation of all good men; whereas a contrary conduct will draw down inevitable ruin on you here, and eternal misery hereafter. I shall conclude with this simple reflection, if the sway of our impious invaders were here established, you would not, my beloved people, enjoy the comfort of celebrating this auspicious day with gladness and thanksgiving, nor of uniting with all Christians on earth, and with the celestial spirits in heaven, in singing, *Glory to God on High, and on Earth peace to men and good will!*"

But the spirit of insurrection in the south probably only lay dormant, and one of the most spirited of the Irish revolutionary songs came out at Cork at this period, under the title of the *Shan Van Vocht*, and was said to have been written by a member of one of the volunteer corps of that city.* The United Irishmen, indeed, were as completely taken by surprise as the English government. They had received contrary and

* This song is so curious in shewing the spirit of the party with whom it originated, that it merits to be given here entire. The chorus of this song, by which it and many other songs, generally of a rebellious character, are known, means literally "The Old Crippled Woman," under which figure Ireland is allegorically depicted. The versions of this song are numberless; that here given is taken from Mr. Crofton Croker's little volume of ballads on the French invasion of Ireland:—

THE SHAN VAN VOCHT.

Oh! the French are on the sea,
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
The French are on the sea,
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
Oh! the French are in the bay,
They'll be here without delay,
And the Orange will decay,
Says the *Shan van vocht*.

CHORUS.

Oh! the French are in the bay,
They'll be here by break of day,
And the Orange will decay,
Says the *Shan van vocht*.

And where will they have their camp?
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
Where will they have their camp?
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
On the Currach of Kildare,
The boys they will be there
With their pikes in good repair,
Says the *Shan van vocht*.

To the Currach of Kildare
The boys they will repair,
And lord Edward will be there,
Says the *Shan Van vocht*.

confused intelligences from France, which led them to expect no attempt on the part of that power at this season of the year, in consequence of which they had made no preparations to receive or assist it. They were made aware of the gravity of the danger which threatened the English supremacy by the sudden exertions of the latter in self-defence; some of their chiefs were in prison, others were dispersed in different parts, not prepared for such an event, and before they could do anything more than show their joy, and express their hopes, the French had departed from their shores.

An attempt was made to take advantage of the danger to which government had been exposed, and of the loyalty which had been shown by the people in general, to obtain a return to a more lenient policy. Reports were circulated that the British cabinet had resolved upon adopting measures of conciliation towards the Irish, and it was rumoured that lord Camden was to be recalled in order to make place for a viceroy

Then what will the yeomen do?

Says the *Shan van vocht*;
What will the yeomen do?
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
What should the yeomen do,
But throw off the red and blue,
And swear that they'll be true
To the *Shan van vocht*.

What should the yeomen do
But throw off the red and blue,
And swear that they'll be true
To the *Shan van vocht*.

And what colour will they wear?
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
What colour will they wear?
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
What colour should be seen
Where our fathers' homes have been,
But their own immortal green?
Says the *Shan van vocht*.

What colour should be seen
Where our fathers' homes have been,
But their own immortal green?
Says the *Shan van vocht*.

And will Ireland then be free?
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
Will Ireland then be free?
Says the *Shan van vocht*;
Yes! Ireland SHALL be free,
From the centre to the sea;
Then hurra for Liberty!
Says the *Shan van vocht*.

Yes! Ireland SHALL be free,
From the centre to the sea;
Then hurra for Liberty!
Says the *Shan van vocht*.

more favourable to catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform. It was understood that the prince of Wales had offered his services to proceed to Ireland as lord lieutenant, in order to use his popularity in that country in tranquillizing the public mind, and that he was to take over with him the no less popular lord Moira, as commander-in-chief. But all hopes of this kind were soon dissipated; the prince's offer was not accepted, and lord Camden's coercive policy was pursued with an increase of severity. An attempt was also made by some of the more moderate of the United Irishmen to draw the main body to more temperate measures, which prevailed so far that they agreed to join again in an attempt to press the subject of parliamentary reform on the attention of the house of commons. A meeting was held at the exchange, at which a proposal for reform in parliament was brought forward and agreed upon. But the society of the United Irishmen was now under the influence of men whose ambition was only to be gratified by the overthrow of the existing constitution, to which now all their efforts were directed. Towards the end of January the public mind was further agitated by the publication of a very inflammatory letter addressed by Arthur O'Connor to the people of Ireland, in consequence of which the writer was arrested by an order of the privy council, and committed to the tower.

The alarm and agitation caused by the imminent danger from which Ireland had just escaped was not dispelled when the parliament reassembled after its adjournment, and the discontent occasioned by the want of foresight that the governments of the two countries seemed to have shown was the subject of repeated motions by the now weakened opposition. On the first day of meeting of the house of commons, the 6th of January, 1797, secretary Pelham delivered a message from the lord lieutenant, acquainting them with the failure of the negotiations for peace, and with the Spanish declaration of war, alluding to the recent attempt to invade Ireland, and thanking the people for their loyalty. The address, in answer to this message, was warmly opposed by Grattan, seconded by one of the Ponsonbys, who attacked the government chiefly on the neglect of the national defences. They complained that Great Britain had so totally abandoned the defence of Ireland, that although the destination of the Brest ar-

mament was known long before it took place, not one British ship-of-the-line watched the coasts of that country. The debate was carried on with considerable heat and acrimony, but the strength of the opposition in parliament was now so much diminished, that there were only seven votes for a temperately worded amendment by Grattan. Several motions on the same subject in the months of February and March, met with very little more support. The largest number of votes against government were given on a motion by Mr. Vandeleur for an absentee-tax, which was supported by forty-nine against a hundred and seventy-three. The general gloom throughout the country was increased by the announcement on the 1st of March, that the pecuniary embarrassments of the kingdom had rendered necessary an order of the privy council to the governors and company of the bank of Ireland to discontinue payments in cash.

The agitation on the Bantry Bay expedition soon passed from the parliament of Ireland to that of England. On the 3rd of March, the subject was brought before the British house of commons by Mr. Whitbread, who stated that general Dalrymple (who commanded in Ireland) had at the time of the attempt at invasion not three thousand regular troops to oppose to the enemy, and that there were stores unprotected in Cork to the amount of a million-and-a-half, the great supply for the British navy during the ensuing year. Secretary Dundas excused the circumstance of the French fleet having reached the Irish shore without being opposed, or even seen, by a statement of facts which seemed tolerably satisfactory. On the 16th of March, the subject was brought before the house of lords by the earl of Albemarle. In both houses there was a determined resistance to all inquiry. On the 21st of March, the earl of Moira moved, in the British house of lords, for an address to the king, praying him "to interpose his paternal and beneficent interference to allay the discontents which at present subsist in his kingdom of Ireland, and which threaten the dearest interests of the British empire." This motion, warmly opposed, produced a rather animated debate among the peers, but it was negatived by a majority of seventy-two against twenty. Two days after, an important discussion took place in the house of commons, when the subject was introduced by Mr. Fox, who began by calling

to mind the part he had taken in a recognition of the complete independence of Ireland, and how much he naturally considered himself to be bound in a particular manner, to follow up the principle on which it was founded. Though a variety of circumstances had concurred to produce the present disturbances in Ireland, he confined his observations to two or three leading points. These were, whether, in consequence of the concessions that had been made to Ireland, she had, in fact and substance, enjoyed the advantages of an independent legislature? Whether, in that form of a free constitution which they had obtained, the people possessed that political weight to which they were entitled? And, whether their just voice and influence had been promoted, by the alteration which had been effected. The people of Ireland were divided into two, though very unequal, classes—the catholics and the protestants; neither of which enjoyed their just share of political power and influence. About nine years ago, a regular system was devised for enslaving Ireland. A person of high consideration was known to say, that five hundred thousand pounds had been expended to quell an opposition in Ireland, and that as much more must be expended, in order to bring the legislature of that country to a proper temper. This systematic plan of corruption was followed up by a suitable system of measures. Hostile suspicions were insinuated, not only against the lower order of catholics, but against men of the first respectability for character and fortune, and whose loyalty could not be questioned. Numbers were taken up for high treason; and, when acquitted, it appeared that no ground of suspicion could ever have been entertained against them. What could be the effect of such proceedings, but to convince the catholics, that the concessions in their favour were extorted? That the hostile mind still existed, and that they were still marked out as the victims of the most cruel proscriptions and oppressions? Private animosities, too, arose, and produced those different classes of disturbers of the public peace, about which so much had been said. The remedies applied had tended to foment the disease. The authority of the laws was superseded. Those against whom it was thought convictions could be procured, were taken up; and those whom it would have been impossible to convict, were transported in great numbers, without the ceremony of

a trial or the form of conviction. It had been said, that the catholics are entitled to vote for members of parliament. But except in the counties, Mr. Fox observed, the representation of Ireland was in what is here known by the name of close corporation. The catholics were carefully excluded from the corporations; so that their privilege of voting for members of parliament was almost entirely evaded. He next considered the grievances of the presbyterians, the most numerous class, by far, in the north of Ireland. The discontents of the inhabitants of the northern parts of Ireland, arose from two causes; one of them was the temporary pressure of a war, in which they were involved without interest in the contest, and the distresses which the calamities, with which it had been attended, had entailed upon their trade and commerce; the other had been the abuses, which they conceived to exist in the constitution, by which they are governed. The constitution of Ireland, they complain does not resemble that of Great Britain. Whoever imagined that a practical resemblance existed between the government of Ireland and the English constitution, would find, that the Irish government was a mirror in which the abuses of this constitution were strongly reflected. The jobbing system of influence and patronage, for purposes of personal advantage in Ireland, was an abuse which totally destroyed the spirit of the form of government, and was an abuse not to be endured. To suppose that a large, industrious, active, and intelligent body of men could be governed against the principles they have imbibed, and the prejudices by which they were guided, was an idea which history and human nature proved to be absurd. The interests of this country and of Ireland were the same. The affairs were conducted by ministers and the British cabinet, and it was the privilege of that house to advise his majesty. If we were to justify the measure by precedent, he might quote the case of an impeachment of the earl of Lauderdale, by the English parliament, before the union, for the conduct of the government of Scotland. “But why,” said Mr. Fox, “should I speak of forms, when the consequences of the discontents in Ireland may be a contest to be supported by Englishmen and English money? I shall therefore move ‘That an humble address be presented to his majesty, that his majesty will be graciously pleased to take into his royal consideration, the

disturbed state of his kingdom of Ireland, and to adopt such healing and lenient measures as may appear to his majesty's wisdom best calculated to restore tranquillity, and to conciliate the affections of all descriptions of his majesty's subjects in that kingdom, to his majesty's person and government.' This motion was seconded by sir Francis Burdett. Mr. Pitt asked Mr. Fox whether the parliament, by which the independence of Ireland was recognised, were more accommodating to the wishes of the dissenters of the north, or to the catholics of the south, than those of a subsequent period; quite the contrary. Whatever alteration had since taken place, tended more and more to include both dissenters and catholics within the pale of civil and political liberty, than the principle recognised in 1782. But the main pillar of his defence of ministers, in their conduct towards Ireland, and the ground of his objection to the present motion, was the unconstitutionality, the impropriety, and the dangers, to be apprehended from the interference of the British parliament in the affairs of Ireland. As to the main concession to be made, by way of remedy to the discontent and disturbances in Ireland, that of allowing to the catholics the privilege of sitting in parliament, this could not be done, without reversing the whole of its present form, and new modelling the constitution from beginning to end; and to make that change when such principles were abroad in the world, and were even prevalent in the country in which we lived, would, he said, be attended with the most dangerous consequences. Colonel Fullerton, who had just come from Scotland, and that part of it which almost touches on Ireland, was astonished to find, in the metropolis, such an apparent indifference to the most alarming dangers; and wondered that so much time should be spent in debate and so little in military preparations. General Hoche would find, in Ulster alone fifty thousand Irishmen united, with pikes in their hands, and arms concealed, busily employed in secret discipline, in order to qualify themselves for reinforcing the French army. Mr. Courtney believed, that there were, in Ulster, fifty thousand men with arms in their hands, ready to receive the French; but not to support them. The people in that province, almost all presbyterians, had a strong spirit of liberty, and were attached to the popular, or what had been called, the republican branch of the

constitution, yet they were not to be confounded with jacobins and banditti. Lord Hawkesbury repeated and applauded the arguments of Mr. Pitt. Mr. Curran thought, that the present motion was so far from being mischievous, that even the discussion it had occasioned would do good, inasmuch as it would show the Irish nation, that there was a part, at least, of the British parliament, who were mindful of their interests. Lord Wycombe thought that the disturbances, which had taken place in Ireland, manifestly proved a disaffection to the British government. Conciliation, instead of rigour, should have been tried, for it was time enough to employ force when mildness failed. He could have wished that the Irish parliament had been left, for the settlement of affairs, to themselves. But he well knew that, being for the most part at the beck of the English cabinet, they had lost the confidence of the nation. He adverted to, and commented upon, the proclamation of general Lake.

These debates in England tended rather to increase the warmth of party feeling on the other side the channel, and the opinions expressed on both sides were there repeated and commented upon. The great anti-catholic, Dr. Duigenan, took so much offence at what he termed "the lying and malicious assertions" of Mr. Fox, that he gave notice of his intention to bring them under the consideration of the house of commons of Ireland.

The attention of the latter, however, was soon called to the internal state of the country. There had been no cessation in the ravages of the various parties of insurgents which overran many parts of the island, but on the contrary, they rather increased at the commencement of the year 1797. In the north the spirit of disaffection had gained so much head, and the secret societies were so active, that they could no longer be concealed from government, and it was found necessary to employ against them the extraordinary powers at the disposal of government. Orders to this effect were conveyed to general Lake, who had the military command of Ulster, in a letter from secretary Pelham, dated on the 3rd of March, in which he said—"I am commanded by my lord lieutenant to acquaint you, that, from the information received by his excellency with respect to the various parts of the north of Ireland, additional measures, to those already em-

ployed for preserving the public peace, are become necessary. It appears, that in the counties of Down, Antrim, Derry, and Donegal, secret and treasonable associations still continue to an alarming degree; and that the persons concerned in these associations are attempting* to defeat all the exertions of the loyal and well-disposed, by the means of terror; that they threaten the lives of all who shall venture, from regard to their duty and oath of allegiance, to discover their treason; that they assemble, in great numbers, at night; and, by threats and force, disarm the peaceable inhabitants; that they have fired on his majesty's justices of the peace, when endeavouring to apprehend them in their nocturnal robberies; that they threaten by papers, letters, and notices, the persons of those who shall in any manner, resist or oppose them; that, in their nightly excursions for the purpose of disarming his majesty's loyal subjects, they disguise their persons and countenances: that they endeavour to collect great quantities of arms in concealed hiding-places; that they have cut down great numbers of trees on estates of the gentry, for the purpose of making pikes; and that they have stolen great quantities of lead for the purpose of casting bullets; that they privately by night, exercise themselves in the practice of arms; that they endeavour to intimidate persons from joining the yeomanry corps established by law, in order to resist a foreign enemy; that they refuse to employ in manufactures, those who enlist in the said corps; they not only threaten, but ill-treat the persons of the yeomanry; and even attack their houses by night, and proceed to the barbarous extremity of deliberate and shocking murder, as was exemplified in their recent attack and murder by night of Mr. Comyns, of Newtownards; and that they profess a resolution to assist the enemies of his majesty if they should be enabled to land in this kingdom, &c. His excellency has commanded me, to communicate to you his positive orders, that you take the most immediate and decisive measures for disposing of the military force under your command, aided by the yeomanry corps, for immediately disarming all persons who shall not bear his majesty's commission, or are acting under persons so commissioned; and after making such dispositions, you are required to carry such disarming into effect, &c. His excellency further authorizes you to employ force against any persons assem-

bled in arms, not legally authorized so to be; to disperse all tumultuous assemblies of persons, though they may not be in arms, without waiting for the sanction and assistance of the civil authority, if in your opinion the peace of the realm, or the safety of his majesty's faithful subjects, may be endangered by waiting for such authority. His excellency further authorizes you to consider those parts of the country where the outrages before stated have been committed, or where they shall arise, as being in a state that requires all the measures of exertion and precaution which a country depending upon military force alone for its protection, would require; and you are therefore required to station your troops with a view to interrupt communication between those whom you may suspect of evil designs; to establish patrols on the high road or other passes; and to stop all persons passing and repassing after certain hours of the night. And, in order completely to carry into effect any orders or regulations, which, in the circumstances of the case, may be considered by you as necessary, you are authorized to issue notices, stating the regulations, and calling upon his majesty's subjects to be aiding and assisting therein."

This order was followed by a proclamation of general Lake, dated on the 13th of March, virtually placing the districts in question under martial law. A copy of Lake's proclamation was brought before the house of commons by Grattan, on the 16th of March, and rather severely animadverted upon. Meanwhile the increased vigilance of the government agents in the north was not without effect. Guided by informers, the authorities broke in upon two committees of the United Irishmen in Belfast, and seized their papers, which threw some light on the plans and designs of the secret associations. On the 19th of March, the house of commons received a message from the lord lieutenant, in which he said, "Upon the information of the meetings of certain persons, styling themselves United Irishmen, for the purpose of concerting plans for the subversion of the constitution and of the established government of this kingdom, two committees of the town of Belfast have been arrested, and their papers seized; they contain matter of so much importance to the public welfare, that I have directed them to be laid before the house of commons, and I recommend it to them to take the same into their serious consideration. I shall in

the meantime pursue those measures, which have received your sanction and approbation, with unremitting vigour, and employ the force entrusted to me in the most efficient manner for the protection of his majesty's faithful subjects against all treasonable designs, and for bringing to condign punishment those who are endeavouring to overturn the constitution, and betray this country into the hands of her enemies." In consequence of this communication, the house of commons appointed a secret committee to take the papers of the United Irishmen into consideration.

After some opposition by Grattan and his few supporters, the house of commons appointed the secret committee to examine the papers seized and other matters connected with the seizure, and their report was laid before the house on the 10th of May. It contained a brief history of the formation of the society of United Irishmen, and an account of the seizure of the papers. The latter consisted of minutes of the proceedings of two affiliated societies, reports of various committees, forms of oaths, lists of arms and contributions, with other loose notes, which left no room to doubt of the character and extent of the conspiracy. They showed the complicated and at the same time skilful construction of the great association of the United Irishmen by its division into baronial, county, provincial, and national committees, so contrived as to insure easy and rapid communication between the disaffected in every part of the country, and at the same time with so much caution that the arrest and confession of individuals could almost in any case endanger only the persons of those arrested. The papers further showed that the conspirators aimed at an entire revolution in society, and that they were arming the population on a very extensive scale in order to carry their plans into effect by force. At a meeting of one of these societies, as early as the 31st of October, 1796, it was resolved, "that three men be appointed to purchase pikes and powder for this society," and "that any man that fairly tells any of these three appointed that he is not able to purchase a pike, shall be furnished with one out of the fund of this society." On the 1st of January, 1797, it was resolved, "that all money

or subscription received for this society shall go to the use of buying pikes." During the spring of this year, the different committees were busily engaged in obtaining lists of men and arms at their disposal, as though they were contemplating an immediate rising. The disaffected seem at this time to have expected another visit of the French to Bantry Bay, for in one of the reports of numbers and arms, we are told that it was given "sooner nor usual, on account of our friends being expected soon in Bantry," and it is added, "government is using all means in their power to put us into insurrection, the executive is taking proper measures to appoint proper officers." At this time there were in the county of Antrim above twenty-two thousand men enrolled, and the United Irishmen in that county possessed nearly three thousand guns, above twelve hundred bayonets, three hundred pistols, two hundred and fifty swords, between three and four thousand pikes, twenty thousand ball cartridges, above fifty thousand balls, nine hundred pounds of powder, eight cannons and one mortar. On another paper was the following memorandum: "A report from the military committee received as such; you are to let the officers know their men, and the men their officers, and do not fail to engage men in a solemn manner, that they may call them out on one minute's warning, and they may by that means endeavour to see them armed in the most speedy manner: there is no time to be lost, for the grand committee think that if one of the prisoners we let them be hanged, we shall forfeit our intention for evermore; for we know not the minute we'll be called on to give an account; for our friends is hourly expected." This shows how much interest the local societies took in the numerous United Irishmen who had now been arrested and were on the point of being put on their trials. From other papers it appeared that considerable sums of money had been expended in supporting these prisoners, and in paying counsel for their defence. On the 11th of April, 1797, it was resolved, "that it be recommended to all societies that is wealthy to enter into a voluntary subscription for the purpose of arming our poor fellow-citizens.*"

* The language and orthography of some of these documents show the class of society to which the members of these committees belonged. The following is a verbatim copy of part of the Belfast county report of the 11th of April, 1797:—

"A voluntary subscription got from aras-	
torrick	374 4 6
Paid to the north west sirkiet (<i>circuit</i>)	90 9 6
To do. the north est do.	283 15 4
Recommended to the provensal et. to form a plan	

These informations, imperfect as they were, were certainly enough to create serious alarm; and when Mr. Pelham laid the report before the house on the 10th of May, he urged that what had then transpired must convince every man, that it was no longer the time to resort to legislation for counteracting the evil, but that to repress this daring and dark conspiracy it was necessary to use strong measures. That report, he said, justified in the fullest extent the measures which the executive government had already adopted, and he called on the gentlemen of that house and on every loyal subject to strain every nerve to put down the society of United Irishmen; for he did not think, formidable as they might appear, that there was any reason to fear that the loyalty of the country, and the force of the state, would not be fully sufficient to crush them. He believed their numbers had been greatly exaggerated in these papers; for it was plain that they tried every mode to keep up the spirit of their deluded followers, as well by fallacious statements of their force, as by the promise of foreign assistance. He believed that the great body of the people were loyal, and he should be proud to exert every power he possessed in opposing the band of daring traitors. He believed further that among those who formed the society of United Irishmen, there were many much less criminal than others; many who had been induced to join them by the specious pretext of reform, &c., and continued among them through ignorance of their real designs, but whose eyes he trusted would be opened by the publication of this report.

On the 15th of May, the subject of parliamentary reform was brought before the house of commons, and gave rise to a long and animated debate. The ministerial party opposed it as a question which ought not to be agitated when a part of the country was virtually in a state of rebellion. The resolutions on this subject, moved by Mr. William Brabazon Ponsonby, were rejected by

of provision for poor mens familys during our exhorshings in the field. Fulton and McCormick afirs is settled. Jno. brother-in-law to Hy. Sinclair from crew, Kinly Sherlick Dimanry is a bad man and is very dangeries to the cause. John Love belly moner a bad man very dangers to the cause. A risultion we again declare it that it is highly improper to hold any communication with persons out of society, not nowing them to be regu-

lar members. Resolved that 7 members out of this etc. be chosen, he will be appointed, he shall have full power to vot away any sums of money not exceding 200l. if in your hands, if in there hands for the seport of the provensal prisiners. Last meeting 66 ct. voted away. Beronial. Resolved that it is recommended to the different societys that is able to enter into a voluntary subscription for the use of arming those that is not able."

If the United Irishmen overrated their force, the government certainly over-estimated the success of their efforts to reduce them.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

PROTESTS AND PETITIONS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT MEASURES; SEVERITY OF THE MEASURES OF COERCION; RETALIATION BY THE DISAFFECTED; RENEWAL OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE; DUNCAN'S VICTORY.



THE failure of the French expedition to Bantry Bay had not discouraged the United Irishmen; on the contrary, it served to convince them of the facility with which Ireland might be invaded, and of the determination of the republican government of France to give them assistance. They thus became bolder and more confident in their treasons, and they were further provoked by the arrest of many of their chiefs. The arming and drilling of the peasantry was carried on with more activity than ever, and numerous trials which took place in the spring of 1797, showed that extensive attempts had been made to seduce the soldiers from their allegiance. The seizure of the committees in Belfast, and the consequent report of the secret committee of the house of commons, with the orders of the government to put the disaffected districts under military rule, had further acted as a stimulant to drive the more sanguine of the revolutionists into some violent measures.

The people were rendered more desperate by the defection of so large a portion of the liberal party in parliament. The latter, finding they had lost all weight within the walls of the house of commons, seemed desirous of an opportunity of showing their strength without, and most of them, including Grattan, the Ponsonbys, and Curran, took part in a meeting of the freemen and freeholders of the city of Dublin, held at the Royal Exchange, in that city, on the eighth of April, in order to petition the king against the ministers. The meeting was a large one, and a great number of the ministerial party, including Dr. Duigenan and others, attended, as well as many of the popular party who appear to have been neither freemen nor freeholders. Duigenan and his friends attempted to defeat the objects of the meeting, by proposing an adjournment, in which the majority was against them, but the high-sheriff, who was in the chair, declared that the majority was composed of many who had no right to

vote. The sheriff was thereupon voted out of the chair, and Grattan was chosen in his place. The petition, which was then agreed to, although the sheriffs refused to put their names to it, was as follows: "May it please your majesty, we, your majesty's faithful and loyal subjects, the freemen and freeholders of the city of Dublin, beg leave to approach the throne with the strongest assurances of affection, and to express at the same time, with all humility, our decided opinion with respect to the councils of your majesty's ministers, who have prosecuted the present disastrous war with an obstinacy that can only be equalled by their misconduct of the same, and who have in this country pursued a system of government inconsistent with the principles of the constitution, injurious to the independency of parliament, and subversive of the liberty of the subject. Your ministers have been publicly charged with the sale of peerages, for the purpose of procuring seats in parliament, and when evidence was offered to convict them of the same, they shrunk from the inquiry. Places have been created for the express purpose of procuring majorities in parliament, and those attacks upon the constitution have been accompanied by a doctrine which pleaded for the necessity of corrupting the legislature, in a memorable declaration, equally public and audacious. Your ministers have endeavoured to support their system of corruption by terror and violence, and accordingly have applied to parliament for the enactment of certain statutes, namely, the gunpowder bill, convention bill, insurrection bill, and a bill for the suspension of the habeas corpus act, whereby your subjects have been deprived of their personal liberty, their dearest rights, and of all those inestimable privileges, for the defence of which your majesty's family was chosen to the sovereignty of these kingdoms. That, in addition to all this, your ministers of late issued an order for putting the north under military government and military execution; an order which amounts to an exercise of a dispensing power, lawless, unprecedented, and outrageous. That here we beg leave

to submit to your majesty how dangerous such a measure, if persisted in, may be to the connection of the two countries, and how rash those ministers must be who persevere in a war with France, and at the same time commence hostilities against the north of Ireland. That the conduct of your ministers towards the catholics of Ireland has been equally impolitic, and illiberal; and, notwithstanding your gracious recommendation from the throne, in favour of your catholic subjects, they caused several innocent members of the catholic communion to be tried for their lives, and endeavoured to exclude catholics from those offices and franchises to which, by law, they were admissible, exercised against their characters the most unqualified abuse, and your English ministers having authorized earl Fitzwilliam to hold out hopes of full emancipation, they recalled him for supporting the same, and when your people petitioned your majesty, in expressions of concern and disappointment, they received no answer, save only troops poured into this country by those ministers. Your ministers have loaded your people with taxes beyond example, and given a fatal blow to public credit by their measures, foreign and domestic. Our commerce has declined, our manufactures are severely depressed, and our manufacturers starving by thousands. When the country was threatened with invasion, they neglected its defence, and when they attempted to negotiate peace, they proved themselves insincere and incapable. We, therefore, must humbly implore your majesty to dismiss them for ever from your presence and councils, and that you will restore the blessings of peace, and give to all your people the full enjoyment of a free constitution."

On the 14th of April, a public meeting was convened by the sheriff of Armagh, which also in equally firm language called for redress from the coercive policy which had been lately adopted against the great body of the people. On the very day of this latter meeting, a very inflammatory paper, purporting to be an address from the people of Ulster, to their countrymen, was printed and circulated extensively. This document commenced in the following terms:—"Irishmen! Our best citizens are entombed in bastilles, or hurried on board tenders; our wives and our children are

trolled and licentious foreign soldiery! Irishmen; Ulster, one of your fairest provinces, containing one-third of the population of the land—Ulster, hitherto the pride and strength of Ireland, is proclaimed and put under the ban of martial law! the executive government of the country has sentenced us to military execution, without trial; and the legislature of the country has sanctioned this illegal act without inquiry! The constituted authorities of the land (without condescending to examine into the existence of our grievances, the truth of the outrages alleged against us, or the nature of the circumstances that may have provoked them), have stigmatized us as objects of terror to the rest of Ireland, and of horror to the rest of Europe! What, you will naturally ask, are our crimes? Hear them. Our enemies say, that under the appellation of United Irishmen, and by means of illegal oaths, we have established and organized a horrid system of murder, that we are the avowed enemies of all order and good government, and, finally, that our ultimate object is pillage, massacre, and plunder! Countrymen! these charges are false—they are malevolent! for the only proof which our enemies have pretended to adduce in their support is, that in one whole province, where the servants of government have, for the last four years, by a system of premeditated persecution, endeavoured to drive the people into insurrection, a few individuals, who had rendered themselves notorious by their vindictive pursuit of this system, have, during the last five months, lost their lives. We do not defend these outrages; they give us more real grief than they do to our enemies. But, how has it happened that the same horror was not expressed by the same persons, when a civil war was for two years carrying on, in the county of Armagh, against the catholics, supported by magisterial exertions, and, as it was said, by ministerial connivance? Do you not know, countrymen, that these cruel persecutions were carried on by men, not only enjoying impunity, but boasting that they were acting under the authority of government? Do you not know that the same system of tyranny and terror has been enforced, with various success, in almost every part of the north? that Belfast has been dragooned? that our most virtuous inhabitants have been nearly decimated? that magistrates have frequently issued forth, by day and by

night, at the head of parties of the army, to scour the country, to burn the houses, and imprison the persons of those who are suspected to love liberty? Can you, then wonder, if men, who have made themselves peculiarly obnoxious by their cruelties, should sometimes fall victims to individual vengeance? however you may lament, in common with us, can you be surprised if the son, whose father has been torn from his family, and illegally imprisoned, or carried on board the fleet; if the husband, whose wife has been dragged from her lying-in-bed, at the hour of midnight, and thrown into the street, to see her house burned before her eyes; if the father, whose property has been destroyed, and his children cast out into want and misery; can you be surprised, even if men, who are daily witnesses to such transactions, without redress, and without the shadow of legal authority, and who are themselves suffering under a grinding persecution, the acts of which cannot be easily particularized, but which, by its unceasing operation, crushes and destroys—can you be surprised, if men thus situated, determined not to be forced into insurrection, should seek to assuage their revenge, and vainly hope to stop the current of general calamity, by the assassination of the most atrocious of their persecutors? Do not, we beseech you, falsely impute their acts to the moral depravity of any body of men. No; if the hands of the inhabitants of the north were not restrained by the strongest ties of duty and religion, the highest heads, and most overbearing spirits of our oppressors, would have long since expiated their tyranny. We have told you, countrymen, the charges exhibited against us; hear now the facts, and for the truth of them we solemnly appeal to the searcher of hearts. We are under an obligation (and we glory in it) to promote a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen, of every religious persuasion. We are united in an organized system—not to promote murder—but to promote peace; not to destroy persons and property, but to save both from destruction. Lastly, beloved countrymen! we are most solemnly pledged (a pledge we will never forfeit), to co-operate with you in every temperate and rational measure for obtaining the freedom of our country, by a full and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland, without regard to religious distinctions. These are the crimes of Ulster. They are the common crimes of

Ireland. How should it be otherwise, when they arise from the duty we owe to our country and to our God? Yes, Irishmen! the sacred flame has become general. That which originated in Antrim, has been reverberated from Cork, and all the intermediate space, from Wicklow to Mayo, glows with the same enthusiasm. It has been our glory to raise the abutments, to you belongs the still more glorious task of crowning the arch. Our intentions have been, and still are, to obtain the great objects of our pursuit, through the means of calm discussion, and their own unquestionable justice. The common enemy knows that these are the most powerful and irresistible weapons. It is, therefore, that they have practised upon us a system of reiterated aggression, unparalleled in the history of civilised nations, for the purpose of goading us into insurrection, or driving us into despair. They have hitherto failed, and they will still fail, thanks to that bountiful Being, who has endured us with patience as well as courage. We can even yet endure for our country's sake. But, countrymen! is there not a point, beyond which forbearance becomes a crime, and human nature is incapable of enduring? Shall we be forced beyond that point? if we should, our poor and feeble oppressors would find, that united Ireland could, in an instant, trample them to dust."

This popular manifesto was a sort of reply to the proclamation issued by general Lake, from Belfast, on the 13th of March, in the following words: "Whereas the daring and horrid outrages in many parts of this province, evidently perpetrated with a view to supersede the laws and the administration of justice, by an organised system of murder and robbery, have increased to such an alarming degree, as from their atrocity and extent, to bid defiance to the civil power, and to endanger the lives and properties of his majesty's faithful subjects. And whereas, the better to effect their traitorous purposes, several persons who have been enrolled under the authority of his majesty's commissions, and others, have been forcibly and traitorously deprived of their arms, it is therefore become indispensably necessary for the safety and protection of the well disposed, to interpose the king's troops under my command, and I do hereby give notice, that I have received authority and directions to act in such manner as the public safety may re-

quire. I, therefore, hereby enjoin and require all persons in this district (peace officers and those serving in a military capacity excepted) forthwith to bring in and surrender up all arms and ammunition, which they may have in their possession, to the officer commanding the king's troops in their neighbourhood. I trust that an immediate compliance with this order may render any act of mine to enforce it unnecessary. Let the people seriously reflect, before it is too late, on the ruin into which they are rushing; let them reflect on their present prosperity, and the miseries in which they will inevitably be involved by persisting in acts of positive rebellion; let them instantly, by surrendering up their arms, and by restoring those traitorously taken from the king's forces, rescue themselves from the severity of military authority. Let all the loyal and well intentioned act together with energy and spirit, in enforcing subordination to the laws, and restoring tranquillity in their respective neighbourhoods, and they may be assured of protection and support from me. And I do hereby invite all persons, who are enabled to give information touching arms and ammunition which may be concealed, immediately to communicate the same to the several officers commanding his majesty's forces, in their respective districts; and for their encouragement and reward, I do hereby promise and engage that strict and inviolable secrecy shall be observed with respect to all persons who shall make communication; and that every person who shall make it, shall receive a reward the full value of all such arms and ammunition."

After the report of the secret committee had furnished government with a new justification of their rigorous measures of precaution, a proclamation, dated the 17th of May, was issued under the signatures of the lord lieutenant and privy council, in which it was stated that: "Whereas there exists within this kingdom a seditious and traitorous conspiracy, by a number of persons styling themselves United Irishmen, for the subversion of the authority of his majesty and the parliament, and the destruction of the established constitution and government; and whereas, for the execution of such their wicked designs, they have planned means of open violence, and formed such arrangements for raising, arming, and paying a disciplined force; and, in furtherance

of their purposes, have frequently assembled in great and unusual numbers, under the colourable pretence of planting or digging potatoes, attending funerals, and the like, and have frequently assembled in large armed bodies, and plundered of arms the houses of many of his majesty's loyal subjects, in different parts of the kingdom, and cut down and carried away great numbers of trees, wherewith to make handles for pikes, and other offensive weapons, to arm their traitorous associates, and have audaciously attempted to disarm the district or yeomanry corps, enrolled under his majesty's commission, for the defence of the realm, and even fired upon several bodies of his majesty's forces, when attempting to quell their insurrections; and it is therefore now become necessary to use the utmost powers with which government is, by law, entrusted for the suppression of such traitorous attempts; and whereas, the exertions of the civil power have proved ineffectual for the suppression of the aforesaid traitorous and wicked conspiracy, and for the protection of the lives and properties of his majesty's faithful subjects; now we, the lord lieutenant, by and with the advice of the privy council, having determined as far as in us lies, to suppress such daring attempts, and at the same time, desirous to prevent the well-disposed or misled from falling into the dangers, to which ignorance or incaution may expose them, do by this our proclamation forewarn all such to abstain from entering into the said traitorous societies of United Irishmen, or any of them, and from resorting to their meetings, or acting under their directions or influence, or taking or adhering to any of their declarations or engagements, and from suffering them to assemble in their houses, or in any manner harbouring them. And we do strictly charge and command, on their allegiance, all persons having knowledge or information of the meetings of the said societies, or any of them, to give immediate information thereof to some of his majesty's justices of the peace, or to some officer of his majesty's forces in the neighbourhood of the place where such meeting is intended. And we do forewarn all persons from tumultuous or unlawful assemblies, or from meeting in unusual numbers, under the plausible or colourable pretence aforesaid, or any other whatsoever."

On the 18th, orders were sent to the com-

mander-in-chief, lord Carhampton, to employ the military in putting this proclamation into effect, and he immediately published an order, that, "in obedience to the order of the lord lieutenant, in council, it is the commander-in-chief's commands, that the military do act without waiting for directions from the civil magistrates, in dispersing any tumultuous or unlawful assemblies of persons threatening the peace of the realm, and the safety of the lives and properties of his majesty's loyal subjects where-soever collected."

After his proclamation in March, general Lake had already enforced the rigour of military government in the north, and the populace was further exasperated by numerous outrages, sometimes unprovoked and unnecessary, committed by the soldiery. Some houses of respectable people were plundered and demolished, on the mere suspicion that the inhabitants were United Irishmen, and, in one or two instances, women and children were ill-treated, and even murdered. One of the publications most obnoxious to the government was the newspaper printed at Belfast, by Robert and William Simms, under the title of the *Morning Star*. At the beginning of February, after the suspension of the habeas corpus act, the two Simmses were placed under arrest, and carried to Dublin, to be committed prisoners to Newgate; but the paper was still carried on, under a person to whom they had delegated the office. This man was ordered to insert in the paper a paragraph, which seemed to reflect on the loyalty of the people of Belfast, and, upon his refusal, a detachment of the military from the barracks attacked and utterly demolished the printing office. Other houses of suspected individuals, in Belfast and its neighbourhood, were destroyed, and similar acts of violence followed in other parts of the north. Persons, unarraigned, were seized and sent on board the tenders; others were subjected to flagellation and torture, to extort confessions; and the military were charged, and it appears with truth, with burning and destroying people's houses and property, on very slight suspicion, mutilating men, committing outrages on women, and even devastating villages and whole districts, with impunity. A regiment of cavalry, called the Ancient Britons, under the command of sir Watkin Williams Wynne, was particularly notorious for the part they took in such outrages,

and became marked men among the insurgents. The following instance of their exploits is recorded. Information having been lodged that a house near Newry contained concealed arms, a party of the Ancient Britons was sent to it, and found the information to be false; yet they set fire to the house. It was the first military conflagration in that part of the county, and the peasantry of the surrounding country, supposing that the fire was accidental, assembled from all sides for the purpose of extinguishing the flames. As they came up in different directions, they were attacked and cut down by the soldiers, and thirty of them were killed, including a woman and two children. An old man of seventy years of age, fled from this slaughter, but he was pursued, and, when overtaken at a distance from the scene of outrage, his head was deliberately cut off with a blow of a sabre, while he was on his knees imploring mercy.

The United Irishmen, rendered more desperate by the military executions, and the seizure of so many of their chiefs, were now eager for action. In the month of March, they sent one of the most zealous of their number, Lewins, to press the French republic for assistance; and about the same time, or very soon after, a plan was discussed amongst the leaders, then assembled in Dublin, for an immediate rising, which was thrown aside because it was disapproved by the Dublin part of the committee. The northern delegates, then in Dublin, were so sanguine that, provoked at the cowardice (as they called it) of their colleagues, they proposed to act on their own risk, and seize upon the castle, &c., with the assistance of the mob of the capital, but this plan was abandoned on account of the additional military precautions adopted by the garrison at that moment. The difference on this subject gave rise to a temporary coolness between the Leinster and Ulster delegates, which impeded the progress of the conspiracy. Towards summer a new plan of insurrection was discussed, and, it is said, that the military demonstration which followed lord Camden's proclamation, in May, alone hindered it from taking effect. A partial rising took place in the mountains of the county of Down, but the insurgents soon dispersed.

The rigorous measures of coercion which followed the proclamation of May, had the effect of repressing the boldness of the

disaffected. Great numbers of arms were taken; multitudes came in to shelter themselves under the proffered pardon; and the meetings of the lesser societies were discontinued. For several months of the summer and autumn of 1797, little money was collected for the purposes of the United Irishmen, and their resources seemed to be rapidly decreasing. The consequence was that the northern province appeared to be restored to its usual state of order, and the interference of the military was no longer found necessary.

Such was the apparent state of affairs; but, under the surface, the agitation continued almost unabated. The revolutionary party was indefatigable in their efforts to encourage their followers, and spread abroad their principles; although fear had led them to act with more caution and secrecy. They were anxious to propagate their principles in Munster and Connaught, in which provinces they had hitherto met with little encouragement, and numerous emissaries were sent into the south and west, who spread alarm among the catholic peasantry, by stories of pretended tests, taken by orangemen and other protestants, to exterminate all the papists, and by spreading abroad reports that large bodies of men were coming to put them all to death. The efforts of these incendiaries were so successful, that the peasantry in the southern counties became more turbulent even than the people of the north. The old whiteboy outrages were revived, with the attendant practices of burning corn and houghing cattle.

The leaders of the revolutionary party naturally regarded the fates of their comrades, who were brought to public justice, as so many judicial murders, and they did not hesitate to recommend retaliation upon those who were concerned in convicting or judging them. The murder of witnesses had long been an ordinary occurrence, but now some of the leading men of the state began to be marked out for assassination. One of the individuals most obnoxious to the United Irishmen was the earl of Carhampton, to assassinate whom a conspiracy was formed by James Dunn and Patrick Carty, with others. The former was a blacksmith and farrier, who lived on his lordship's demesne, and, having been in his service for many years, had constantly experienced marks of kindness from him. Notwithstanding these obligations, James Dunn repaired

to the house of Maurice Dunn, a relation in Dublin who kept a cabaret, on Sunday the seventh of May, and offered to a committee of sixteen United Irishmen, who were then sitting there, to *do out** his benefactor. When he made the proposal, one person (according to the evidence brought forward,) said it was "great news;" another called it, "glorious news;" another, "the best news he had heard a long time." Lest a concourse of so many people should excite suspicion, they appointed seven persons as a committee of assassination, to concert measures with Dunn. As money would be necessary to procure weapons and horses, application was made to one Burke, the secretary of finance, who was clerk to Myles Duigenan, a grocer in Grafton-street, but he postponed granting their request, till Mr. O'Callaghan, who was at the head of the finance, should recover from sickness. It was at last agreed that Dunn and Carthy, a labourer on his lordship's demesne, and seven more persons, should assassinate lord Carhampton on the succeeding Sunday, the fourteenth of May. Three of them on horseback, having loose coats with blunderbusses under them, and six mounted as yeomen cavalry, with pistols, were to fire into his lordship's carriage as it passed through a narrow road near Luttrellstown; and at the same time to murder his servants, and any persons who might be with him. Ferris, who was at the head of the committee of sixteen, and the only protestant member of it, struck with horror at the atrocity of the plot, turned informer, and Dunn and Carthy were hanged. While Dunn was in prison, lord Carhampton went to see him, and said to him, "Considering the kindness I shewed you, I did not imagine you would have been concerned in an attempt on my life." To his lordship's astonishment, he replied, without hesitation, that he thought it a good act. On asking him, whether he himself had proposed to murder him? he answered, that he never had; but that he was sworn to execute it, and if he were out again, he would perpetrate it if he could. His lordship said, "though you might think it a good act to murder me, why should you shoot a poor innocent postilion?" "Why," said he, "to do the thing completely."

Though plots of this kind appear to have been not uncommon at this period, it would be unfair to charge them to the whole body

* This was a common cant expression among the insurgents for murdering a person.

of the United Irishmen. Yet we know to what lengths the violence of political feeling may carry people, and we have seen the loose notions at times expressed by the great agent of the party, Theobald Wolfe Tone. The following is given as the substance of an information sworn by a white-smith, in the city of Dublin, in the June of 1798, before John Claudius Beresford, who had him arrested on a charge of being concerned with the United Irishmen. He deposed that he was seduced and made an United Irishman the first day of May, 1797, and belonged to a society of twelve, of which Rowland Goodman, a slater, was secretary. That he hoped to rise to the rank of an officer in a superior committee which regulated his, but which he had never seen, but he saw among their rules, set out in a printed paper, that no black-mouth or black-bean should ever rise; and he discovered afterwards that these appellations signified a protestant, and Goodman reported him to be such. That one Hely, a chimney doctor, was substituted as secretary in the place of Goodman, and carried to the superior committee a proposal and plan for burning the castle of Dublin, which was approved of. The informant asked Hely how it was to be done? and when he was about to inform him of it, the rest of the committee prevented him, because, as informant believed, he was a protestant. Hely told informant, that Horish was a sound good fellow, and much attached to the cause. Rowland Goodman, and John Graham, asked informant to make pikes for the United Irishmen, but on his hesitating, suspicions were entertained of his sincerity in the cause; and Goodman went to his wife, and said, he feared that he was not to be depended on, and that he would hang thousands. One Masterson said, if he make the pikes he will do; if not, Brown will *out him*, which was a cant word for killing informers. That a plan was formed in the committee, and carried up to the superior one, to seize the soldiers who lined the streets, when the lord lieutenant was going to the house of lords; that three men armed with daggers were to attack each soldier and disarm him, and if resisted put him to death: that they were to enter the house of parliament to kill such members as were not their friends; and at the same time to get possession of the castle. At last strong suspicions being entertained of informant, the question for his expulsion was put,

and every member of the committee but one, voted for it. That no person of his committee had any knowledge of, or connection with, the superior committee, but the secretary. While he was in the society, a plan was formed, and sent up to the superior committee, "That each committee should supply two men, who were not afraid of losing their lives, and that they were to form assassination committees of five, to kill the leading men of the kingdom." That they endeavoured to keep the object a secret from him; but some of the members informed him, that it was to *do out* the leading men of the kingdom. He understood that every Roman catholic in the kingdom was in the United cause, that the militia and yeomen of that persuasion were attached to it, and that they were to kill all those of a different religion in action. He was informed that all the popish servants in Dublin were United Irishmen; and he saw many of them at their different meetings. They made it a religious cause, and often said, that a Roman catholic would certainly go to heaven, if he killed three protestants. They resolved never to lay out sixpence with any protestant. Such fanatical conversation was very common in their clubs. The castle was to have been attacked in front, and in rear from Ship-street. The leading men in government, particularly the Beresford family, were to be *done out*. There was to be a general rising; a sky-rocket was to be the signal for it, and informant was to get twenty-four hours' notice of it. The following regiments of militia were considered as most attached and steady to the United cause: the Kildare, Westmeath, Longford, Killkenny, and King's County.

It is probable that some portions of informations like this were invented or exaggerated by the persons who made them, in the hope of reward. But still there can be no doubt that plans of assassination were formed in the summer of 1797; and a paper, called the *Union Star*, which took the place, at Belfast, of the suppressed *Morning Star*, and was circulated privately, but extensively, actually gave lists of public men marked out for popular vengeance.

Meanwhile the disaffected in Ireland were still buoyed up with expectations of assistance from France. Their agent, Lewines, who had left London, in March, and proceeded to Hamburgh, did not reach Paris till the end of May, from which time he

continued to reside there as the accredited minister of the Irish "Union" to the French directory. In the month of June, when the leaders of the United Irishmen feared that they should be unable to restrain the people from premature insurrection, another of their friends, Dr. M'Nevin, was sent to press the French directory to delay their succours no longer. He was authorized to give assurance to the French government that the full expenses of any future armaments sent to Ireland, as well as those of the last, should be repaid, in case of their success, out of the money to be raised by the confiscation of the lands of the church, and of the property of all those who opposed them, and he was to negotiate a loan, on the same security, of half a million, or at the least of three hundred thousand pounds sterling, for the immediate purposes of the union. If he did not succeed with the government of France, he was to apply to that of Spain.

M'Nevin left Dublin at the end of June, and, like Lewins, proceeded to Hamburg, where he delivered his letters of credence to the French minister. At first, he was refused a passport to Paris, and he therefore delivered to the minister of the French republic a memoir, to be forwarded to the directory. This memoir was written in English, and stated the objects of his mission, according to the instructions which he had received from the executive. It began by stating, that the appearance of the French in Bantry Bay had encouraged the least confident of the Irish, in the hope of throwing off the yoke of England with the assistance of France; that that expedition had proved the facility of invading Ireland; that in the event of a second expedition, if the object were to take Cork, Oyster Haven would be the best place of debarkation; that the person who had been before accredited was instructed to point out Oyster Haven as the best place of debarkation; and it described the precautions which had been taken by throwing up works at Bantry, Fermoy, and Mallow. It further stated, that the system of United Irishmen had made a rapid progress in the county of Cork, and that Bandon was become a second Belfast; that the system had made great progress in other counties, and that the people were now well inclined to assist the French; that a hundred and fifty thousand United Irishmen were organised and enrolled in Ulster; a great part of them

regimented, and one-third ready to march out of the province. It detailed the number of the king's forces in Ulster, and their stations; recommended Lough Swilly as a place of debarkation in the north, and stated, that the people in the peninsula of Donegal would join the French. It stated, also, the strength of the garrison in Londonderry, and that one regiment, which made a part of it, was supposed to be disaffected. It mentioned Killibegs, also, as a good place of debarkation, and stated that the counties of Tyrone, Fermanagh, and Monaghan, were amongst the least affected to the cause. In case of a landing at Killibegs, it recommended a diversion in Sligo, and stated that a force of ten thousand United Irishmen might be collected to fall upon Enniskillen, which commanded the pass of Lough Erne; that it was easy to enter the bay of Galway, but very difficult to get out of it; that the counties of Louth, Armagh, Westmeath, Kildare, King's County, and city of Dublin, were the best organised; that the catholic priests had ceased to be alarmed at the calumnies which had been propagated of French irreligion, and were well affected to the cause; that some of them had rendered great service in propagating with devout zeal the system of the union. It declared, that the people of Ireland had a lively sense of gratitude to France for the part which she took, and also to Spain for the interest she took in the affairs of Ireland. It engaged, on the part of the national directory, to reimburse the expenses of France in the expedition which had failed, and of another to be undertaken. The number of troops demanded was a force not exceeding ten thousand, and not less than five thousand men. It stated, that a brigade of English artillery had been already sent over; and that a large body of troops would, probably, be sent if Ireland were attacked. A considerable quantity of artillery and ammunition, with a large staff, and a body of engineers, and as many Irish officers as possible, whose fidelity they were assured of, were demanded as necessary to accompany the expedition. A recommendation was given to separate the Irish seamen, who were prisoners-of-war, from the British, supposing they would be ready to join in an expedition to liberate their country. It further recommended a proclamation to be published by the French general, on his arrival there, that the

French came as allies to deliver the country, not to conquer it. It also recommended to the directory to make the independence of Ireland an indispensable condition of the treaty of peace then depending; and stated, that a proceeding so authentic could not be disguised or misrepresented, and would very much encourage the people of Ireland. It contained, also, an assurance that the Irish militia would join the French, if they landed in considerable force.

As soon as this memoir was given in, a passport was granted to M'Nevin, and he proceeded to Paris, and there presented a second memoir to the directory, who assured him that the United Irishmen should receive assistance from France. Preparations were accordingly made on a large scale, to send an armament from Holland, and a confidential person was sent over by the French directory to collect information, but finding it impossible to proceed to Ireland, he sent to the executive of the United Irishmen to request some one might meet him in London. Lord Edward Fitzgerald was employed in this mission.

We find our best information on the French preparations for this new expedition in the diary of Wolfe Tone, who was at this time attached to the Batavian army, which was under the command of Hoche. When Tone heard of the agent sent by the Irish to Hamburgh, he obtained authority to go thither to communicate with him. On the 9th of April, he says, he "called on Mr. Shee early, and mentioned to him my present situation. After turning it in all possible lights, we agreed that I should write a letter to the general, suggesting the necessity of opening a communication with Ireland, and offering, in case he had not otherwise disposed of me, to go in person to Hamburgh for that purpose. I wrote the letter accordingly, which Mr. Shee translated, and I signed. April 12.—Saw the general to-day, for an instant, before dinner. He told me he had read my letter, approved of the plan, and had, in consequence, desired Poiton to make out a permission for me to go to Hamburgh. I did not like the word 'permission,' and therefore took an opportunity to speak to him again after dinner, when I told him that I did not desire to go to Hamburgh, unless he himself thought it advisable, and requested that, in that case, he would give me an order specially for that purpose, as, otherwise, it might appear that I had applied for a congé

at the very opening of the campaign, which was not the case. He entered into my view of the business directly, and promised me to have the order made accordingly, so I am in hopes that affair will be settled to my mind. I took this occasion to ask him if he had any particular directions to give me, or any particular person to whom he wished I should address myself. He told me, not; that all I had to do, was to assure my friends that both the French government, and himself individually, were bent as much as ever on the emancipation of Ireland; that preparations were making for a second attempt, which would be concluded as speedily as the urgency of affairs would admit; that it was a business which the republic would never give up; and that if three expeditions failed they would try a fourth; and ever until they succeeded. He desired me also to recommend that this determination should be made known, through the medium of the patriotic prints in Ireland, in order to satisfy the people that we had not lost sight of them."

Tone met the Irish agent, Lewines, at Neuwied, on the 14th of June, and they left that place together to proceed to Treves, "where we arrived on the 17th. What is most material is, that he (Lewines) is sent here by the executive committee of the united people of Ireland, to solicit, on their part, the assistance in troops, arms, and money, necessary to enable them to take the field, and assert their liberty. The organization of the people is complete, and nothing is wanting but the *point d'appui*. His instructions are, to apply to France, Holland, and Spain. At Hamburgh, where he passed only two months, he met a Senor Nava, an officer of rank in the Spanish navy, sent thither by the Prince of Peace on some mission of consequence; he opened himself to Nava, who wrote off, in consequence, to his court, and received an answer, general, it is true, but in the highest degree favourable. A circumstance which augurs well, is, that in forty days from the date of Nava's letter, he received the answer, which is less time than he ever knew a courier to arrive in, and shows the earnestness of the Spanish minister. Lewines's instructions are, to demand of Spain five hundred thousand pounds sterling, and thirty thousand stand of arms. At Treves, on the 19th, Dalton, the general's aid-de-camp, came express with orders for us to return to Coblenz." Here they met Hoche,

who gave Tone full information relating to the preparations then making in Holland, under general Daendels, for the Irish expedition. In consequence of this information, Tone and Lewins proceeded to the Hague, where they were eye-witnesses of the eagerness of the Dutch to complete their armament. On the 8th of July, things were in such a state of advance that Tone embarked in the admiral's ship, the *Vryheid*, of seventy-four guns, where he found general Daendels and the commander of the fleet, admiral De Winter. They were however kept in port by contrary winds, till the favourable moment passed away. On the fifth of August, Tone writes, "This morning arrived aboard the *Vryheid*, Lowry, of county Down, member of the executive committee, and John Tennant, of Belfast. I am in no degree delighted with the intelligence which they bring. The persecution in Ireland is at its height; and the people there, seeing no prospect of succour, which has been so long promised to them, are beginning to lose confidence in themselves, and their chiefs, whom they almost suspect of deceiving them. They ground their suspicions on the great crisis of the mutiny [in the British fleet] being suffered to pass by, without the French government making the smallest attempt to profit of it; and I can hardly blame them. If either the Dutch or the French ever effectuate a landing, I do not believe the present submission of the people will prevent their doing what is right; and, if no landing can be effectuated, no part remains for the people to adopt but submission or flight." On the 12th of August, Tone's disappointment was complete. "To-night, admiral De Winter took me into secret, and told me he had prepared a memorial to his government, stating that the present plan was no longer advisable; and, in consequence, he proposed that it should be industriously published that the expedition was given up; that the troops should be disembarked, except from two thousand five hundred to three thousand men, of the *élite* of the army, who, with twenty or thirty pieces of artillery and all the arms and ammunition, should remain on board the frigates and one or two of the fastest sailing transports; that as the vigilance of the enemy would probably be relaxed in consequence, this flotilla should profit of the first favourable moment to put to sea, and push for their original destination, where they should land the men,

arms, and artillery, and he would charge himself with the execution of this plan; that, by this means, even if they failed, the republic would be at no very great loss, and if they succeeded, must gain exceedingly; that she would preserve her grand fleet, which was now her last stake, and during the winter would be able to augment it, so as to open the next campaign, in case peace was not made during the winter, with twenty sail of the line in the North Sea; whereas, on the present system, to the execution of which were opposed the superiority of the enemy, extra consumption of provisions, and especially the lateness of the season, a successful engagement at sea would not ensure the success of the measure; and an unsuccessful one, by ruining the fleet, would render it impossible for the republic to recover, for a long time at least, the blow. These are most certainly very strong reasons; and, unfortunately, the wind gives them every hour fresh weight. I answered, that I did not see at present any solid objection to propose to his system, and that all I had to say was, that if the Batavian republic sent but a corporal's guard to Ireland, I was ready to make one. So here is our expedition in a hopeful way. It is most terrible. Twice, within nine months, has England been saved by the wind."

It is evident, from the papers of the secret societies which afterwards fell into the hands of the government, that the United Irishmen had intelligence of this armament, and that they were making preparations for an insurrection, to co-operate with the invaders on their arrival. On the 17th of June, one of the colonels of the county of Down "called the captains of his regiment, and told them it was the determination of the national committee to make a rising in the ensuing week, and desired them to go home and cause their men to prepare their arms. He said he had not the plan they were to act upon, but the colonels were to meet the next day, and he would receive the general's plan how they were to act; but he believed they were to cut off all the outposts, and to embody in divisions, like to eight or ten thousand men; and it was thought, when all resources were cut off from the camps, the general part of the men would turn over to us." The captains were to meet again, for further directions, on the 19th, and then the same colonel told them "the national committee was sitting these

fifteen days past, and will for some days more. The only thing that retarded the rising at present, was the county of Antrim not being willing to rise, ten thousand men only, excepted; but if they could get the county of Antrim to come properly forward, there was no doubt but the business would be put into execution. The only account from France is, that they will not be here before six weeks from hence, if then. He had the honour to say, that the colonels of the county of Down were unanimous for rising." A meeting of the county of Down was held at Belfast, on the 10th of July, when "a provincial delegate for the county of Antrim said there were seventy-five thousand men at the Texel, who were positively coming to Ireland; that the Irish delegates were warmly received by the directory of France; that Lowry and Teeling were of the number of delegates. He could not say exactly the time when the men would land in Ireland, but he would not think it strange if they came in the course of a fortnight. He was positive, that at the present time there were two frigates reconnoitring the coast of Ireland." At a meeting of captains on the 29th of July, "they all agreed that their respective companies would act if the French should land." At the meeting of the captains of another battalion, on the 31st, "great fears were expressed of the catholics and dissenters becoming two separate parties."

There appears at this time to have been much mistrust among different parties in the "union." At a provincial meeting at Randalstown, on the 14th of August, information was given, "that the national committee has dissolved the executive in May, and that the executive had had then a plan of insurrection, which they gave to the national, and that the province of Leinster was to meet them in Dublin. The provincial delegates of Leinster came to Dublin at the time appointed, but the members of Ulster, instead of meeting them at the time appointed, sat in Belfast several days, calling the land-jobbers of the province to see whether it was necessary or not, until the principal leading men were all attacked, and the Leinster delegates gone home, after waiting in Dublin four days. A few spirited men in Belfast, now seeing the business frustrated, subscribed five hundred guineas to send a person to France; but not knowing which road to send him, or how to get him introduced to the directory, they

applied to a member of the old executive, and found the very person they had elected was sent ten days before by the executive; it was also found that the executive had been a thousand guineas out of their own pockets. From these circumstances the old executive is elected, with full power to act for the whole nation, and they think they can bring forward the whole nation yet, to act in a very short space of time, even in case the French should be frustrated in making a descent, which they are perfectly assured is their intention at this very instant, as there is a regular communication still carried on with them and the executive." It was reported on this occasion, "that no money is to be had from the people, the county Antrim excepted." Another meeting of the provincial committee was held at Dungannon on the 14th of September, when it was stated, "that two members of the executive had met the Leinster delegates in Dublin, and had found that Leinster was in a tolerable state of organization, as also Connaught and Munster, and there had been a great number of United Irishmen made, more since the proclamation. They had also elected an executive in Leinster, which would co-operate with the Ulster executive. He said there was a person just arrived from France; he brought word that the French had everything ready for making a descent, and that the most part of the troops were on board; that our delegates were along with them, and were to come from two parts, and that the directory had given orders to their admiral to proceed as soon as the wind would answer, and fight the English, and that the Dutch admiral had got similar orders." The next provincial meeting was held at Armagh, on the 14th of October. It was then "reported, that there had not been any information from our delegates in France, further than that one of them had drawn a bill of a hundred and sixty pounds on a member of the executive. The opinion of the executive was, that the French should have been here by this time, but they thought that the British government had got into possession of the plan of the expedition, which had frustrated them for some time, but they were sure the French never would make peace until they had fulfilled their engagements with Ireland."

At this time an event had occurred which materially altered the prospects of the disaffected. As Tone has informed us in his

diary, the troops intended for the Irish expedition were disembarked from the Dutch fleet; and the latter, having imprudently put to sea (it is supposed by order of the French directory), was entirely destroyed by the English fleet under admiral Duncan, in the battle off Camperdown on the eleventh of October. This disaster put an end for the present to the plans of

the French for the invasion of Ireland. Tone, entering this event in his diary, observes, "It was well I was not aboard the *Vryheid*; if I had, it would have been a pretty piece of business." And, little anticipating the ill-fated result of his rash course, he adds, "I fancy I am not to be caught at sea by the English; for this is the second escape I have had."

CHAPTER XXIV.

PROGRESS OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN; EXECUTION OF ORR; LORD MOIRA'S SPEECH IN THE ENGLISH HOUSE OF LORDS; THE IRISH PARLIAMENT MEETS.



ALTHOUGH the government measures of coercion, seemed for a while to be successful, in suppressing open violence, they tended eventually to increase the general discontent. The courts of law, in many parts, became jealous of the military interference with justice, and several of the United Irishmen in the north, who were under arrest, were set at liberty. These, and a few cases in which the victims of oppression gained redress by law, were adroitly used by the leaders of the United Irishmen to encourage and put confidence into their fellow-conspirators. Of the intolerable condition to which the country was now reduced, we may form some notion from one of the cases of individual oppression committed by persons in power and authority. An action for false imprisonment was tried at the assizes of Rosecommon, before justice Finucane, and a very respectable jury, wherein Alexander Colvil was plaintiff, and viscount Dillon defendant. The case stated was, that the plaintiff was, on Sunday, the 12th of January, arrested on a pretended charge of felony, by two constables, who bound the plaintiff with hempen ropes, and brought him a prisoner to Loughlin before his lordship. That his lordship told plaintiff there were informations sworn against him for sheep stealing, and further assured plaintiff that he had an order from govern-

ment to transport any person of bad character to Botany Bay, and that he would send plaintiff there next day; that his lordship then gave verbal orders to the constables to take plaintiff to the black hole. As they were conducting plaintiff to the black hole, they were met by a serjeant of captain Dillon's company, who offered plaintiff a shilling, to enlist him in said company. That plaintiff having refused to enlist, or accept of the shilling, was then very severely bound with ropes, and put into the black hole; that the black hole is a dark, damp, arched vault, situate under old ruins in the demesne of his lordship, to which there was neither light or air admitted, but through a small spike hole cut through a single stone; that the black hole was not a public prison or bridewell, but used as a place of confinement by lord Dillon only. That the person called captain Dillon was the supposed natural son of his lordship, and that his lordship procured for him some commission in the army, on the terms of his raising men, to effect which, his lordship used such means as his rank and power in the country enabled him to put in execution. That on the 13th of January, plaintiff was brought from the black hole into lord Dillon's presence, and after several efforts to intimidate him by charges of felony, his lordship declared there was evidence sufficient to hang the plaintiff; and then ordered him to be brought to captain Dillon's barracks, where he was kept about two hours, then handcuffed, and again put into the black hole; from Sunday, the 13th of January, to

Saturday, the 1st of February, plaintiff was kept a prisoner, without any lawful authority, and for the most part confined in the black hole, but sometimes in the barracks, and he was bounden with ropes, and otherwise treated with great cruelty, particularly, that he was for twenty-five hours of his said confinement in the black hole, hand-cuffed to one Henry Davis, who, among several others, was sent there by the said lord Dillon. That plaintiff, by his confinement in the black hole, found himself grown very weak, and his health otherwise much impaired; that during plaintiff's said confinement, several efforts, by threats and promises, were made by captain Dillon, his serjeant, and some of his recruiting party, and by lord Dillon personally, to induce the plaintiff to enlist, which he obstinately refused; that Mr. Charles Costello, who is the plaintiff's landlord, hearing of his confinement, sent his agent to lord Dillon, to know for what offence plaintiff was confined, but if there were informations sworn against him for felony, that he might be sent to the county gaol; upon which application, and no information of any kind appearing against the plaintiff, he was set at liberty. In some time after, at the plaintiff's instance, Mr. Costello personally applied to his lordship, and requested he might make some compensation to plaintiff for his illegal confinement, and great sufferings, which his lordship declined, and said, "What signifies a fellow of that kind, or what can he do?" This case was stated by counsellor Boyd, and fully proved, to the astonishment of the judge, and of the jury, who gave a verdict for the plaintiff, with sixty pounds damages, and full costs.

Under provocations of this kind, the United Irishmen recovered during the winter of 1797 the courage which they had been losing in the autumn; but, deprived of most of their abler and more cautious leaders, who were in banishment or in prison, they were guided by men of less experience, and were soon hurried into rash measures of resistance. Among the numerous trials for political offences which had marked the preceding autumn, there was one which had created a great sensation throughout the country, and which became subsequently a sort of watchword among the disaffected. William Orr was the first victim to the new law, which made administering an illegal oath felony, and his trial was regarded by many as an experiment of

strength, on the part of the government, against the people. Orr was tried at Carrickfergus, before lord Yelverton and Mr. justice Chamberlain, charged with administering to a soldier the United Irishmen's oath. The only evidence against him was the soldier, Whately. The jury retired from their box, at six o'clock in the evening, to consider their verdict, and remained shut up during the night. The court was opened by lord Yelverton, at six on the following morning, when the jury requested to know whether they might not find a qualified verdict, which would not affect the life of the prisoner. This being inadmissible, they retired, and in some time after returned with a verdict of guilty, at the same time recommending the prisoner to mercy. On the following day, Mr. Orr was brought up to receive sentence; when his counsel made a motion in arrest of judgment. This was overruled by the court. The counsel then stated, that a most extraordinary event had just come to their knowledge, of which it was their duty to apprise the court. "Two of the jurors had made an affidavit, stating that on the night of the trial a considerable quantity of spirituous liquor had been conveyed into the jury-room, and drunk by the jury, many of whom were greatly intoxicated. The two jurors who made the affidavit, admitted themselves also to have been in a state of intoxication; and one of them was threatened to be prosecuted as an United Irishman, if he did not concur in a verdict of guilty; until, at length, worn out by fatigue and drink, and subdued by menaces, he did, contrary to his judgment, concur in that verdict." The affidavits having been produced, the counsel was interrupted by Mr. justice Chamberlain, who declared that such a statement ought not to be permitted; that it was evidently calculated to throw discredit upon the verdict, and could not be the foundation of any motion to the court. Mr. Orr was then remanded, and on the next day he was again brought up, when lord Yelverton, in a very solemn and pathetic manner, pronounced sentence of death on him. During the latter part, his lordship's voice was scarcely audible, and at the close he burst into tears! Mr. Orr (immediately after the sentence) begged leave to say a few words: "My lords," he said, "the jury has convicted me of being a felon; my own heart tells me that their conviction is a

falsehood. I am not a felon. If they have found me so improperly, it is worse for them than for me, for I can forgive them. I will say but one word more, and that is to declare, in the awful presence of God, that the evidence against me was grossly perjured—grossly and wickedly perjured." Every exertion was made on the part of Orr's family, his friends, and the country at large, to procure a suspension of the sentence. The affidavit of the two jurors was followed up by the solemn declaration of others to the same effect. The principal witness, Whately, struck with remorse, came voluntarily forward, confessed his guilt, and deposed, before a magistrate, on oath, that his testimony against Orr was false. The vice-regal court was crowded with petitions, imploring that mercy, the extension of which is the best prerogative of the crown. All proved ineffectual; execution was stayed for a time, and the sentence was three times respited, but Orr was ultimately executed at Carrickfergus, on the 14th of October, 1797, declaring his innocence again at the scaffold.

One circumstance occurred during the latter part of the year 1797, which had a considerable influence on subsequent occurrences, the distrust which arose between the Roman catholics and the presbyterians. As might naturally be expected, the conspiracy, as it extended itself, especially when the southern and western provinces were brought in, became more and more catholic, and soon aroused all the old religious prejudices and resentments. The catholics who were not in the conspiracy presented loyal addresses and passed loyal resolutions, professing to throw the blame of disaffection entirely on the northern presbyterians; while the latter, provoked at these symptoms of hostility, began to suspect that the catholics who entered the association, in doing so laid aside none of their hostile feelings towards the protestants. From this time, the zeal of the United Irishmen of Ulster was considerably cooled, and the spirit of rebellion was propagated more actively among the catholics.

The whig party in both countries cried out loudly against the military executions which had been authorized by the Irish government, and against the ravages of the soldiery. The subject was again brought before the English house of lords by the earl of Moira, who on the 22nd of No-

vember, 1797, introduced a motion for this purpose with a general view of the situation of the British empire, in which he lamented that the prospective view which he had given in the last session, had been more than realized. By the lord mayor of Dublin's application for relief, it appeared, that above thirty-seven thousand manufacturers in that city alone, were reduced to the extremity of distress; and in the towns of Newry and Belfast, where the customs had usually produced fifteen thousand pounds per annum, not one-fifteenth of that sum had in the last year been received. "When I troubled your lordships with my observations upon the state of Ireland last year," he said, "I spoke upon documents certain and incontestible. I address you, on this day, my lords, upon documents equally sure and stable. Before God and my country, I speak of what I have seen myself. But in what I shall think it necessary to say upon this subject, I feel that I must take ground of a restrictive nature. It is not my intention to select any individual, in order to adduce a charge against him. It is not my wish to point a prejudice against any one. What I have to speak of, are not solitary and isolated measures, not partial abuses, but what is adopted as the system of government. I do not talk of a casual system, but of one deliberately determined upon and regularly persevered in. When we hear of a military government, we must expect excesses, which are not all, I acknowledge, attributable to the government; but these I lay out of my consideration. I will speak only of the excesses that belong to, and proceed from, the system pursued by the administration of Ireland. I am aware it may be urged that a statement, such as I am about to lay before your lordships, is calculated to interfere too much with the internal government of the sister kingdom. In answer to this assertion, I would, if necessary, begin by laying it down as an incontrovertible opinion, that we have so direct a concern and connexion with Ireland, that any error of government in that country is a fit subject for our attention, and, if circumstances required it, for an address to his majesty for the removal of the chief governor. My lords, this observation applies not in any manner to the present lord lieutenant; on the contrary, I will pay him the tribute which I think due to him, that to much private worth and honour, his lordship adds, I believe, very sincere wishes for

the happiness of the kingdom, which has been placed under his government. My lords, I have seen in Ireland, the most absurd, as well as the most disgusting, tyranny that any nation ever groaned under. I have been myself a witness of it in many instances; I have seen it practised and unchecked; and the effects that have resulted from it have been such, as I have stated to your lordships. I have said, that if such a tyranny be persevered in, the consequence must inevitably be, the deepest and most universal discontent, and even hatred, to the English name. I have seen in that country a marked distinction made between the English and Irish. I have seen troops that have been sent full of prejudice that every inhabitant in that kingdom is a rebel to the British government. I have seen the most grievous oppression exercised, in consequence of a presumption, that the person who was the unfortunate object of such oppression was in hostility to the government. I have seen the most wanton insults practised upon men of all ranks and conditions. I have seen the most grievous oppressions exercised, in consequence of a presumption that the person who was the unfortunate object of such oppression was in hostility to the government; and yet that has been done in a part of the country as quiet as the city of London. Who states these things, my lords, should, I know, be prepared with proofs. I am prepared with them. Many of the circumstances I know of my own knowledge; others I have received from such channels, as will not permit me to hesitate one moment in giving credit to them." His lordship then observed, that from education and early habits, the curfew was ever considered by Britons as a badge of slavery and oppression. It then was practised in Ireland with brutal rigour. He had known an instance, where a master of a house had in vain pleaded to be allowed the use of a candle to enable the mother to administer relief to her daughter struggling in convulsive fits. In former times, it had been the custom for Englishmen to hold the infamous proceedings of the inquisition in detestation; one of the greatest horrors, with which it was attended was, that the person, ignorant of the crime laid to his charge, or of his accuser, was torn from his family, immured in a prison, and in the most cruel uncertainty as to the period of his confinement, or the fate which awaited him. To this injustice, abhorred

by protestants in the practice of the inquisition, were the people of Ireland exposed. All confidence—all security were taken away. In alluding to the inquisition, he had omitted to mention one of its characteristic features: if the supposed culprit refused to acknowledge the crime with which he was charged, he was put to the rack, to extort confession of whatever crime was alleged against him, by the pressure of torture. The same proceedings had been introduced in Ireland. When a man was taken up, on suspicion, he was put to the torture; nay, if he were merely accused of concealing the guilt of another. The rack, indeed, was not at hand; but the punishment of picqueting was in practice, which had been for some years abolished, as too inhuman, even in the dragoon service. He had known a man, in order to extort confession of a supposed crime, or of that of some of his neighbours, picqueted till he actually fainted; picqueted a second time till he fainted again; and as soon as he came to himself, picqueted a third time till he once more fainted; and all upon mere suspicion! Nor was this the only species of torture; men had been taken and hung up till they were half dead, and then threatened with a repetition of the cruel treatment, unless they made confession of the imputed guilt. These were not particular acts of cruelty exercised by men abusing the power committed to them, but they formed a part of our system. They were notorious, and no person could say, who would be the next victim of this oppression and cruelty, which he saw others endure. This, however, was not all; their lordships, no doubt, would recollect the famous proclamation issued by a military commander in Ireland, requiring the people to give up their arms; it never was denied that this proclamation was illegal, though defended on some supposed necessity; but it was not surprising, that a reluctance had been shown to comply with it, by men who conceived the constitution gave them a right to keep arms in their houses for their own defence; and they could not but feel indignation in being called upon to give up their right. In the execution of the order, the greatest cruelties had been committed; if any one was suspected to have concealed weapons of defence, his house, his furniture, and all his property, were burnt; but this was not all; if it were supposed that any district had not surrendered all the arms which it contained, a party was sent

out to collect the number at which it was rated; and, in the execution of this order, thirty houses were sometimes burnt down in a single night. Officers took upon themselves to decide discretionally the quantity of arms; and upon their opinions these fatal consequences followed. Many such cases might be enumerated; but from prudential motives, he wished to draw a veil over more aggravated facts, which he could have stated, and which he was willing to attest before the privy council, or at their lordship's bar. These facts were well known in Ireland, but they could not be made public through the channel of the newspapers, for fear of that summary mode of punishment which had been practised towards the *Northern Star*, when a party of troops in open day (and in a town where the general's head-quarters were), went and destroyed all the offices and property belonging to that paper. It was thus authenticated accounts were suppressed. His lordship concluded with entreating the house to take into serious consideration their present measures, which, instead of removing discontents, had increased the number of the discontented. The moment of conciliation was not yet past, but if the system were not changed, he was convinced Ireland would not remain connected with this country five years longer.

Lord Grenville replied, that it was a matter of no small difficulty to enter into the question now brought forward, on the vague grounds and isolated facts upon which it was supported. He expressed his surprise to hear this government accused of hostile disposition towards the sister country, or eager to keep up in it a system of coercion. He confidently appealed to the house, whether we had ever abandoned measures of concession, or conciliation? for the whole space of thirty years, his majesty's government had been distinguished by the same uniform tenderness of regard, by the same adherence to the principles of a mild system. Amongst the various instances exhibited of liberality and kindness on the part of this country towards Ireland, he adverted to the establishment of its parliament into an independent legislature, and a wide extension of its commercial privileges. It was no arduous task to exonerate government from any charges of inhumanity. Bravery, clemency, and good-nature, were the characteristic features of the English disposition. That

there might be individual exceptions, he pretended not to say; but, if such excesses were perpetrated, were there no courts of justice, no laws, no magistrates, no tribunals, open to the complaints of the oppressed. Ireland had its juries as well as this country, and the same safeguards were provided for the lives of the Irish as for Englishmen. Indeed, if a system so rigorous as was described, had been pursued, it must naturally be resented by a spirited and independent people. But what was the object for which these troops were sent over? To protect the great body of the people against conspiracy and assassination; to overawe and counteract the machinations of a set of men, who were actively plotting the destruction of their country, and favouring the designs of our most inveterate enemy. If against such men they had been at times incited to acts of harshness and severity; if they had been occasionally warned into a sense of indignation, which broke out into insults and outrages, no one who understood the heart of man, would wonder. What was more natural, than that a large body of Englishmen should be enraged against the abettors of a conspiracy, to deliver up the country to the French invaders? No public man placed in so critical a situation as lord Camden, had ever displayed more exemplary moderation in the discharge of a painful duty. If severe measures had been adopted, the circumstances of the country had required it; and if any partial abuses existed, we had only to lament them. Of the press, which was said to be abridged of all its freedom most unjustly, he held now in his hand a paper printed, the contents of which were too shocking to read: its avowed object was to point out innocent men, by name, to the poignard of the assassins. It loaded his majesty with the most opprobrious epithets, and reviled the English nation with every term of contumely, affirming it to be the duty of every Irishman to wrest from the hands of English ruffians, the property which these English ruffians had wrested from their ancestors. The question was, would their lordships interpose on the present occasion, and tell the parliament of Ireland, and the Irish magistracy, that we were more careful of the interest and happiness of their people than they themselves were; and that the English military were not to obey the Irish laws, but the arbitrary instructions of the British parliament. Earl Moira said, that

no sentiment had fallen from him to that effect. He had not reprobated the troops in Ireland for obeying the law; but the conduct of the executive government, which was repugnant to the feelings of the Irish people, inconsistent with the British character, and highly injurious to the real interests of both countries. The lord chancellor warmly supported lord Grenville, and justified all acts of rigour, by the actual existence of a conspiracy in Ireland, against all those whose duty it was to preserve order in that country, and by the printed list of the individual objects of future assassination. Lord Moira's object was defeated by a large majority of the British peers.

In the midst of this universal agitation, the time had arrived for the general election of representatives in parliament, which became, by law, dissolved in the year 1797. But the legislative body appeared as if it had fallen into popular contempt, and the elections, in general, excited little interest, and passed over quietly. Grattan declared, before a public meeting in Dublin, his despair of obtaining any redress of national grievances from parliament, and announced that he declined accepting a place in the new house of commons. When parliament met, on the 15th of January, 1798, the lord lieutenant cited "the tranquillity which attended the late general election" as a proof "that the wisdom and firmness which were manifested by the late parliament, were felt and approved by the nation at large." In allusion to the state of the country, lord Camden said, "In consequence of the addresses of the houses of lords and commons, in May last, I directed immediate and vigorous measures to be taken for repressing disaffection, in the northern parts of the kingdom, and for restoring security and confidence to the loyal and well disposed; the effect of which has been manifested in the return of subordination and industry in that quarter. Other attempts have since been made by the leaders of the disaffected, in some parts of the midland and southern districts, with too much success; and emissaries have been employed, and publications have been circulated by them, to revive religious animosities, and to open prospects of plunder, by which means the lower classes have been excited to commit acts of the most horrid outrage and barbarity. I have to lament, that the diligence and activity of the magistrates, though assisted by the troops which

have been ordered into that part of the kingdom, have not yet been able entirely to put a stop to those disturbances. Constant vigilance, and unremitting exertions, continue to be necessary when all means are tried to excite the people to rebellion and revolt; when a systematic plan of assassination is adopted and encouraged, and when the most audacious attempts are made to impede and prevent the administration of justice." The addresses were passed with very little opposition, although a few members of both houses raised their voice against the system of coercion adopted by the government. In the lords, the chancellor (lord Clare), spoke with some warmth against these appeals, as being encouragements to treason and revolt. He spoke exultingly of the success which had attended the coercive policy, which, he stated, had been extorted from the lord lieutenant by the ministry.

On the nineteenth of February, lord Moira stood up in his place in the Irish house of lords, to make the same appeal to government which he had made unsuccessfully in England. He described the state of the country, and the outrages to which it was exposed by the measures of coercion now in force. He said, that many individuals had been torn from their families, and locked up for months in the closest confinement, without hearing by whom they were accused, with what crime they were charged, or to what means they might recur to prove their innocence. Great numbers of houses had been burnt, with the whole property of the occupiers, on the loosest suspicion of petty transgressions; while the torture of picqueting, and half-hanging, were constantly used to extort from the sufferer a charge against his neighbour. "The state of society," he said, "was dreadful indeed, when the safety of every man was at the mercy of a secret informer; when the cupidity, the malevolence, or the erroneous suspicions of an individual, were sufficient to destroy his neighbour." Lord Dunsany said, that he could relate to the lords not simply the burning of houses, but the murder, in cold blood, of their inhabitants; he could give them an account of three men particularly, who, having had their houses burnt to the ground, were shot by the military, after having been for some time held prisoners; and he could add to these accounts, the much more numerous in-

stances of men torn from family and country, to be transported for life, without even the form of a trial. The uselessness of such appeals, at this moment, was proved by the small number of lords who voted for the motion of lord Moira. All attempts, during the session, to bring the sufferings of the country under parliamentary investigation, met with a similar fate.

The chief matters of public interest that came before this parliament, were measures of coercion. Among these was a very severe act against the liberty of the press, authorizing grand juries to present any newspaper containing seditious or libellous matter, and giving the magistrates authority, on such presentation, to suppress the paper and seize and destroy the printing materials. This bill raised a warm debate in the house of commons, where the small fragment of the old popular party which remained, made a determined stand against the encroachments of the government. Mr. Vandeleur called attention to the outrages committed by orangemen, and summoned the ministers to put them under the same ban as the United Irishmen. His remarks called up the violent protestantism of Dr. Duigenan, who entered into a warm panegyric of the loyalty and good principles of the class that

Mr. Vandeleur had stigmatized. It was represented by other speakers, that however the name of orangemen might be used by the disaffected, as an instrument of agitation, the orangemen themselves were not at present engaged in any acts of turbulence, that they joined with catholics and others in their professions of loyalty, and that it was the United Irishmen alone against whom it had become necessary to protect the government and country. On the fifth of March, sir Laurence Parsons moved for a commission to inquire into the state of the country, and introduced his motion by a long and able speech. The debate on this occasion was very animated, and lasted till five o'clock on the following morning. All the speakers agreed in the fearful state of the country, and many even of those who voted for the ministers, appeared alarmed at the character which the coercive measures of government had assumed. Lord Castlereagh defended those measures, which he said had been the consequence of the popular excitement, and not the causes of it. The excesses committed by the soldiery, he said, were naturally to be expected from the state of things, though he did not cease to lament them.

CHAPTER XXV.

AGITATED STATE OF IRELAND IN THE EARLIER MONTHS OF THE YEAR 1798; THE TRIALS AT MAIDSTONE; ARREST OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT OLIVER BOND'S.



FROM the extraordinary aspect of society in Ireland during the earlier months of the year 1798, it would seem that some great revolutionary convulsion was in preparation. The operation of the laws in many parts of the country seemed to be suspended, many parts of the country were abandoned to military discretion, and others were held in awe by an armed population, who committed nightly depredations and outrages. With all the documents and memoirs of this period which have been published, we really

know but little of the secret history of the popular movements, and it would be unfair to ascribe to the United Irishmen every violence that was perpetrated by the excited peasantry. An extensive system of assassination of individuals remarkable for their loyalty was certainly being carried into effect during the months of January and February, and scarcely a day passed during which the post did not bring to the capital the intelligence of numerous acts of this description. One of those cases which caused most sensation through the country was that of colonel St. George, a considerable landholder of the county of Cork. Colonel St. George was a magistrate of that county,

well known for his loyalty, and, hearing that the peasantry on his estates had embraced extensively the principles of the United Irishmen, he went to reside upon them, in the hope that his presence and influence might prove some check to the political infection. On the 10th of February, colonel St. George, who was residing at the house of his tenant and agent, Mr. Uniacke, dined with lord Mountcashel at his seat at Moor Park. It was one of the effects of the political agitation then existing that people were not safe even in the privacy of their own houses. Gentlemen's servants had been extensively seduced, and they acted as spies upon their own masters, so that men who were particularly obnoxious to the revolutionists were thus kept under a constant surveillance. Such, it seems, was the case at Moor Park, in the county of Cork; some of the conspirators were on the watch in the neighbourhood, and were informed of everything that passed, and of the time of the colonel's departure, by the servants of the house, and some strong expressions of abhorrence of the United Irishmen and of a resolution to exert himself to the utmost of his power against them, expressed at lord Mountcashel's table, are said to have sealed his fate. He was dogged on his way home to Mr. Uniacke's by the assassins, who for some reason or other did not attack him on the road. But he had not been long in the house before a party of armed men, headed by a ruffian brandishing a pistol in his hand, rushed into the parlour, where they found Mrs. Uniacke and her two children, colonel St. George having retired to bed. The assassins immediately proceeded to the bed-room, and while some of them dispatched their principal victim, the others dragged Mr. Uniacke, already severely wounded, into the parlour, and there murdered him in the most brutal manner. His wife, who supplicated for his life, was treated with scarcely less brutality, and was left, as it was supposed, dying; and, having dragged the lifeless body of colonel St. George from his room they threw it on Mrs. Uniacke, who lay by her husband on the floor, and leaving them in this condition, made their escape. Mrs. Uniacke had, however, recognised some of the murderers, and they were subsequently seized and brought to justice.

The leaders of the United Irishmen had now resolved on making a desperate effort, whether they received assistance from abroad

or not. In almost every part of the country, whole nights were spent in teaching the peasantry the use of arms and military discipline, under the directions of military commissioners appointed by the executive committee. In the papers seized by government, and afterwards published in the report of the secret committee, we trace the progress of this organization, though imperfectly, and we see the negotiations with France renewed. Lord Moira's speech in parliament had given little satisfaction to the malcontents, and at a county meeting at Saintfield, in the county of Down, on the 4th of February, "earl Moira's character was discussed at full length, to know whether he was a man that could be depended upon or not by the people—it was agreed that he was as great a tyrant as the lord lieutenant, and a deeper designing one." These are the words of the secretary's minutes. At a meeting at Armagh, on the 27th, "the report said we had a delegate arrived from France, and that the French were using every endeavour to have the expedition for this country completed, and that our delegate came home to cause us to put ourselves into a state of organization to join them, as the directory positively assured our delegates that the expedition would set out for this country in the latter end of April or beginning of May . . . He said we had now fourteen delegates in France, and that there had been held in London a meeting of all the delegates in England and Scotland." Frequent meetings of colonels were now held, to consult on the speediest way of calling up the armed population, and on the means to be used for surprising and disarming the military in each particular district.

The result of these frequent meetings and consultations of an immense number of little committees in every part of the island was soon visible outwardly in the increase of the public agitation and in the nightly insurrections of the peasantry. In the months of February and March many parts of Leinster and Munster were actually in possession of the United Irishmen; and the town of Cahir, in the county of Tipperary, was invested in the open day by a party of eight hundred men, chiefly mounted, who held possession of the place till a regular search had been made for arms, after which they were suffered to depart unmolested. The outrages, many of them of the most brutal description, committed on such occa-

sions, were innumerable; and the terror was so great that in the counties of Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, Kilkenny, Carlow, King's and Queen's counties, Kildare, and Wicklow, many of the loyal inhabitants fled from their country-houses to seek refuge in the garrison towns.

The delegates who were in France, or rather the expatriated traitors (for they had most of them fled from Ireland to escape prosecutions for high treason), were at this time intriguing and quarrelling among themselves. Tone whose hopes were fallen with the death of Hoche and the defeat of the Dutch fleet, returned to Paris, and had been introduced to Bonaparte, and was now full of the new expedition which was to be undertaken by the "army of England," which was at this time in progress of organization under Bonaparte's orders. Some notion of the position of the Irish refugees in Paris may be formed from the entry in Tone's journal on the 1st of February, 1798. "The number of Irish refugees," he says, "is considerably increased. Independent of Lewines, Tennant, and Lowry, there are Teeling, of Lisburn; Orr, of Derry; McMahon, of county Down; Macan and Burgess, of county Louth; Napper Tandy, and my brother. There is also one Maguire, who was sent by Reynolds from Philadelphia, in consequence of my letter to him by Monroe, and one Ashley, an Englishman, formerly secretary to the Corresponding Society, and one of those who was tried with Thomas Hardy, in London, for high treason. We all do very well except Napper Tandy, who is not behaving correctly. He began some months ago by caballing against me with a priest of the name of Quigley, who is since gone off, no one knows whither; the circumstances of this petty intrigue are not worth my recording. It is sufficient to say that Tandy took on him to summon a meeting of the Irish refugees, at which Lewines and I were to be arraigned, on I know not what charges, by himself and Quigley. Lewines refused to attend, but I went, and when I appeared, there was no one found to bring forward a charge against me, though I called three times to know whether any person had anything to offer. In consequence of this manœuvre, I have had no communication since with Tandy, who has also lost ground, by his mean behaviour, with all the rest of his countrymen; he is, I fancy, pestering the government here with applications and memorials, and

gives himself out for an old officer, and a man of great property in Ireland, as I judge from what general Murat said to me in speaking of him the other night at Bonaparte's. He asked me did I know one Tandy, *un ancien militaire, n'est ce pas?* I said I did know him, but could not say that he was exactly *un ancien militaire*, as he had never served but in the volunteer corps of Ireland, a body which resembled pretty much the garde nationale of France at the beginning of the revolution. *Mais c'est un tres riche proprietaire!* I told him I believed he was always in easy circumstances, and there the discourse ended. By this I see how he is throwing himself off here. He had got lately a coadjutor in the famous Thomas Muir, who is arrived at Paris, and has inserted two or three very foolish articles, relating to the United Irishmen, in the Paris papers, in consequence of which, at a meeting of the United Irishmen now in Paris, with the exception of Tandy, it was settled that Lowry, Orr, Lewines, and myself should wait upon Muir, and after thanking him for his good intentions, intreat him not to introduce our business into any publications which he might hereafter think proper to make. Accordingly, we waited on him, a few days since, but of all the vain, obstinate blockheads that ever I met, I never saw his equal. I could scarcely conceive such a degree of self-sufficiency to exist. He told us roundly that he knew as much of our country as we did, and would venture to say he had as much the confidence of the United Irishmen as we had; that he had no doubt we were very respectable individuals, but could only know us as such, having shown him no powers or written authority to prove that we had any mission. That he seldom acted without due reflection, and when he had once taken his party, it was impossible to change him; and that, as to what he had written relative to the United Irishmen, he had the sanction of, he would say, the most respectable individual of that body, who had, and deserved to have, their entire confidence and approbation, and whose authority he must and did consider as justifying every syllable he had advanced. This most respectable individual of the body we presumed to be Tandy, for we did not ask his name. So that, after a discussion of nearly three hours we were obliged to come away *re infecta*, except that we gave Mr. Muir notice that he had neither licence nor autho-

city to speak in the name of the people of Ireland, and that if we saw any similar productions to those of which we complained, we should be obliged to take measures that would conduce neither to his ease nor respectability; for that we could not suffer the public to be longer abused. On these terms we parted very drily on both sides. The fact is, Muir and Tandy, are puffing one another here for their private advantage; they are supporting themselves by endorsing each other's credit, and issuing, if I may so say, accommodation bills of reputation; this conversation has given the *coup de grace* to Tandy with his countrymen here, and he is now in a manner completely in Coventry."

It has been already stated that the newspaper *The Press*, which succeeded the *Northern Star*, suppressed at Belfast by military execution, had become extremely obnoxious to the government by its intemperate language. In the latter part of the year this paper was prosecuted, and the publisher thrown into prison, upon which Arthur O'Connor acknowledged himself to be the proprietor and editor. A prosecution was immediately directed against him, and he was held to bail to present himself before the court of king's bench at the next assizes to take his trial, his recognizances being lord Edward Fitzgerald and counsellor Emmett. These, as well as O'Connor, were at this time members of the Irish "directory." At the beginning of February, 1798, when he ought to have appeared, O'Connor had gone to England, as it was alleged, on his own private affairs, and with difficulty his recognizance was respite till the next term. The business on which O'Connor was employed in England came to light sooner than was expected. The Irish directory, as we have already seen, had opened a correspondence with the English conspirators who had assumed the name of United Britons, and in the month of January, 1798, they had received from them an address of fraternity. The United Britons, like the United Irishmen, were anxious to keep up a communication with the French government, which was at this moment preparing on an extensive scale for the invasion of the British isles. It was to carry this desire into effect that Arthur O'Connor repaired to England in 1798.

At the end of February four persons, under suspicious circumstances, appeared in Margate, and attempted to hire a small

vessel to convey them to France. Information was given, and they were all arrested and conveyed to London. They proved to be Arthur O'Connor, his servant, named Patrick Leary, John Binns, a very active member of the London Corresponding Society, John Allen, and the priest Quigley, or Coigley, the same who had given so much offence to Wolfe Tone in Paris. The latter was passing under the name of James Fevey, and it was proved that he had at different times assumed the other *aliases* of captain Jones and colonel Morris. They were examined before the privy council, committed to the Tower, and transferred thence to Maidstone jail, to be tried in that town by a special commission. The trial came on on the 21st of May. An address to the French directory, with other papers of a treasonable tendency, were found on the priest Coigley, and he was found guilty, and executed. The other prisoners were acquitted; but Arthur O'Connor was immediately taken into custody again on a charge of high treason. Events had occurred during his imprisonment which made his position much more serious.

During March and April the conspirators were unusually active in the county and provincial committees preparing for a rising, and their intelligence from France, which promised a speedy arrival of French troops, tended not a little to encourage them. It was understood that the executive directory in Dublin had formed a grand plan of insurrection, only as much of which was made known to the country agents as was necessary to direct their exertions. Whilst the United Irishmen were busily maturing these plans, they were disconcerted by an unexpected blow. There was a man named Thomas Reynolds, of the county of Kildare, where he had numerous and respectable connections, who was bred to the business of a silk manufacturer, which he followed very extensively for many years in the city of Dublin; but having acquired a landed property at Kilkea Castle, in his native county, he retired and resided there, and had considerable influence among the Romanists. Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Oliver Bond having, for these reasons, considered him a proper person to assist in forwarding their designs, practised every art of seduction to attach him to their cause; and having at last succeeded, he was sworn an United Irishman at the house of Oliver Bond, in Dublin, in the beginning of the

year 1797. He was eventually induced to accept the commission of colonel, the offices of treasurer and representative of the county of Kildare, and at last that of delegate for the province of Leinster. Soon after he was raised to this elevated situation in the union, having discovered that the conspirators, instead of intending to reform the abuses of the state, and to abolish all religious distinctions, which was their professed object at first, meditated the subversion of the constitution, the massacre of the leading members of government and of such persons as should oppose their designs, he resolved to defeat them, by embracing the first opportunity of communicating them to some person in whom he could confide. He had great respect for Mr. Cope, an eminent merchant of the city of Dublin, who, having lamented to him in the course of conversation, the crimes and atrocities which were constantly committed, and which were undoubted symptoms of an approaching rebellion, Reynolds said, that he knew a person connected with the United Irishmen, who, he believed, would defeat their nefarious projects, by communicating them to government, in order to make an atonement for the crime he had committed, in joining them. Mr. Cope assured him, that such a person would obtain the highest honours and pecuniary rewards that the administration could confer; and that he would be admired and applauded by the most virtuous and valuable portion of society; but Reynolds said, that nothing could tempt him to come forward and avow himself. However, after the most earnest and pressing solicitation repeatedly made on the part of Mr. Cope, he said that his friend would appear in person, and disclose the particulars of the plot, on the following conditions: that he should not prosecute any United Irishman; that the channel through which the information came should be kept a secret, at least for a time; that as his life would be in danger upon its being known, and he must leave the country and go to England till matters were settled, which would derange his affairs, and put him to considerable expense, he expected to receive compensation. Mr. Cope then told him that he might draw on him for any sum not exceeding five hundred guineas. On that, he told Mr. Cope, that the Leinster delegates were to meet at Oliver Bond's, on the 12th of March, to concert measures for an insurrection, which was shortly to take

place, but did not at that time acknowledge that the information came directly from himself, insinuating that it was imparted by a third person. In consequence of this, justice Swan, attended by twelve serjeants in coloured clothes, arrested the Leinster delegates, thirteen in number, including Oliver Bond himself, while sitting in council in the house of Oliver Bond, in Bridge-street, on the 12th of March, 1798, and seized at the same time their papers, which led to the discovery of the plot, and the intended insurrection. On the same day, Thomas A. Emmett, the barrister, William James M'Nevin, Messrs. Bond, Sweetman, Henry Jackson, and Hugh Jackson, were arrested; and warrants were issued against lord Edward Fitzgerald, Richard M'Corrick, and counsellor Sampson, who made their escape.

The seizure of their delegates was the greatest misfortune that had yet befallen the United Irishmen. They proceeded to elect a new directory, but their best leaders were gone, and those now chosen to fill their places were hasty in their plans and rash and unguarded in their conduct. The plan adopted by these men was to seduce as many as possible of the king's troops, especially of the militia regiments, and then to make a general attack on the camp at Loughlinstown. In their attempts to gain converts in the army, they were naturally exposed to spies and informers, and they seem not to have adopted sufficient caution against them. One captain Armstrong, of the King's county militia, was in the habit of visiting the shop of Byrne, the seditious bookseller, in Grafton-street, Dublin, who presumed from the tenor of his conversation, that he was a convert to the popular cause, and looked upon him as a fit instrument for their designs with respect to the soldiery. Among the leading men of the new executive directory were John and Henry Sheares, and to these Byrne proposed to introduce captain Armstrong. He accepted the offer, soon obtained their confidence, and they made him acquainted with their plans for attacking Loughlinstown camp, in which he was to give them his assistance. A variety of interviews took place, all of which were duly reported by captain Armstrong to the government, which thus became acquainted with their designs.

The arrest of the directory, and of many others of the leading conspirators, destroyed the unity of action as well as the confidence

of the revolutionists, but those who remained did their best to sustain their cause. The ministers were now, by the discoveries already made, and by the informations daily brought by spies and informers, sufficiently well acquainted with the danger, and were

prepared for it; and if they allowed men like Neilson and the Sheares to go at large, it was because they thought the rebellion would be more effectually stifled, by letting it break out before the blow was struck.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOYAL DECLARATIONS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS; PRECAUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT; ARREST AND PROCEEDINGS AGAINST POLITICAL OFFENDERS; EFFECT OF THE COERCIVE POLICY OF GOVERNMENT; JOSEPH HOLT.



HE respectable part of the catholic body were alarmed at the rebellious spirit that was spreading more and more among the peasantry of their persuasion; they saw that its tendency was to establish the principles then triumphant in France, and they felt the necessity of supporting the government. Many of the priests certainly encouraged their flocks to revolt, but the higher ecclesiastics generally acted with zeal in the cause of order. As an example of the spirit which seemed to actuate the catholic prelacy, we may cite the address of the catholic bishop of Kilmacduagh, in Galway, on the 6th of April, to the laity under his spiritual jurisdiction. "There is not one amongst you," he told them, "even in the most remote and obscure hamlet, who hath not heard of the oaths and associations which have entailed so many misfortunes on various districts of this kingdom. How many poor exiles from northern counties have you seen arrive amongst you, sent adrift without pity or remorse, by a barbarous association! how many atrocities have you heard committed by persons belonging to societies of, if possible, a still more dangerous tendency! How many villages destroyed and districts laid waste in consequence of illegal oaths and conspiracies! It would be foreign to my purpose further to pursue this tale of woe; much less doth it fall within the sphere of my duty to investigate that maze of moral and political causes which have concurred to beget that restlessness and agitation of the public mind which prevails

in various parts of the kingdom; suffice it to observe, that these oaths and associations have been proscribed by the legislature under the severest penalties. And it would be doing an injury to the opinion which I entertain of your principles to suppose that any of you could be so little acquainted with the obligations which he owes to society, as not to know that you are bound, both by the law of God, and the law of nature, to obey the ordinances of the state in all civil and temporal concerns. What could be more deplorable than the situation of that country, in which it would be permitted to each individual to contradict the laws, to withdraw his allegiance, to oppose the legislature? The law of God commands us to obey the rulers of the land. The Saviour of mankind inculcates this doctrine in the gospel, and the apostle of nations, the blessed Paul, is clear on the subject. But, waiving these considerations, your own interest, and the happiness of the district in which you reside, call upon you to avoid, with the utmost caution, all illegal oaths and combinations. Take warning from what hath happened in the various parts of the kingdom, which have had the misfortune to experience the direful consequences of those illegal associations. Learn to appreciate the inestimable blessings of peace and tranquillity, which you have hitherto enjoyed. Thrice happy if, whilst the thunder of anarchy growls at a distance, you are allowed quietly to partake of your frugal fare, and compose yourselves to rest without dread of the assassin or the midnight robber. There are, no doubt, even amongst us, some few whose hearts are corrupted, and whose minds are perverted; who never once be-

seeched, with humility, the Father of light to enlighten them; who yet decide every point, philosophize on every subject; whose whole education consists of a few scraps taken from immoral or injurious writers; who, on the authority of some sacrilegious innovator, blaspheme that religion to which they are utter strangers; who, afraid to look into the state of their own hearts, which they have never enriched with the practice of any virtue, and, not daring to look to heaven, which they have never ceased to insult, would wish to forget themselves in tumult and confusion. They look forward with anxious expectation for the arrival of their brethren in impiety. They tell us, with a malignant and ill-dissembled satisfaction, that we must not flatter ourselves with the hopes of escaping a visit from the French. I will not take upon myself to determine an event which, as yet, remains amongst the secrets of providence. Obstacles of great magnitude lie in their way. I will not, however, hesitate to declare that the wrath of heaven could scarcely visit us with a more dreadful scourge. Witness the atrocities which have marked their steps in every country into which they have intruded themselves. Treasures and valuable effects carried off under the name of contributions; the smallest opposition to the will of those apostles of liberty attended with the most horrid devastations; churches pillaged and profaned; our holy religion proscribed; even lately, a respectable nation given up to carnage and slaughter, for having attempted to defend the constitution and laws under which they and their ancestors lived for ages, a brave, frugal, and happy people; the supreme Pastor of our church not only reviled and calumniated in the most impudent manner, but also stripped of that property, which enabled him to display a generosity and benevolence worthy of his high station, and to propagate the gospel of Christ amongst the most remote nations of the globe. Such are a part of the blessings which, under the specious name of liberty, have been bestowed on many neighbouring countries, by the rulers of the French people. Ill-fated people, destined to wade through torrents of blood, in quest of that liberty which hath hitherto escaped their pursuit! More restless than the waves of the ocean which dash against their shores, have they plunged from revolution to revolution, the sport of every prevailing faction; and are, at length, compelled to bend under

the iron rod of tyrants, more despotic than any of the kings who swayed the sceptre of their nation. But, my beloved brethren, let us put our trust in that providence which directs all human events. Let the impious man quit his iniquity, and the virtuous man redouble the fervour of his supplications; and the God of mercy will turn away his wrath from us; for who is it that hath confided in the Lord and was confounded? In the meantime, let me conjure you, through the precious blood of our divine Redeemer, whose death we thus commemorate, to have mercy on yourselves, on your children, and on your country; to reject, with horror, all clandestine oaths which may be proposed to you. As for my part, it will be the pride of my life, and the greatest consolation which I can enjoy here below, should I be, in any degree, instrumental in preserving you from the machinations of dangerous and designing men."

A month after this manifesto, when the disorders of the country had increased considerably, on the 6th of May, lords Fingall, Gormanstown, Southwell, and Kenmare, sir Edward Bellew, forty-one catholic gentlemen and ecclesiastics, and the president of the college of Maynooth, signed their names to the following address, "To such of the deluded people now in rebellion against his majesty's government, in this kingdom, as profess the Roman catholic religion." "The undersigned Roman catholics of Ireland," says this document, "feel themselves earnestly called on, to remonstrate with such of the deluded people of that persuasion, as are now engaged in open rebellion against his majesty's government, on the wicked tendency and consequences of the conduct which they have embraced; they apprehend with equal horror and concern, that such deluded men, in addition to the crime committed against the allegiance which they owe to his majesty, have in some instances attempted to give to their designs a colour of zeal for the religion which they profess. The undersigned profess, equally with them, the Roman catholic religion. Some of them are bishops of that persuasion, others are heads of the leading families who profess that religion; and others are men of the same persuasion, who, by an honourable industry have, under the constitution now sought to be subverted, raised themselves to a situation, which affords them, in the most extensive sense, all the comforts of life. The undersigned

of each description concur in entreating such of the deluded, who have taken up arms against the established government, or entered into engagements tending to that effect, to return to their allegiance; and by relinquishing the treasonable plans in which they are engaged, to entitle themselves to that mercy, which their lawful governors anxiously wish to extend to them; a contrary conduct will inevitably subject them to loss of life and property, and expose their families to ignominy and beggary; whilst at the same time it will throw on their religion, of which they profess to be the advocates, the most indelible stain; on this point the unfortunately deluded will do well to consider whether the true interests and honour of the Roman catholic religion are likely to be most considered by the bishops of that persuasion, by the ancient families who profess that religion, and who have resisted every temptation to relinquish it; by men, who at once professing it, and submitting to the present constitution, have arrived at a state of affluence which gratifies every wish; or by a set of desperate and profligate men, availing themselves of the want of education and experience in those whom they seek to use as instruments for gratifying their own wicked and interested views. At all events, the undersigned feel themselves bound to rescue their names, and as far as in them lies, the religion which they profess, from the ignominy which each would incur, from an appearance of acquiescence in such criminal and irreligious conduct; and they hesitate not to declare, that the accomplishment of the views of the deluded of their persuasion, if effected, must be effected by the downfall of the clergy, of the ancient families, and respectable commercial men of the Roman catholic religion; the undersigned individuals of each of which description hereby publicly declare their determination to stand or fall with the present existing constitution."

Meanwhile government was pursuing its policy of coercion, and, now well aware by its spies of the extent of the conspiracy and of the names of the principal leaders, it was gradually watching the latter into acts and situations which gave it power over their persons, and at the same time increased its knowledge of the danger. The recently published correspondence of lord Castle-reagh, who during the rebellion acted in Mr. Pelham's office of secretary, has thrown some light on the difficulties and precau-

tions of the Irish government on the eve of the outburst. Their attention had, during the spring, been called especially to the central counties of Leinster and north Munster, where the insurrection was assuming a more formidable character than in the north. On the 3rd of April, the commander-in-chief issued the following notice to the inhabitants of the county of Kildare, and King's and Queen's counties. "Whereas his excellency the lord lieutenant in council has, in consequence of the daring acts and depredations committed in this county, ordered and directed, by his proclamation bearing date the 30th of March last, and by his particular orders thereon, that the military should use the most summary means to repress disturbances, and to recover all arms taken from the yeomanry and well-affected, and other concealed arms and ammunition; all the people concerned in taking or concealing these arms are required to give them up within ten days from the publication of this notice, which, if they do, they may be assured no violence whatever will be done to them or to their properties; but, if they do not, they are informed that the troops will be quartered in large bodies, to live at free quarters among them, and other very severe means be used to enforce obedience to this notice. And those who have knowledge where arms are concealed, are called upon to give information, which they may do in any private manner, to the nearest civil magistrate, or commanding officers of his majesty's forces, or of the yeomanry corps. Secrecy shall be observed with respect to them, and they shall be rewarded when their report is proved to be true. Should the deluded and evil-disposed among the people in this county still persevere in robbing, and murdering, and committing other acts of violent insubordination to the laws of their country, they are informed that the commander-in-chief will be obliged to have recourse to those powers with which he has been invested, to bring them to immediate punishment."

A variety of plans were, at this time, under consideration for the defence of Dublin, which shows how great was the alarm of the cabinet. A letter from major-general sir Charles Asgill, commanding in Kilkenny, to sir Ralph Abercrombie, dated on the 17th of April, shows us not only how little the threats of military execution availed, but how cruelly, and, we might almost say, uselessly they vexed the

country. "I have the honour to inform you," he says, "that the ten days' notice expires, in Queen's county, on Monday next; but I am sorry to observe, that no arms have as yet been brought in. Almost all the principal gentlemen have left the county since the assizes; and the few who remain, and with whom I have consulted, are of opinion that the robberies and murders have been committed by the lowest orders of the people, who have little to lose, and, of course, have no property nor subsistence for the soldiers to lay hold of; and it is strongly represented to me, that the soldiers, by living in free quarters, will possess themselves of the comforts and savings of the farmers, and it will be impossible for the officers commanding to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty, unless the gentlemen of the county, who are now absent, and who perhaps may know where the banditti reside, or can point them out, will return to the country, and attend with me and the other officers employed during the operation of the order. I submit to you, whether an indiscriminate attack on the whole of the inhabitants of any distant part would involve the innocent, and make fresh enemies to government. I earnestly request the favour of you to represent these circumstances to government, and to inform me in what manner it is your pleasure that I should proceed. The county of Kilkenny is quieter, and I have heard of but one enormity being committed within this fortnight in Queen's county."

In other parts the troops were more successful in obtaining arms, and in making arrests; but they were everywhere driving the populace to desperation by their outrages. Sir Ralph Abercromby spoke openly, and in severe terms, of the disgraceful irregularities and licentiousness of the army in Ireland, which, he declared, must end in "rendering it formidable to every one but the enemy," and he became disgusted with his own position. He obtained his recall, and was succeeded as commander-in-chief by general Lake, who received directions to pursue still more vigorous measures, and to do his work as quickly as possible, on account of the evil that might arise "to the discipline of the troops, from their being permitted for any *length of time* to live at free quarters." These directions were, perhaps, rendered more pressing by the fears now entertained of a new attempt at in-

vasion, and the knowledge of the extensive preparations in France. A paper of suggestions, dated on the 25th of April, shows that the government was now more on the alert than it had been at the time of the expedition to Bantry Bay. Among other things, it was recommended that, "to prevent the made-up provisions that may be at Waterford, Cork, and Limerick, for exportation, from being possessed by an enemy, the commanding officers in those districts should have orders to be furnished with weekly returns of such provisions as are in several towns. At Waterford, Ross, and Graignamanagh, are many boats, that are in the trade for lime, stone, and other articles, that pass up and down the Suir and Barrow rivers, and many proceed to Dublin by the canal. A list of the boats that each place can furnish should be kept by the commanding officer of that district. On the landing of an enemy (south of Waterford), a sufficient number of boats should be engaged, and the provisions immediately put on board, keeping the different properties in separate boats, which should move up the Barrow river, towards or to Dublin, as circumstances may require. At Cork, the provisions may be best disposed of in ships, and conveyed to the safest ports in Ireland or England. At Limerick, they may be conveyed by land to such parts as may be deemed the most secure. On the rivers Suir, Nore, and Barrow, are many flour-mills, that have large quantities of corn in store, and may supply either friend or foe. On an invasion (if in the south), all the flour that can, should be conveyed in boats up the Barrow, or by cars towards Dublin. If the enemy should penetrate far into the country, the mills should be prevented grinding such corn as may be left in store by breaking of the upper stones—as much corn as it was possible to remove having been previously done, to prevent an enemy being supplied with so necessary an article. On an enemy's landing, the mills should be guarded, and prevented from grinding more corn than will be sufficient to serve the inhabitants adjacent."

Most of the original leaders of the United Irishmen were, by this time, in prison or in exile, and it became a question of serious consideration with the Irish ministry, what course they should pursue towards them. The evidence against many of those under arrest would hardly have been sufficient in an ordinary court of law, and those who had

fled could only be touched in their property, and some of them were men of independent circumstances. A letter from the English minister, lord Grenville, addressed apparently to lord Castlereagh, and dated the ninth of May, informs us of the opinion of the ministry in England on this subject. After pointing out some legal precedents, in cases of high treason, and alluding to the difficulties of the case, lord Grenville proceeds to say:—"But, upon the whole, I have no doubt, that if stronger ground cannot be had, the report of a committee, stating the existence of a treasonable conspiracy, and charging individuals by name, as persons who appear to have been engaged in that conspiracy, and who have fled the country, would be sufficient ground for a bill of attainder, in default of surrender. Nor do I think this proceeding will be nugatory; because, first, you could thereby confiscate their property, and attain their blood in Ireland; whereas, no process of outlawry would stand against the allegation, even of the most trivial omission or error, supposing the criminals to return and offer themselves to trial, after the evidence is either dead or bought off. And, second, you might easily, and without the possibility of objection, add to such a bill a clause of the same nature with that in Atterbury's bill, by which all correspondence and intercourse between him and the king's subjects was absolutely prohibited. If this view of the subject is right, it remains to consider what is fit to be done in the case of the traitors who have been arrested, and are now in confinement, but against whom it may not be possible to bring such evidence of guilt as will suffice to convict them in the ordinary course of law. With respect to them, the decision is less pressing, because the suspension of the habeas corpus act allows you to detain them in custody, and no man can doubt that their cases are precisely those which the suspension act was intended to provide for. In the interval, it is possible that fresh evidence may be procured, that the measures taken for suppressing the rebellion may give more confidence to the witnesses, whom you already have, and, by removing from their minds the terror under which they now labour, may induce them to consent to be brought forward, or that the course of affairs may be such as to produce a more evident and unquestionable necessity for a parliamentary proceeding. If,

however, that necessity is conceived to exist already, and there are certainly strong grounds for that opinion, I conceive the whole question will then turn on a comparison of expediency, which it is hardly possible to decide but upon the spot. That a bill of pains and penalties, not going to life or limb, in cases where legal evidence is wanting (and that by the act of the criminal, or by the nature of the conspiracy), but when the guilt is manifest, and is of a nature which, if legally proved, would affect his life, that such bills are consonant to the principle of our constitution, is of itself undeniable; but it is, besides, established beyond dispute, by the precedent in Atterbury's case, which I think appears to have been extremely well considered, and conducted with great judgment and temper. But neither the principle nor the advantage of such a proceeding applies, except in the instances of one or two (or possibly three or four) leading conspirators, by whose punishment and removal from the means of doing mischief, the course of this conspiracy will be either totally stopped, or, at least, very greatly impeded; because no precedent or analogy would bear you out in applying this mode of proceeding to numerous bodies of men, and thus appearing to supersede the ordinary law and course of justice, not in individual cases, but in the general punishment of all treasons. Now I am hardly enough informed of the state of Ireland to judge whether there are any such individuals amongst the traitors, nor, if there are, whether they are among the prisoners. Perhaps lord Edward Fitzgerald and O'Connor may be of this description; but the former would be reached by the proceeding against fugitives; and, as the latter is to be tried here, it would be hardly possible to attain him on acquittal, if that should be the issue. Whether there are any one or two others, whose example would be sufficiently marked to operate, to any great degree, either to deter others, or to maim the conspiracy, you alone can judge; but, unless that is the case, I should certainly not advise the proceeding by bill against them; at least, not till the time arrives when you must decide between that course and the letting them be discharged from confinement, without trial or punishment of any kind."

Of the two persons more especially alluded to in lord Grenville's letter, Arthur

O'Connor was, as we have seen, in custody, but lord Edward Fitzgerald had absconded since the seizure of the executive committee at Oliver Bond's, on the 12th of March, and government appears at this moment to have been uncertain if he were in Ireland, or if he had escaped to the continent. A letter from lord Bulkeley to secretary Dundas, describing an interview between an United Irishman and a gentleman, whom he took for lord Edward, at the latter end of the month of April, gives us a curious insight into the views of the insurgents at that time. "On Sunday night," he says, "the 22nd of April, a gentleman, who was walking in one of the streets of Chester, was addressed by a man, meanly dressed, and apparently off a journey. His address was thus:—My lord Edward, I am glad to see you; we thought you had got safe to France. It struck the gentleman there might be a possibility of gaining some important information relative to the affairs of Ireland, by carrying on the deception. He, therefore, acknowledged he was lord Edward Fitzgerald, and his countryman. The man immediately griped the gentleman by the hand, and gave him a particular pressure upon the knuckle of the fore-finger, which the gentleman returned. The gentleman immediately inquired when he left Ireland; he was informed on Thursday last. The gentleman then put several questions to the man, as to the situation of matters; he gave only this answer: 'All is not well as we could wish. I am much fatigued to-night, but if you will be here to-morrow morning, exactly at ten o'clock, you will see me sitting on one of those steps;' pointing, at the same time, to steps which led up to a particular house, 'you will look hard at me, and I will follow you to the wall of the city, where we can converse without suspicion.' We parted for the night. The gentleman had a friend at the inn, to whom he communicated what had passed. It was resolved that his friend should pass as his cousin, and also be present at the conversation which was to take place next morning. In the morning, the stranger was punctual to his appointment; and, when they arrived at a part of the city wall convenient for conversation, the gentleman again put the same question as last night, and received the same answer. The gentleman then inquired how the military stood affected. The answer was, 'The militia are all our own, except a black sheep here

and there; but you know we can easily dispose of them. We have also gained over most of the Scotch fencible regiments, but we cannot make anything of the English regiments.' He then, without being asked the question, said, 'I doubt they are hurting the cause in the south; they have begun too soon. They are more cautious in the north, and still continue to pay their rents. It will yet,' he added, 'be some time before the general burst is made.' He also added, that they were playing the fool in Dublin, by being so premature. I then inquired where sir Watkin Wynne's regiment was. He told me they were gone to the south, and it was determined that not a man of that regiment should be in existence in the course of a few weeks, as they had done too much mischief in the north. I then inquired if he knew what the intentions of the French were. He told me that the last accounts were, as soon as their forces were assembled, and all ready, their intentions were to invade Ireland in three different places, viz., Belfast, the Shannon, and Londonderry. He said a regular correspondence was carried on with France. He said, also, that there was not a blacksmith in Dublin but was now busy in making pikes, &c. He added, 'If you please, my lord, I can go over to Dublin, and bring you the most exact information of everything in the course of four days. Give me only a letter signed by yourself, to any of your friends, and I'll perish in the attempt rather than fail.' I regretted much I was not acquainted with lord Edward's writing, otherwise the most complete intelligence might have been had. The man would not go over unless I wrote. Had I written, it must have produced a discovery, without having any good effect. I then consulted with my friend, who was present at the conversation, whether we should apprehend the man. Upon mature deliberation, we thought it better not; as we were convinced he would deny everything. I have, however, mentioned what passed to a gentleman, who is of opinion that it is of such consequence, that it ought to be transmitted to his majesty's ministers."

The report given by the nameless refugee, in the foregoing account, was perfectly true, as to the divisions which now existed among the United Irishmen. The executive in Dublin was hurrying things forwards too much for the more cautious chiefs in the north, and, even in the heart of the executive,

there were two contending opinions. One party, at the head of which were John and Henry Sheares, was for pursuing the plan of corrupting the militia and soldiery for some longer time, in order to make sure of their strength in this quarter. The other party was led by lord Edward Fitzgerald and Samuel Neilson, and they, preferring open violence to secret treachery, urged that the insurrection should be commenced at once. Their eagerness was no doubt occasioned by the dangers to which lord Edward himself was now exposed, and the fear of losing the only influential leader they now possessed; and as the name of a Fitzgerald weighed most in the south, it was there that all their efforts in exciting sedition were now strained. From the time this division took place, the two parties seem to have acted, in a some respects, independently of each other; and the two Sheares were so much opposed to what they considered a rash outbreak, that when Neilson was arrested on the 23rd of May, a letter from John Sheares was found on his person, in which he threatened that if the plan were not laid aside, he would himself give information of it to government. In this letter, John Sheares used the very remarkable words, "The scheme you have undertaken I view with horror, whether its effects be considered as relating to my imprisoned friends, the destruction of whose property and lives must be the consequence, even of your success, or as affecting Arthur O'Connor's existence, the precarious chance for which you thus cruelly lessen, or (what is superior to every other consideration) as ensuring the ruin of Ireland's freedom. In short, to be candid with you, the scheme is so totally destitute of any apology, even from the plea of folly or passion, that I cannot avoid attributing its origin to a worse cause, and nothing can convince me of the contrary, but your immediately foregoing so pernicious an enterprise. In these sentiments I am not singular, nor in the resolution which arises from them; and should you doubt me, you must purchase conviction at a very severe cost. My resolution, and that of my friends, is this, if you do not, by nine o'clock this evening, give us every necessary and sacred assurance that you will counteract and prevent the perpetration of this plot, against all that you ought to hold dear, notice of it shall be given to the government, without a moment's delay; for we do prefer that a few

misguided (not to say guilty) individuals should perish, than that every remaining hope of our country's success, and the lives of our most valuable friends, should be sacrificed by the accomplishment of a stupid, perhaps wicked undertaking."

From the tone of this letter we are, perhaps, justified in supposing that the plans of immediate insurrection, or at least that of commencing with an attack upon Dublin, were carried on by lord Edward Fitzgerald, Neilson, M'Cabe, and some others, independently of the executive committee. Yet, singularly enough, it was in a box in Sheares's house that the rough draft of the rebel proclamation was found, which was to have been issued at the moment of their expected success. We may, perhaps, however, explain this by supposing that the proclamation had been sent or given to Sheares for his approval, and that it had alarmed him, and given rise to the letter above alluded to. This proclamation is a curious memorial of the designs of the conspirators; it was worded as follows: * "Irishmen, your country is free, and you are about to be avenged. That vile government which has so long and so cruelly oppressed you, is no more. Some of its most atrocious monsters have already paid the forfeit of their lives, and the rest are in our hands. The national flag, *the sacred green*, is at this moment flying over the ruins of despotism; and that capital which, a few hours past, had witnessed the debauchery, the plots, and the crimes of your tyrants, is now the citadel of triumphant patriotism *and virtue*. Arise, then, united sons of Ireland; arise like a great and powerful people, determined to be free—or die. Arm yourselves by every means in your power, and rush like lions on your foes. Consider, that for every enemy you disarm, you arm a friend, and thus become doubly powerful. In the cause of liberty, inaction is cowardice—and the coward shall forfeit the property he has not the courage to protect. Let his arms be seized, and transferred to those gallant *spirits* who want and will use them. Yes, Irishmen, we swear by that eternal justice, in whose cause you fight, that the brave patriot who survives the present glorious struggle, and the family of him who has fallen, or shall hereafter fall in it, shall

* The paper was a rough copy, with alterations and erasures; it is given here as it appears to have been corrected, the erasures being omitted. The words in italics were underlined in the original.

receive from the hands of a grateful nation an ample recompense, out of that property which the crimes of our enemies have forfeited into its hands; and his name shall be inscribed on the great national record of Irish revolution, as a glorious example to all posterity; *but we likewise swear to punish robbery with death and infamy.* We also swear, that we will never sheath the sword until every being in the country is restored to those equal rights which the God of nature has given to all men—until an order of things shall be established, in which no superiority shall be acknowledged among the citizens of Erin, but that of virtue and talent. As for those degenerate wretches who turn their swords against their native country, the national vengeance awaits them. Let them find no quarter, unless they shall prove their repentance by *speedily* exchanging the standard of slavery for that of freedom, under which their former errors may be buried, and they may share the glory and advantages that are due to the patriot bands of Ireland. Many of the military feel the love of liberty glow within their breast, and have joined the national standard. Receive with open arms such as shall follow so glorious an example: they can render signal service to the course of freedom, and shall be rewarded according to their deserts. But, for the wretch who turns his sword against his native country, let the national vengeance be visited on him; let him find no quarter. Two other crimes demand [this phrase was left unfinished.] Rouse all the energies of your souls; call forth all the merits and abilities which a vicious government consigned to obscurity; and, under the conduct of your chosen leaders, march with a steady step to victory. Heed not the glare of hired soldiery, or *aristocratic yeomanry*; they cannot stand the vigorous shock of freedom. Their trappings and their arms will soon be yours; and the detested government of England, to which we vow eternal hatred, shall learn that the treasures it exhausts on its accoutred slaves, for the purpose of butchering Irishmen, shall but further enable us to turn their swords on its devoted head. Attack them in every direction, by day and by night; avail yourselves of the natural advantages of your country, which are innumerable, *and with which you are better acquainted than they.* Where you cannot oppose them in full force, constantly harass their rear and their

flanks; cut off their provisions and magazines, and prevent them, as much as possible, from uniting their forces: let whatever moments you cannot devote to fighting for your country, be passed in learning how to fight for it; or preparing the means of war, for war. War alone must occupy every mind and every hand in Ireland, until its long oppressed soil be purged of all its enemies. Vengeance, Irishmen! vengeance on your oppressors! Remember what thousands of your dearest friends have perished by their *merciless orders.* Remember their burnings—their rackings—their torturings—their military massacres—and their legal murders. *Remember Orr.*”

It is not to be wondered at if the divisions thus reigning in the executive body added to the feelings of dissatisfaction already entertained by the northern unionists, and cooled their zeal. The most ardent of the patriots of Ulster appear to have been averse to an insurrection before the arrival of the French. The minutes of committee meetings afterwards published by the secret committee of the house of commons exhibit these sentiments in a strong light. At a provincial meeting at Armagh on the 10th of May, the reporter stated that, “the executive committee of Dublin was changed three times in ten days, in order to get warm patriots and men of abilities who would lay a plan for the people to act upon. They had now laid a plan to take Dublin, Chapelizod, and the camp, and to seize on the executive government; he would not, however, say that it would be put into execution, but he was sure that nothing but the cowardice of the people would stop it at the moment of action, which he doubted would be the case.” Although the Ulster members at this meeting seem to have been backward in their promises of a military demonstration, they proceeded to elect members to represent the respective counties in the national assembly, or parliament, which was to meet on the overthrow of the English government; these were, “a silversmith for Armagh, a presbyterian clergyman for Tyrone, a probationer presbyterian clergyman from Donegal, a farmer for Louth, an adjutant-general for Derry, a cloth merchant for Antrim, and a farmer for Monaghan.” Two days after, a meeting of colonels was held, but they did “no particular business.” Another provincial meeting was held at Armagh on the 29th of May, at which it was re-

ported, "that a plan of insurrection was in contemplation by the national executive; two members were deputed from the Ulster executive to form the said plan, in conjunction with certain deputies from the other provincial executive; the plan was for Dublin to rise and to seize on the government, and the mail coaches were to be burned for a signal for the whole kingdom to act. These delegates returned and reported the same to the Ulster executive; the reporter complained that the Ulster executive had taken no measures to put the people in readiness to act; every application had been made to the executive to call the adjutant-generals together, but without effect; they were required also to summon the provincial delegates together to put the respective counties in a state ready to act, and that they did not obey; he thought they completely betrayed the people both of Leinster and Ulster, and he thought it the duty of the present committee to denounce and vote them out of office, and to take some speedy and vigorous measures to second the efforts of the people in the upper counties; they were accordingly voted out of office. The reporter then took a list of all the military through the province, and their places of quarters, as nearly as he could ascertain; he then asked the different delegates if they thought they could disarm the military in their respective counties; Derry, Donegal, and Louth said they could; Down, Antrim, and Armagh, and the upper half of the county of Tyrone, thought they could not. He then asked them individually, if they thought the people they represented would act, and they all said they would, except Down. Its delegate observed, that he could not exactly answer whether it would or not, but he would try and ascertain it by taking the sense of the adjutant-general and colonels." At the time of this consultation, the rebellion had already broken out in the south, and several encounters had taken place with the king's troops. Yet two days afterwards, at a meeting of colonels at Saintfield, although a meeting had been held at which they "generally determined to act," it was stated that "several messages had passed between the different colonels as to this resolution; a few days after this an adjutant-general resigned, and at a meeting where twenty-three colonels were assembled, only two resolved for action, and the other twenty-one declared they would not act on any plan but on the invasion of the French,

or on the success of the efforts of the insurgents about Dublin."

All things, however, seemed now combining to hurry the unfortunate populace into that outbreak for which they paid with so much of their blood. The government troops literally devastated the country with fire and sword. If arms were found concealed in a house, or if a meeting of members of the union was known or suspected to have been held in it, or if the inmate was even suspected of having shared in any act of disaffection, it was immediately burnt to the ground with whatever it contained that the soldiery did not consider worth plundering; women and children were turned adrift, often insulted and ill treated, and cases of the most wanton cruelty, extending to mutilation and death, were of but too frequent occurrence. Men were seized on the slightest suspicion, often on the mere word of a personal enemy, and scourged, picqueted, or subjected to other torture, in order to force them to confessions, and their houses and families were meanwhile treated as if they were known traitors. A man of the name of Wright, a teacher of languages, as it appears, was seized at Clonmel by order of the high sheriff of Tipperary; his only crime was the fact of his being known to have in his possession a letter in French, which was construed into a proof that he was carrying on a traitorous correspondence with the enemies of his country; the magistrate caused five hundred lashes to be inflicted on him in the severest manner, and confined him several days without permitting his wounds to be dressed, so that his recovery was almost a miracle. It appears that his persecutors were not able to read French, for when the letter was subsequently examined, it was found to be of the most innocent character, and there was no reason to suspect Wright of having taken any part in political matters. After the rebellion was suppressed, he brought an action against the magistrate, and recovered heavy damages, which were paid by government. So many persons, who had been treated with equal injustice, came forward to follow his example, that government was obliged to get an act of indemnity passed for all errors committed by magistrates in their zeal for the public service.

The population was further exasperated by the insults with which those who professed loyalty were encouraged in treating all whom they chose to consider as otherwise. Short hair was considered a badge of

revolutionary principles, and those who wore it were insulted and outraged in the streets, under the name of *croppies*, and the air of an orangist song, entitled "Croppies, lie down," was the usual burthen of the songs in which the loyalists ridiculed and insulted their opponents. They often seized upon persons whom they had marked as the objects of their outrage, and, besides other insults, fixed pitched caps on their heads, which could not be taken off without tearing the hair up by the roots and seriously lacerating the scalp. The insurgents not only retaliated by treating soldiers and others who fell into their hands in the same manner, but they seized some of the more obnoxious of their opponents, cut their hair close, and then set them at liberty, liable to become objects of similar outrage to their own party, who, when they met with what they called a "croppy," seldom troubled themselves to examine whether he was what they imagined him to be or not. The wearing of green on their persons was as bad as wearing the hair short, for it was a proscribed colour, and the least fragment of

* The following example of these revolutionary songs is selected because it gives a full account of the principles which the United Irishmen professed among themselves:—

PLANT, PLANT THE TREE.

Tune—Daffy hi down dilly.

See, Erin's sons, yon rising beam
The eastern hills adorning,
Now freedom's sun begins to gleam,
And break a glorious morning;
Despotic sway from France is chas'd,
And church delusion's vanish'd
Our isle shall never be disgrac'd
If these dread fiends were banish'd.

Plant, plant the tree, fair freedom's tree,
Midst danger, wounds and slaughter;
Erin's green fields its soil shall be,
Her tyrant's blood its water.

They come; they come; see myriads come
Of Frenchmen to relieve us:
Seize, seize the pike, beat, beat the drum,
Then come, my friends, to save us;
Whilst trembling despots fly this land
To shun impending danger,
We stretch forth our fraternal hand,
To hail each welcome stranger.

Plant, plant the tree, etc.

That castle which through ages past
For despots was appointed,
You sovereign people, claim at last,
For you're the Lord's anointed:
The useless baubles that adorn'd
Our late vice-royal ninnies,
Now to the crucible return'd,
Produce you useful guineas.

Plant, plant the tree, etc.

this colour in a lady's dress exposed her to every kind of annoyance. Women were treated with wanton indecency in the open streets, to see if the obnoxious colour appeared even in their petticoats.

On the other hand, the leaders of the united Irishmen who were still at large did all they could to encourage and exasperate their followers. Revolutionary agents, missionaries of sedition, were running about the country in all directions; extraordinary reports were set forth of the preparations of the orangemen to massacre all the Irish, of the measures they were taking for resistance, and of the great promises of the French; and they replied to the songs and epigrams of the loyalists by songs equally violent and bitter.* The feelings of the Irish were thus worked up to a pitch at which it would be at any time difficult to restrain them, much more now when they were made desperate by a violent persecution, and when the cool-headed leaders who had hitherto directed the union were taken from them, and those who remained were powerful to urge them on, but impotent to restrain.

Those nicknames, marquis, lord, and earl,
That set the crowd a gazing,
We prize as hogs esteem a pearl,
Their patents set a blazing;
No more they'll vote away our wealth,
To please a king or queen, sirs;
But gladly pack away by stealth,
Or taste the guillotine, sirs.

Plant, plant the tree, etc.

Our commons too, who say so sooth
They represent the nation,
Shall scamper east, west, north, and south,
Or feel our indignation:
The speaker's mace to current coin
We presently will alter,
For ribands lately thought so fine
We'll fit each with a halter.

Plant, plant the tree, etc.

No more our tithes we'll grumbling throw
To those who on us trample,
But where he wills each man shall go,
To reason's purest temple;
Erin go bragh, each choir shall sing
The heart oppress'd to cheer, sirs;
Not those curs'd sounds, "God save the King,"
Discordant grate our ears, sirs.

Plant, plant the tree, etc.

The nation's bank has been put up
To swindling most completely.
To forgeries it e'en can stoop
On guinea notes so neatly;
And when it gets your solid coin,
The custom-house marauder
Will forgery in red letters join
To the bank of Townly Lawder.

Plant, plant the tree, etc.

One of the Irish opposition papers gave the following as a "receipt to make a rebel." "Take a loyal subject, uninfluenced by title, place, or pension; *burn* his house over his head; let the soldiery exercise every species of insult and barbarity towards his helpless family, and march away with the plunder of every part of his property they choose to save from the flames." There is too much evidence that multitudes of rebels were made in this way, and we may cite the example of the celebrated rebel leader, Holt, as told by himself. It is possible that he tells the story in his own favour, but it certainly was the story of many who figured in the insurgent ranks. An individual story is often the best exemplification of history.

Joseph Holt held a respectable position in the county of Wicklow, and does not appear to have been suspected of any disaffection to the existing government. He says that he took no interest in the political disputes that were going on. It was a misfortune attendant on the sort of dragooning under which Ireland then suffered, that political accusations were constantly adopted as the means of revenging personal animosities. Holt had given offence to one of the petty functionaries of the neighbourhood, by pressing him for money which he unjustly withheld. He tells us that he himself, at this time, "was wood-ranger, sales-master, and general manager in Ballycorry, for Mr. Tottenham, as well as for Mr. Miles, and Bryan Byrne, of Ballynabarney and Kura-kea, and my income from all these situations enabled me to support my family in a decent comfortable manner. I was also billet-master of the army, and billeted a part of the Antrim militia in the houses of the neighbourhood, and a serjeant and his wife in my own house, where I had a spare bed. It was well for me I did so, as will soon appear. I had that year made great exertions to finish my road work, presented at the spring assizes, which I had accomplished, and was now cutting my turf, that I might have my summer work in a forward state, little dreaming of politics or any other thing than my lawful affairs, or of the destiny that awaited me, or

the enterprises I should soon be called on to undertake. As I was alert and active I was up with the lark, and about my business, recollecting the old proverbs, 'He that would thrive should rise at five,' and 'The early bird gets the worm.' Though, by the latter rule, it would have been more prudent for the worm not to have been out so early, whatever it might have been for the bird. But it was fortunate for me to be out, or — [the man he had offended, as stated above] would have settled me; however, whether or not, my habit was to rise early. One morning, about half-past five, Mr. —, before-mentioned, of road-money memory, came to my house with a party of the Fermanagh militia, and calling my wife out, inquired where I was? She told him I was cutting turf, and he went away. He returned again about twelve o'clock, made the same inquiry, and went away. I returned home to dinner, and having heard of the visits of —, I began to suspect he meant me no good, and yet I could not imagine any mischief he could do me, as I knew there was no guilt in me. While I was musing about the matter, the serjeant's wife came into the room much excited, and said to me, 'God help you, poor man, your life is in danger.' I rose up and asked her what she meant. She said, 'Your house is condemned, and I am ordered out of it, why I do not know.' I went to the door, and from thence saw Mr. —, with a party of soldiers, in the direction of the turf bog where I had been employed. I recollected his threat of revenge, and judging of his malicious disposition from his burning his own tenants' cabins, and shooting the man, as I have before related, I felt that innocence would be no protection against him, and that if he got me in his power he would assuredly murder me. I was so strongly impressed with this belief, and also thought that if any of the friends or connexions of the many villains I had been the means of bringing to justice, swore falsely against me that I was a rebel, it would be of little avail that I was innocent, especially if I was once in his power. I therefore thought it most

Those lawyers who with face of brass,
And wigs replete with learning,
Whose far-fetched, quibbling quirks surpass
Republicans' discerning;
For them, to ancient forms be stanch,
'Twill suit such worthy fellows,
In justice spare one legal branch,
I mean, reserve the gallows.

Plant, plant the tree, etc.

And when th' all-glorious work is done,
Rejoice with one another;
To plough-shares beat the sword and gun,
Now ev'ry man's your brother;
Detested wars shall ever cease
In kind fraternization,
All will be harmony and peace,
And the whole world one nation.

Plant, plant the tree, etc.

prudent to get out of the fangs of this wolf, and I took my sword-cane, a brace of pistols, and some money. Hastily bidding good bye to my wife, my son, and daughter, I left my home.

"I crossed Vartrey river* and proceeded to White Rock, formerly occupied by Mr. Edwards, at this time in the possession of Mr. James M'Clatchy, sub-sheriff of Wicklow, where I sat down, meditating on my situation, and not knowing what to think or what step to take next, hardly believing it possible that Mr. — would proceed to extremities so far as to injure my family or property, though he might have taken a personal revenge upon me. How soon was I undeceived! About seven o'clock in the evening, like Lot's wife, I looked back in the direction of my home, where I had left all that was dear to my heart, my darling wife and children, and my neat, well-ordered, and comfortable habitation, where I had enjoyed so much happiness, and had hoped to pass all my days in peace and quietness. I saw it in flames! What were my feelings, I leave the reader to imagine; it is impossible for me to describe them; it was more than man could bear. I did not know the extent of the infliction; my property was destroyed, my wife and children houseless and destitute, that I knew; perhaps, too, they had been murdered. I roused myself from brooding over my misfortunes, and vowed revenge, and I made the vow in the fulness of my wrath: gracious God! forgive me, I knew not what I did. I was wild with grief, and agitated by the strongest feelings of detestation and hatred against the monster who had, as I believed, from malice, brought such miseries upon a wife and children that were a thousand times dearer to me than my own existence. I pictured to myself a thousand evils which had befallen or would happen to them, and the contemplation drove me to madness. Like a fury I proceeded towards the Devil's

* The Vartrey is a mountain stream, the course of which lies for about three miles from Roundwood over a rocky and gravelly bed, through open and easy banks, until its waters are precipitated about one hundred feet with great force and fury into the Devil's Glen, forming a picturesque and irregular cascade.

† "The Devil's Glen," says the writer of *Angling Excursions in Ireland* (1824), "is a scene of uncommon wildness and beauty, and which amply repaid the curiosity that led us to it. The glen is about an English mile in length, and narrow; an excellent road has been perfected along the side of the stream by the proprietor of that side of the glen, Mr. Tottenham, of Ballycorry. The mountains on

Glen, a name very appropriate to my frame of mind. On the way I was soon joined by my wife, who told me that — said, that he was little satisfied with burning my house, and that he wished to have me in the flames. She gave me an account of the transaction. I had been accused of being a United Irishman, and accusation was quite enough in the mind of a tyrant. I was out at five in the morning on a summer's day minding my business, which was proof of my guilt. I did not allow myself to be tamely butchered, or trust myself to his tender mercies, and, therefore, I must be guilty, and he proceeded to burn my house. The soldiers first broke open my desk, and took away the money and other valuable things that it contained; then loaded themselves with my provisions, of which I had good store in beef, bacon, hams, &c., and turned my poor wife and children adrift in the world without a roof to shelter them, exposed to the merciless or wanton atrocity of the excited soldiery. One Nailor, whom I had made by a device pay a sum of money that he owed to Edward Brady, of Ballynacor, vowed revenge against me, and the country being under martial law, this miscreant swore against me that I was a United Irishman, which was quite sufficient to doom me to death, and my property to destruction without farther investigation.

"On the 10th of May, 1798, I entered the Devil's Glen,† where were collected a few unfortunate persecuted creatures like myself, and we recounted to each other our misfortunes and our wretched fate. We passed the night in a cave. On the 11th, Edward Saul, an old man, and a friend of mine, came to look for me, and brought me some refreshment. At least one-third of the people in the glen were protestants, and loyal men, if they had not been driven into rebellion by oppression, and thus added to the ranks of revolt. Much conversation

both sides rise high and almost perpendicular, and exhibit as do the mountains at Luggelaw, the opposites of bare sterility and rich plantation, the one clothed to the very top in the various and beautiful tints of the oak, fir, larch, birch, holly, &c. broken by masses of grey rock, here and there protruding boldly through the surrounding foliage. A part of this wood suffered much immediately after the rebellion of 1798, to which sad period there is but too much reference by objects and circumstances throughout this county. It formed the retreat of some of the dispersed insurgents, whom it was found necessary to burn out, and the black and scorched stumps of the trees and underwood exhibit to this day a memorial of the event."

passed between us all on the terrific aspect of the times. I now found it difficult to discover who had escaped taking the oath of a United Irishman. It must have been diabolic influence which first instilled the idea of that oath into the heart of man; but I trust the barbarous treatment I had received, and the unfortunate circumstances in which I was placed, will be some apology for my entering into the business, and for the excitement and irritation produced in my mind, as well as the inevitable destruction which awaited me if I had not fled from my persecutors—and having fled, I was in the meshes of the rebellion. By taking the oath I could not recede, for I should then certainly perish, by not having a friend on either side; besides I had taken an oath, from which no power could absolve or free me. I had, in short, no alternative; I might escape by continuing a rebel to my king, but certain destruction followed my return to the quarters of the military. I write from no disgust or bigotry against any sect or people, but I will not spare to mention and describe the cruelties and atrocities I saw committed. I write from my own knowledge, and not from hearsay or the information of others. The night of the 12th of May, I retired to the cave in a rock of the Devil's Glen; a young man named John Arundel was my companion. Early the next day my kind friend Edward Saul, brought me provisions. Refreshed by them, I walked out, and was anxious to hear the opinions and feelings of the people in the glen. I had no account of my dear wife and children. Loaded with sorrow, and vexed with the spirit of revenge, I brooded over my contemplated vengeance, turning in my mind how it might be best accomplished. Various were the schemes I planned, but they vanished from my mind for want of means to execute them; at length I determined to let events unravel themselves. 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

"Like most Irishmen in despair, Arundel and myself determined to fly to whiskey to raise our spirits. We set off for Ballinalea, a small village about a mile distant from the glen, crossed Ashford bridge, and entered the house of Thomas Kavanagh. His wife, who knew me, said 'My dear Mr. Holt, I pity your misfortunes, and will send you support for a year if I can do it with safety; I have a good heart to you, and so has Tom.' We drank freely, which only served

to aggravate my mind, by bringing to my recollection my altered circumstances and my family's distress. Mrs. Kavanagh came running into the room we were in, saying, 'You will be taken, for here comes Marks and Chapman.' 'Are there but two?' said I. 'That's all,' she replied. 'Then I will take them,' said I. We then walked towards them, and accosted them. 'Do you want me?' I asked. 'No, sir,' was the answer. 'You lie, you cowards; I know you came after me, but have not courage to attempt to fulfil your errand. Attempt it, and I'll soon send you both to eternity.'

"They walked off, and we entered the glen. The drink now began to operate; it kindled my affections, and deprived me of my prudence and caution; I determined to set out in quest of my poor persecuted family. I borrowed a musket from one of my unfortunate comrades, and a few rounds of ball cartridge, prepared my pistols, and set off for Mullinaveig, but could obtain no tidings of *my care*. There were several of the militia quartered at Mr. Price's, and it happened just as I arrived at the ruins of my late happy dwelling four of them were passing from Roundwood to Mr. Price's. I was so exasperated by the prospect before me, and the desolation I saw, and knowing they were all my sworn enemies, that alone, as I was, I fired upon them, which made them hasten their march into double quick time, and when they reached their quarters, they got under arms. I walked to a neighbour's house, from whom I learned that the army had consumed all my substance, but that my wife and children were well. This was my first effort, as a military commander; I detached myself, the only being then under my command, to reconnoitre and gain information, and having attacked and routed a party of the enemy, and alarmed their out-posts, retreated in good order to head-quarters, much to the satisfaction of the commander-in-chief of my hundred men, which the four militia-men's fears had placed under my orders, but which really was but my poor weary, wretched, and sorrowful self.

"There were now about sixty unfortunates assembled in the glen; but persecution and oppression daily increased our numbers. The new comers brought us intelligence of the melancholy state of affairs. Our situation was not only forlorn and miserable, but dangerous. There were with us several persons whom I considered

to be spies, and we were liable to be visited by the military and yeomanry, and also to be starved; it therefore became necessary to consider what we must do. I called a council and proposed to move, but I found the majority against me; they were residents of the neighbourhood, and refused to leave the glen. I had determined not to stay, and therefore took my departure, and without intending or hardly knowing what I was about, moved towards the ruins of my old dwelling, where my heart and affections were, although there was nothing there to respond to my feelings. I got as far as the grouse house at Luggelaw mountain, where, fatigued and weary, I threw myself on the grass and slept soundly for some hours. Early next morning I arose, and looking towards the glen, I saw it in a conflagration. It had been visited by the destroyers shortly after I had left it, guided by the spies I had suspected. On my knees I gave thanks to God for my escape, and felt refreshed, and strengthened, by this great and striking proof of His merciful interposition. I proceeded on, without design, and without object, not knowing where to go or what to do. At length, seeing a smoke rising from a glen, I crossed over towards it; and after proceeding a short distance, I found about seventy persons collected together cooking some fresh beef. They gave me a hearty welcome, and asked me to partake of their meal, which hunger had compelled them to make where they could find it. I was equally famished, for I had not tasted any food for twenty-four hours. A curious looking little fellow was the commander-in-chief of this party. Him they dignified with the title of colonel Mac Mahon, and they seemed to adore him; he appeared as a little king among them. Mac Mahon shortly after proposed to attack a house near Rathfarnham, where he said there was a great deal of money—a scheme not at all to my taste, and I accordingly declined having anything to do with it, observing that I was no robber, and did not approve of such practices. The colonel

wanted to have me tried as a spy, when he found me not inclined to burglary; but there were some among them who knew me well, and I escaped this danger. I stopped with them from Thursday to Saturday, when I suggested that we were not altogether safe in that place, and that it would be prudent to remove to a more elevated part of the country, where we should be more secure from surprise. The great majority agreed with me, but Mac Mahon said I might go alone, for none of them should stir. I answered, 'As to that every man has the exercise of his free will. I will not stay here, for I am sure it is not safe quarters.' With lively emotion I leaped over a small brook, saying, 'My boys, any of you who wish to save your lives, come with me.' There were one hundred and eighteen at this time, of whom one hundred and sixteen followed me, leaving Mac Mahon with two men; and these that followed resolved to obey me as their leader. This was a remarkable day with me; hitherto I had been a forlorn unhappy wanderer without an object, farther than to escape from my persecutors. I now became the leader of a band of men, and I felt myself called upon to provide for their safety and support. They were altogether undisciplined and disorderly, but they declared themselves ready to obey my orders and to submit to such instructions and directions as I should give them. I was uninstructed myself, or nearly so, in the art of war and military discipline, but my necessity drove me on the resources of my own mind; so I began to consider what would be my best plan of operations. Extensive as the rebellion was, the planners and schemers had no system of co-operation in the different counties: every one, as far as I can judge, was left to do the best he could. I considered that my plan was to keep to the mountains and difficult parts of the country, and to attack only such parties as I could get into a disadvantageous situation; to surprise small parties, and harass the enemy by sudden attacks, where they were unprepared and kept a careless lookout."

THE HISTORY OF IRELAND.

BOOK IX.

THE REBELLION AND THE UNION.

CHAPTER I.

ADVENTURES AND ARREST OF LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD.



PREPARATIONS for the insurrection were now directed entirely by lord Edward Fitzgerald, who was looked upon by the United Irishmen as their military commander-in-chief, assisted by Neilson and M'Cabe. While most people, both in Ireland and England, imagined that he had made his escape abroad, the young nobleman had remained at Dublin, attending secret meetings, and arranging the various ramifications of a conspiracy which was intended to burst upon the government like a thunderbolt. The government had, however, its private intelligence, both of the designs of the conspirators, and of the presence of lord Edward in Ireland, although his hiding-place long escaped their searches. His adventures during this period, as related by those of his friends who were in the secret, savour almost of romance.

Lord Edward was on his way to the meeting at Bond's, on the twelfth of March, when he received warning of the danger, and, as a warrant was immediately afterwards issued against him, he was obliged to entrust his safety to the fidelity of a few of his most tried friends. He was concealed

for two or three days by an active United Irishman, Mr. Lawless, and then, on the Thursday following the arrest of the executive committee, he was taken in disguise by Mr. Lawless to a retired house on the banks of the canal, belonging to a widow lady, who consented to receive him, and in a situation so near the metropolis that, when it was thought necessary to act openly, he could show himself without delay. The name lord Edward went by, while at the house of the widow on the banks of the canal, was Jameson, and an old and faithful maid-servant of the family was the only person allowed to wait upon him. He had not, however, been more than two days in the house, when an accident occurred that made the secret known to the whole family. A pair of his boots having been left outside his door to be cleaned, the man-servant to whom they had been given for that purpose, told his mistress afterwards, that he knew "who the gentleman up stairs was; but that she need not fear, for he would die to save him." He then showed her lord Edward's name, written at full length, in one of the boots. The fugitive conspirator continued to remain in this unsuspected retreat near a month, and as it was feared that, to one accustomed to exercise, confinement

might prove injurious, he used to walk out, most nights, along the banks of the canal, accompanied generally by a child, who became a great favourite of his, and whom it was his amusement sometimes to frighten, by jumping into the boats that were half-sunk in the reservoir, or basin, of the canal; so light-hearted, indeed, and imprudent, was he at times, that his hostess, who, during his absence on these walks, was kept in a constant state of anxiety and suspense, used often to hear him at a considerable distance laughing with his young companion, and more than once went out to meet them, and try to impress upon him the necessity of more caution. After he had remained in this retreat for about a month, a circumstance occurred which caused some fears for his safety. During the absence, one day, of the lady of the house, the maid-servant came in alarm to tell him that she had just seen a guard of soldiers, with fixed bayonets, pass on the other side of the canal. Lord Edward also had observed a man he knew to be a police officer looking up earnestly at the building. The maid caused him instantly to put on a lady's night dress, and get into bed; then, darkening the room as for a person indisposed, she placed a table with medicine bottles upon it, beside the bed. In this situation he remained for two hours, but neither policeman nor soldiers again made their appearance; and the scene served but as a subject of mirth for the evening. It excited, however, some fears; even his own sense of security was disturbed by it, and his friends thought it most prudent that he should remove to Dublin, where he might be concealed for some days in the house of a respectable feather merchant, named Murphy, in Thomas-street. He was again accompanied by his friend Lawless to his new retreat, having wrapped himself in a countryman's great coat, and in order the more completely to disguise him, wearing a pig-tailed wig. During the fortnight he remained here, he lived much the same sort of life as at the widow's, walking out often at night, along with his host, by the canal, and receiving the visits of two or three persons in whom he placed especial confidence. As it was now more than a month since he had seen any of his family, he could no longer restrain his impatience for an interview with them; but, insisting that Mr. Murphy should dress him in woman's clothes, went attended by his host, in that disguise, to Denzille-street. The

surprise, however, had nearly proved fatal to lady Edward. Some friend being with her at the moment, the servant came to say that there was a lady in the parlour waiting to see her; and on lady Edward discovering who it was, and that he meant to remain till next night, her alarm at his danger, and her anxiety about his return brought on premature confinement, and her second daughter, Lucy, was then born. From the house of Mr. Murphy, his lordship, at the end of a fortnight, was removed to Mr. Cormick's, another feather merchant in the same street; and, between this and the residence of Mr. Moore, a few doors distant, he contrived to pass his time safe from detection till the first week in May.

It was about this time that the resolution was finally taken to prepare for a general rising before the end of the month, and intelligence of the design was transmitted to the leaders of the United Irishmen, through all parts of the kingdom, so that the news of the risings of the respective districts should reach Dublin on the day it broke out there. The younger Sheares, who was now one of the most active members of the Leinster executive, proceeded early in May to Cork, to lay the train for explosion in the south. So many of the militia had now been corrupted by the exertions of the Sheareses, and others, that early in May a conference, on the subject of rising, is understood to have been held by Lawless with a meeting of delegates from almost all the militias in Ireland. By the plan of operations for Leinster, where lord Edward was to raise his standard, it was arranged that the forces of the three counties, Dublin, Wicklow, and Kildare, should co-operate in an advance upon the capital, taking by surprise the camp at Loughlinstown, and the artillery at Chapelizod, and crowning their enterprise by the seizure of the lord lieutenant and the other members of the government in Dublin. As it was now, however, known that the pursuit of lord Edward was becoming every day more active and eager, his friends felt the necessity of having him removed to some fitter place of concealment, and as none offered that seemed to combine so many advantages, both of security and comfort, as his former asylum at the widow's, to that lady's house he was again conveyed. Lord Edward's conductors, Messrs. M'Cormick and Lawless, experienced considerable alarm on the way, having heard

voices behind as they came along the canal from Thomas-street, which appeared to them like those of persons eagerly in pursuit. In their anxiety, they persuaded his lordship to lay himself down in a ditch by the roadside, till these people (who after all proved to be only labourers returning from work) should have passed by; and the plight in which, after being covered up to the chin in mud, he made his reappearance among his old friends, was to himself a source of much amusement.

Meanwhile captain Armstrong, the informer, had given full information of the designs of the conspirators to the government, which was now aware of their desperate project to seize the camp at Loughlinstown, the artillery at Chapelizod, and the castle of Dublin in one night. On the 11th of May, they issued a proclamation, offering a reward of a thousand pounds for the apprehension of lord Edward Fitzgerald. His friends were now greatly alarmed, and they saw no hope of safety but in open rebellion. For the purpose of concerting measures with his colleagues, the presence of lord Edward himself was considered necessary in the capital, during the week previous to the great event, and he was accordingly, about the 13th, removed to Dublin, leaving his hostess under the impression that he went but to attend some of the ordinary meetings of the conspirators. In taking leave of her he spoke with his usual cheerfulness, saying that as soon as these meetings were over he would return. A night or two after leaving the widow's, it appears that he rode, attended only by Neilson, to reconnoitre the line of advance on the Kildare side, to Dublin—the route marked out on one of the papers found upon him when arrested—and he was for some time stopped and questioned by the patrol at Palmerstown. Being well disguised, however, and representing himself to be a doctor on his way to a dying patient, his companion and he were suffered to proceed on their way. It was thought advisable, as a means of baffling pursuit, that he should not remain more than a night or two in any one place; and, among other retreats contemplated for him, application had been made, near a week before, to his former host Murphy, who consented willingly to receive him. Immediately after, however, appeared the proclamation offering a reward for his apprehension, which so much alarmed Murphy that he repented of

his offer, and would most gladly have retracted it had he but known how to communicate with the persons to whom he had pledged himself. On the 17th, Ascension Thursday, he had been led to expect his noble guest would be with him, but owing to some circumstance or other, he did not then make his appearance.

It appears that there were traitors even among those admitted to at least a semi-confidence by the leaders of the conspiracy now hanging over Ireland, and government was informed of some of lord Edward's movements, if they had not yet been able to discover the place of his concealment. On the morning of the 17th, information was conveyed to major Sirr that a party of persons supposed to be lord Edward Fitzgerald's body-guard, would be on their way from Thomas-street to Usher's-island, at a certain hour that night. Major Sirr took with him a sufficient number of assistants for his purpose, and, accompanied also by Messrs. Ryan and Emerson, he proceeded, at the proper time, to the quarter pointed out, and there being two different ways, either Watling-street or Dirty-lane, by which the expected party might come, he divided his force so as to intercept them by either road. A similar plan was adopted by lord Edward's escort, so that in each of these two streets a conflict took place, and major Sirr himself, who had posted himself with his party in Dirty-lane, fell down in the struggle, and narrowly escaped with his life. Lord Edward was carried off by his friends in safety, but his active agent M'Cabe was captured, and committed to Newgate. Next day, however, he succeeded, by his presence of mind, and his inimitable talent at mimicry, in passing himself off as a harmless manufacturer of muslins from Scotland, and he was soon afterwards set at liberty. It was supposed that lord Edward was at the time on his way to Moira house; it was for the purpose, no doubt, of once more seeing lady Edward (to whom the noble-minded mistress of that mansion had since his concealment paid the most compassionate attention). On the following night, Friday the 18th of May, he was brought from Moore's to the house of Mr. Murphy, (No. 153, Thomas-street), Mrs. Moore herself being his conductress. Murphy wrote an account of the transaction, in which he tells us:—“I was getting the house cleaned down and scoured, and I brought his friend (the lady) in, and he saw the persons employed as I

told him; he mentioned that it was not intended to remove him hence immediately, but said, 'I think a week or ten days would answer.' I assented, and indeed, with reluctance; however, I made no mention of that. In a few days previous to lord Edward's coming, the government had offered one thousand pounds' reward for his apprehension. I certainly felt very uneasy at this circumstance, and I wished very much to see lord Edward's friend, (Lawless, who engaged the lodging for him), but where to see him I did not know. As a man of honour, I wished to keep my word; and I could not think of refusing him admittance when he came. Unfortunately for him and myself, he did not come till Friday, the 18th of May, 1798. I perceived he looked very bad and altered from what he appeared when I saw him before. The lady that came with him did not stay long; and I made a tender of my services to go home with her, as she lived in the neighbourhood; there was a person that we met on our way who I believe was waiting for her—I had some knowledge of him myself: I returned to the house with a troubled mind. Lord Edward told me he was very ill with a cold, and it was easy to perceive it: I had procured for him whey, and put some sherry wine in it. At this time he appeared quite tranquil, and went up to the room intended for him—the back room in the attic story. In the morning he came down to breakfast, and appeared better than the night before. The friend that spoke to me about his coming came, I believe, about eleven o'clock. Then came out, for the first time, an account of the rencontre that took place the night before, between lord Edward's party and major Sirr's. It is perfectly clear, in my humble judgment, that major Sirr knew of his removal, and the direction he intended to take, for his party and lord Edward's came in contact in a place called Island-street. They there met, and a skirmish took place, and in the confusion lord Edward got off; however, one of the party was taken, but could not be identified. I found my situation now very painful, but nothing to what it was afterwards. In the course of the day (Saturday, 19th,) there was a guard of soldiers, and I believe major Swan, major Sirr, a Mr. Medlicot, and another, making a search at Mr. Moore's house, the Yellow Lion, in Thomas-street. A friend came and mentioned the circumstance to me. I imme-

diately mentioned it to lord Edward, and had him conveyed out of the house, and concealed in a valley on the roof of the warehouses. While I was doing this, Sam. Neilson came, and inquired of the girl if I was at home? I believe she said no. 'Bid him be cautious,' I think was what she told me he said. I considered that conduct of his very ill-timed; however, I am led to believe it was well intended. On Saturday morning, the day of the arrest, there came a single rap at the door; I opened it myself, and a woman with a bundle appeared, and inquired if that was Mr. Murphy's? I said it was. She informed me that she came from Mrs. Moore, and was directed to leave that bundle there. I knew not what it contained, but to my surprise, when I opened it, I found it to be a uniform of a very beautiful green colour, grimped and braided down the front, with crimson or rose colour cuffs and cape; there were two dresses—one a long-skirted coat, vest, and pantaloons—the other a short jacket, that came round quite close, and was braided in front; there was also a pair of overalls, that buttoned from the hip to the ankle, with, I think, black Spanish-leather on the sides. I suppose they were intended for riding. The bundle contained a cap of a very fanciful description, extremely attractive, formed exactly like a sugar-loaf—that part that went round the forehead green, the upper part crimson, with a large tassel which reclined on one side or other occasionally when on the head.

"After placing lord Edward in the valley on the roof of the warehouse, I came down in a little time and stood at the gate, the soldiers still at Mr. Moore's. I perceived four persons walking in the middle of the street, some of them in uniform. I believe yeomen. I think major Swan and captain Medlicot were of the party. Towards four o'clock lord Edward came down to dinner; everything was supposed to be still. Now at this time Sam. Neilson came in to see us. Dinner was nearly ready; I asked him to stay and dine, which he accepted. Nothing particular occurred, except speaking of a variety of subjects; when Mr. Neilson, as if something struck him, immediately went away, leaving us together. There was very little wine taken; lord Edward was very abstemious. In a short time I went out; and now the tragedy commenced. I wished to leave lord Edward to himself. I was absent, I suppose, about an hour. I came

into the room where we dined, being the back drawing-room, he was not there; I went to the sleeping-room; he was in bed. It was at this time about seven o'clock. I asked him to come down to tea. I was not in the room three minutes when in came major Swan, and a person following him in a soldier's coat."

The attempt to secure lord Edward Fitzgerald on his way from Thomas-street to Moira house having failed, information was given to government that he was now to be concealed in Murphy's house, in Thomas-street, and this information was so exact that it further stated the existence of a staircase communicating between lord Edward's bed-chamber and the roof of the house, which in case of surprise afforded an easy mode of escape over the adjoining buildings, where a further retreat was prepared. The state of society in Ireland at this calamitous period was such, that government could confide only in the army and the yeomanry, and it became necessary to intrust the execution of all orders of importance to military officers. On the 19th of May, which was only four days before that fixed for raising the standard of revolt throughout the island, a secretary of state's warrant was directed to town-majors Sirr and Swan and to captain Ryan, (the officer who had secured M'Cabe in the rencontre in Watling-street,) requiring them to proceed with eight soldiers to Thomas-street in order to arrest lord Edward Fitzgerald. On reaching the house, major Sirr and the soldiers remained below to secure the entrance against the mob which was gathering outside, while captain Ryan and Major Swan ascended the stairs with as much haste as possible, that their victim might not make his escape by the roof. Lord Edward was in bed, and it appears by Murphy's own statement that Murphy was just leaving the room, when major Swan entered and told the young nobleman that he was his prisoner. Lord Edward instantly jumped from his bed, and aimed a blow with a formidable dagger with which he was armed at the major, who parried it with his hand so that the blade, after passing between his fingers, glanced along his side, inflicting a superficial wound of which he recovered in about a fortnight. Swan, thus wounded, exclaimed, "Ryan, Ryan, I am basely murdered." Captain Ryan had been searching another part of the house, but on hearing this exclamation he immediately rushed in, and seiz-

ing lord Edward, threw him back on the bed, where a violent struggle ensued, in which captain Ryan received a fearful wound in the stomach. He instantly started up, and attempted to make use of a sword-cane, but in vain. The struggle was now renewed, and lasted for several minutes, in the course of which captain Ryan, though unarmed, resolutely maintained his grasp upon his prisoner, who with desperate ferocity inflicted wound after wound to the number of fourteen. Thus brandishing in a wild manner his formidable double-edged dagger, and striking at his opponent, who, when his hands were disabled clung round him with his legs, lord Edward endeavoured to make his way to the door, but he was prevented by the perseverance with which his captor held him, until this fearful scene was put an end to by the arrival of the soldiers. Major Sirr then stepping in at the door, discharged a pistol at lord Edward, and the ball entered his right shoulder; but he had become so desperate, that even then the soldiers had to cross their muskets and force him down to the floor, before he could be overpowered and secured. Major Sirr had him removed in a sedan chair to the castle, under a strong escort of soldiers, who had been sent to support the small party at first employed on this duty. In the castle every attention was paid to his wound and situation, but he was afterwards removed to the prison of Newgate, and there it was represented by his friends that his treatment was more rigorous. It has been asserted that lord Edward resisted the dressing of his wound, and that he tore off the bandages which were placed on it, but there seems no room for doubt that it was progressing in such a manner that his recovery was fully expected. But when he heard that captain Ryan was dead, feeling that now he was involved in the charge of murder as well as that of treason, he seems to have fallen gradually into a state of despondency, and declined rapidly in body and mind till the 4th of June, when he died. His remains were privately interred at St. Werburgh's church. Up to the present time an unfathomed mystery prevails as to the person who gave information of lord Edward Fitzgerald's place of concealment, and who received the reward of a thousand pounds promised by the proclamation.

Captain Ryan was left in a dreadful condition, his bowels protruding from the wound in his stomach, and he was carried

into a neighbouring house. The lord lieutenant and the different members of the government took the greatest interest in his recovery, and the state surgeons were sent to attend him; but medical skill proved unavailing, and, after a few days of great suffering, he expired on the 30th of May. He was buried on the 1st of June, at St. Mary's church, and his remains were followed to the grave by fifteen hundred gentlemen in uniform, and by an immense crowd of the loyal inhabitants.*

A few notes found in lord Edward Fitzgerald's pocket-book, combined with the information already obtained, made the government fully acquainted with the designs of the conspirators as far as they regarded the capital. An insurrection of the united Irishmen throughout the whole kingdom was to take place at the same moment, the night of the 23rd of May, and the signal was to be given by the stopping of the mail-coaches from Dublin. In Leinster the attack was to be concentrated upon the capital. On the night of the 23rd the camp of Loughlinstown, the artillery at Chapelizod, and the castle of Dublin, were to have fallen successively into the hands of the rebels, who expected to be assisted in this part of the enterprise by the desertion of considerable numbers of the military. One hour was to be allowed between seizing the camp at Loughlinstown and the artillery at Chapelizod, and an hour and a half between the completion of this enterprise and surprising the castle; and various divisions of insurgents were appointed to unite on different points in the neighbourhood, and enter the city from different directions.

Within a day or two after the capture of lord Edward Fitzgerald several other arrests were made, among which were those of Patrick Byrne, the bookseller, and of the two Sheareses. It became now necessary to make every preparation to meet the emergency. Proper steps were taken to secure all the points threatened with attack, and the guards at the castle and prisons was doubled. These precautions were the more necessary, because the government was still uninformed

of the day fixed for the general outbreak, and therefore they had to guard against surprise. On the morning of the 21st of May lord Castlereagh, by the desire of the lord lieutenant, wrote to the lord mayor, to acquaint him that his excellency had discovered that the disaffected in the city and neighbourhood of Dublin had formed a plan of possessing themselves, in the course of the present week, of the metropolis, and of seizing the executive government and those in authority within the city. The alarm consequent on this announcement was increased by the frequent discovery of the fabrication of pikes, even at noon-day. On the 22nd of May lord Castlereagh presented a message from the lord lieutenant to the house of commons, "That his excellency had received information that the disaffected had been daring enough to form a plan for the purpose of possessing themselves, in the course of the present week, of the metropolis, of seizing the seat of government, and those in authority within the city; that in consequence of that information he had directed every military precaution to be taken which seemed expedient; that he had made full communication to the magistrates for the direction of their efforts, and that he had not a doubt but by the measures which would be pursued the designs of the rebellious would be effectually and entirely crushed." In answer to this message the house of commons voted an address, "to assure his excellency that the intelligence which it communicated filled them with horror and indignation, whilst it raised in them a spirit of determined resolution and energy. That they relied on the vigilance and vigour of his excellency's government, which, they trusted, would continue unabated until the conspiracy which so fatally existed would be utterly dissolved." The speaker and all the members immediately waited on his excellency with the address; and to show their zeal, and to increase the solemnity of the proceeding, they walked through the streets on foot, two and two, preceded by the speaker, the serjeant-at-arms, and all the officers of the house.

* The above account of the circumstances attending the arrest of lord Edward Fitzgerald are taken from a statement communicated to the author of

the present history by captain Ryan's son, Daniel Frederick Ryan, esq., barrister-at-law, and late assistant secretary at the excise office

CHAPTER II.

THE BREAKING OUT OF THE INSURRECTION.



THE loss of their military leader disconcerted the plans of the conspirators, though it did not put a stop to them. In fact, directions had already been sent round to the com-

mittees and leaders in the different districts, which it would not have been easy on so short a notice to countermand, and they awaited impatiently the signal for rising. In the morning of the 23rd of May the Irish government received certain information that the rebellion was to break out in Dublin that night, and that large bodies of insurgents were collecting at the foot of the Rathfarnham mountains, not more than five miles from Dublin, on the south, and beyond Swords and Santry, on the north, who were to march upon the capital at night, and co-operate with the discontented in the city. This intelligence was immediately communicated to the city authorities, and to the commanders of the militia and volunteer troops in Dublin, and the whole capital was thrown into the utmost consternation, which was not lessened by the knowledge that during the latter part of the day numerous parties of countrymen were introducing themselves into the town; that suspicious-looking people were seen everywhere prowling about the streets, and that every hour brought intelligence of some accidental discovery of arms or combustibles. Dublin had to depend chiefly for its defence on its three or four thousand yeomanry and militia, for the military in the capital were very few in number, and it was known that the troops in the camp at Loughlinstown had been corrupted to such a degree, that it was thought necessary to station the body of troops most distinguished for its loyalty, the city of Cork regiment, with its two battalion guns, on the north side of St. Stephen's-green, to intercept any assistance that might be brought from the camp to the rebels. At the same time almost all the loyal citizens capable of bearing arms effectively were called out, and the main body were stationed in and about Smithfield, to oppose the entry of the San-

try men. Mutual distrust was engendered by the universal prevalence of treason, and it was found that even the lamplighters of the metropolis had been so far seduced by the rebels that they concealed themselves, and left the lamps unlighted, so that this anxious night was passed, with a few slight exceptions, in profound darkness.

It was all along Samuel Neilson's favourite project to begin the attack by obtaining possession of the prisons, and so setting at liberty the numerous chiefs who had been arrested. Between nine and ten o'clock on the evening of the 23rd Gregg, the jailor of Newgate, who was on the watch, observed a man anxiously surveying the building, who, when he saw that he was observed, turned away, and evidently wished to conceal his face. Gregg approached him, and discovered that it was Neilson, on which he seized him by the collar, and in the struggle both fell to the ground. Neilson drew out a pistol, but Gregg succeeded in hindering him from firing it, till two yeomen came up and assisted in the capture. It appeared afterwards that Neilson had established a line of posts in Dublin, that bodies of armed men were concealed in different points, and were openly assembled in the streets in others; and that every arrangement was made for the attack on Newgate and other posts, on the signal being given, but the seizure of the leader overthrew all his plans, and, after waiting in vain for a signal, and receiving no intelligence of their friends in the country, the insurgents in Dublin gradually dispersed. It was stated by one of the insurgent officers arrested subsequently, that Neilson had held a meeting of fifteen colonels of insurgents just before his arrest.

A slight circumstance also had disconcerted the attack from the south. At the village of Rathfarnham, about three miles from Dublin, a corps of yeomanry cavalry was established, as a watch upon the disaffected in the neighbourhood, for which purpose a sergeant and twelve men mounted guard every night and patrolled through the adjacent country. On the 23rd the lord lieutenant sent a message to the officer in command at Rathfarnham, informing him that the rising was to take place that night, and

recommending him to mount guard with the whole troop. In the evening an attempt was made to decoy the usual patrol, but when the whole troop rode up to the spot where the rebels lay in ambush, they were so surprised that they took to flight immediately. Thus was disconcerted, at its first commencement, the plan to cut off the yeomanry at Rathfarnham, and then march into Dublin. A messenger from the post at Rathfarnham carried into Dublin information that the peasantry on the south were in arms, and found on his way that the suburbs of the capital on that side were filled with insurgents, chiefly pike-men; and it was afterwards stated, that a body of rebels, armed with muskets, were stationed behind a wall in New-street, to fire upon the Rathfarnham cavalry, if they should have effected their escape from the assailants by whom they were to be first attacked.

The insurgents from the south were to have attacked the castle, while the Santry men assailed the barracks. The latter had assembled according to their directions, and were in possession of the country to the north of the capital, but their advance was stopped by a spirited attack, and by the misgivings of their leaders, who heard no expected signal from their friends within. Lord Roden, at the head of his dragoons, which, on account of their fine horses, were popularly known by the name of the Fox-hunters, supported by a party of infantry, marched out of the city towards Santry, and falling suddenly upon such of the insurgents as had then collected there, put them to flight with some loss. Some of the dragoons were wounded, and lord Roden himself was bruised by a musket-shot on the helmet. This action completed the discomfiture of the rebels as far as regarded the attack upon Dublin. Those who were in arms retreated to Kildare and Wicklow, to take part in the much more serious events which were beginning in those districts. Enough had been seen to show the government that the attack upon the capital had failed entirely through the seizure of the rebel chiefs; for their plans were well laid, and had the men who originally planned them, and who enjoyed the entire confidence of the "union," been at their head to direct the execution of them, it is very difficult to say what might have been the result.

The morning of the 24th of May brought relief to the minds of the citizens, and it was evident that the capital was no longer

in danger. The dead bodies of the rebels slain in the skirmish at Santry were exposed to public view, and martial law having been proclaimed, those who had been captured in the same affair were hanged from the lamp-irons, or on the bridges. The same punishment awaited some of the lamplighters who had failed in their duty the preceding night. On every side the capital bore the physiognomy of a city under military rule. A proclamation of the lord lieutenant declared the existence of the rebellion, and announced that the commanders of his majesty's forces had received orders to act with the utmost vigour in suppressing it. This was accompanied by a notice from the commander-in-chief, lieutenant-general Lake, proclaiming martial-law, and requiring the inhabitants of Dublin to remain within their respective dwellings from nine o'clock at night till five in the morning, under pain of punishment. A proclamation of the lord mayor followed, ordering all the citizens possessing arms to have them immediately registered, under penalty of being sent on board his majesty's navy; and ordering all housekeepers to place on the outside of their doors a list of all persons in their respective houses, distinguishing such as were strangers from those who actually made part of their family, as "a measure calculated for the public security." At the petty-sessions, held the same day, it was directed that the following notice should be published:—"By the right honourable the lord mayor, recorder, and justices of the peace for the county of the city of Dublin, at a petty sessions of the peace, held at the session-house, in and for the county of the said city, on Thursday, the twenty-fourth day of May, 1798, under and by virtue of an act of parliament, passed in the 26th year of his present majesty's reign, entitled 'An act more effectually to suppress insurrections, and prevent the disturbance of the public peace.' Whereas, his excellency the lord lieutenant of this kingdom, by and with the advice of his majesty's most honourable privy council, pursuant to the said act of parliament, has, by proclamation bearing date the 19th instant, declared the said county of the city of Dublin to be in immediate danger of becoming in a state of disturbance. Now, in pursuance of the said act of parliament and proclamation, we, the undersigned justices at the said petty session, do hereby notify, that that said district of the county of the city of Dublin has been so proclaimed, and we do command

and require the inhabitants thereof to keep within their dwellings at all unseasonable times, between sunset and sunrise. And we do hereby warn and caution them, that any person who shall, within the county of the said city, be found in the street, highways, fields, or elsewhere out of his dwelling or place of abode, at any time from one hour after sunset until sun-rise, will be liable, under the said act of parliament, to be arrested and brought before two justices of the peace for the county of the said city, and examined by them, and unless such person can prove to their satisfaction that he was out of his house upon his lawful occasion, such person shall be deemed an idle and disorderly person, and shall be transmitted by the warrant of such justice on board his majesty's navy; and every inhabitant or inmate who shall, upon search, be found absent from his house between the hours aforesaid, will be deemed an idle and disorderly person, and liable to the same penalties. And all persons found assembled within the said district of the county of the city, in any house in which malt or spirituous liquors are sold, not being inmates thereof, or travellers, after the hour of nine at night and before six in the morning, shall be liable to be deemed disorderly persons, and subject to the penalties above set forth. Given under our hands the day and year aforesaid."

All these precautions show us the alarm which prevailed in Dublin at this moment. "Martial law," we are told by sir Jonah Barrington, "was now proclaimed, and the courts of justice closed, except upon civil subjects. The barristers pleaded in their uniform, with their side-arms. One of the judges (baron Medge), appeared on the bench in the same uniform; the names of the inmates of every house were posted on every door, fabricated reports of massacres and poisonings were daily propagated, and the city assumed altogether the appearance of one monstrous barrack."

Dublin itself was now to appearance clear of rebels, but intelligence arrived from every side that the rebellion had broken out in the country around, and that the district to the south especially was overrun by troops of insurgents. A troop of dragoons was sent out in the direction of Rathfarnham, to reconnoitre, and meeting with a party of yeomanry who had been repulsed in an attack on the rebels, they went in pursuit of them. In an encounter on the Rathcoole road one or two of their leaders were killed or cap-

tured, and were brought back to the capital to be exhibited as trophies of this first successful action in the neighbourhood. In other parts, however, the insurgents overran the country without hindrance, and committed many outrages, especially in the large tract between Dublin and the Wicklow mountains. The houses of protestants were plundered and burnt, and in many cases their inmates were murdered, for among the wild hordes who were hanging on the skirts of the metropolis in hourly expectation of being called into it by the successful conspirators within, difference of religion was the only badge of party that they could understand. A numerous party of the peasantry, armed in every possible manner, took possession of the little town of Dunboyne, only seven miles from Dublin, on the morning of the 24th of May. They put to death the protestant inhabitants, and plundered their houses. In several places, small parties of troops were surprised, and the soldiers were generally killed. But more frequently in these petty encounters the insurgents were defeated, and the prisoners taken by the military were carried into Dublin to be hanged, generally on the bridges. Some threats were made of attacking the camp at Loughlinstown, and several rather numerous bodies assembled on different points for that purpose, but the absence of any encouraging reports from Dublin, joined with the uncertainty of the assistance they would receive from traitors in the camp, hindered them from proceeding on so perilous an enterprise. The town of Dunshaughlin, about fourteen miles from Dublin, was treated in the same manner as Dunboyne; and the more important post of Rathcoole, only eight miles from Dublin, narrowly escaped a similar visit. It was found that a plot existed among the soldiers who held this place, to betray it to the rebels, and a reinforcement from Dublin was sent in time for its protection.

At a somewhat greater distance from the capital the insurrection had assumed a more serious character. The appointed signal from Dublin had been made punctually on the evening of the 23rd of May. The Belfast northern mail was stopped and burned at Santry, the Connaught or western mail experienced the same fate at Lucan, and the Cork or southern mail near Naas. This latter town, which is in the county of Kildare, about sixteen miles from Dublin, was one of the first places in which the rebels

made a serious attack on an English garrison. That of Naas consisted of one hundred and fifty of the Armagh militia, commanded by lord Gosford, with two field-pieces, thirty-five of the ancient Britons, commanded by major Wardell, twenty-four of the fourth horse, and sixteen of the North Naas cavalry, commanded by captain Neville. The officers in command had been put on their guard on the 23rd, by two anonymous letters, informing them that the town would be attacked that night by three thousand men. In consequence of this information, the guards were doubled, and every possible measure necessary for their defence was adopted. As the garrison continued unmolested till two o'clock in the morning of the 24th, many of the officers had gone to bed, thinking the information they had received was groundless; but about half-past two o'clock, a dragoon from an outpost came in, with information that a very large body of rebels was moving towards the town. The drums immediately beat to arms, and the men repaired to their different posts. This they had no sooner done, than about three thousand rebels, who had assembled at the quarries of Tipper, advanced rapidly and quietly to the town, and entered it at four different places, the greater part from the north, by the Johnstown road. The latter, before they reached the gaol, were encountered by a party of the Armagh militia with one piece of cannon, and a detachment of the Ancient Britons, and after a desperate struggle, were repulsed. Large parties of the rebels, who stole unnoticed into the town, through the houses and narrow lanes, fought some time in the streets, and sustained a heavy fire from a party of the Armagh militia, posted opposite the barrack, before they gave way; at last, however, they fled precipitately in every direction, when the cavalry charged, and killed a great number of them in the pursuit. Thirty of the rebels were killed in the streets; and, from the numbers found dead in back houses and in the adjacent fields, a few days after, it was imagined that no less than three hundred could have fallen. They dropped in their flight a great quantity of pikes, and other arms, of which a great number were found in pits near the town; where also three men with green cockades were seized, and immediately hanged in the public streets. The rebels appear very generally to have had intelligence with the troops, and it was stated that, on this occasion, one of

the Irish gunners, who directed the cannon at the gaol, purposely elevated it too much, so as not to injure the assailants.

At the town of Prosperous, in the county of Kildare, treason was more successful. A physician of some distinction, and of popular manners, Dr. Esmond, brother of sir Thomas Esmond, of an ancient Roman catholic family in the county of Wexford, had established himself at this town, and had married there a lady of fortune. Dr. Esmond had secretly entered into the conspiracy of the United Irishmen, and had adopted their principles with great warmth. He had even seduced many of the men of the Clane cavalry, of which corps he was a lieutenant; yet he professed in public a zeal for the established government. On Sunday the twentieth of May, captain Swayne had arrived there with a detachment of the city of Cork militia, and Dr. Esmond met him and joined with apparent zeal in exhorting the people to return to their allegiance, and to surrender their arms: when the day of the insurrection arrived, further to lull the suspicion of the commanding officer, two or three pikes and firelocks were surrendered. This was on the morning of the twenty-third of May; Father Higgins, the popish priest, and Dr. Esmond informed captain Swayne, that the people were repentant, and would have brought in their arms, and have left them in the streets during the night, but that they were afraid of the sentinels. The same afternoon the doctor dined with captain Swayne at an inn, and only left him at a late hour to proceed on his treacherous enterprise.

Besides the Cork militia there was in Prosperous a party of the Ancient Britons, consisting of a lieutenant, a quarter-master, and twenty privates. Twelve of them were lodged in a house opposite the barrack, and the remainder were at single billets, except a few who slept over the stable, where their horses lay. By means of the pass-word obtained by Dr. Esmond, the rebels entered the town about two o'clock on the morning of the twenty-fourth, and the two sentinels were surprised, and killed; and both the barracks were assaulted while the soldiers were asleep. The barrack of the Cork company, consisted of a hall, an apartment on each side, the same in the next story, and under-ground offices. A party of the rebels rushed into captain Swayne's apartment, which was on the ground floor, and

murdered him. Some soldiers, who slept in the opposite apartment, alarmed at the noise, came forth with their firelocks, and expelled those ruffians from the barrack, after having killed two or three of them. The house was at that time surrounded by a great multitude of insurgents, variously armed, and a fierce conflict ensued, which lasted a short time, the soldiers obstinately defending the barrack. At length the assailants discovered a great quantity of straw in the under-ground office, to which they set fire; and to increase the flame introduced some faggots. The soldiers were soon driven by the smoke and flames into the upper story; and when they found this also untenable, some of them leaped out of the windows; but they were received on the pikes of the assailants, who gave a dreadful yell as each victim dropped. At last, the barrack being in a general conflagration, the soldiers resolved to rush forward, and fight their way through their assailants; but the latter formed a half-moon round the front of the barrack, and received them on their pikes, so that few of them escaped. Nicholas Eldon, the deputy barrack-master, with his wife and children, and the families of some of the Cork soldiers, found a temporary asylum in one of the underground offices, during the scene of carnage. At last, preceded by Mrs. Eldon, they endeavoured to escape from the flames; when a ferocious ruffian, ready to dispatch them with his pike, exclaimed "Let the heretics remain to be burnt." They returned and continued to pray, till the flames forced them out again. The barrack-master's wife rushed out first, and dropped on her knees, holding her three young children, one of them in her arms; and they were spared, at least, for a while. At this conjuncture, expresses arrived from Naas and Clane, to inform the people of Prosperous that their friends had been repulsed at both those places, and this intelligence checked their fury.

The fear of provoking retaliation is said now to have held their hand in some degree from slaughter, and some of their chiefs, especially Hugh M'Evoy, who had been chiefly instrumental in saving the women and children from the barracks, urged them to show moderation. That it was not an easy task to restrain them, is proved by the sequel, as related by the contemporary annalists of these events. An Englishman, named Brewer, well known for his hu-

manity and benevolence, had embarked very extensively in the cotton manufacture at Prosperous, where he maintained numbers of people, who had lived previously in poverty. Hugh M'Evoy, was one of his workmen. They carried Eldon and his family to the house of Mr. Brewer, who seeing them almost naked, instantly supplied them with some of his own clothes. He had remained alone at his house, vainly thinking that his active benevolence, and his charitable disposition, would be his best shield among the inhabitants of Prosperous, whom he had fed and clothed, by employing them in useful industry. Hugh M'Evoy informed Mr. Brewer and Eldon, that they had been both condemned, and that he feared he could not save them, but that he would exert himself in their favour. He also said when he was leaving him, "Sir, if they ask you to swear, by no means refuse them;" and he promised to comply. During M'Evoy's absence, Mr. Brewer's house was surrounded by a large body of insurgents, who broke the windows, and were bursting open the door, when Mr. Brewer ordered it to be opened to them. When the mob had obtained admission into the house, James Tobin, tailor of Prosperous, rushed into his apartment, and made a lunge at him with a pike, so vehemently, that he perforated his body, and turned the edge of the weapon against the wall. Having then drawn a scimitar, he cleft his skull from the ear to the forehead, and aided by one Patrick Farrell, another native of the town, carried the body to the front door, when Andrew Farrell, who was leader of the party, cried out aloud, "Behold the body of a heretic tyrant!" which was repeated by the whole party with three cheers. When Hugh M'Evoy returned and learned what had occurred, he exclaimed, "Oh, you villains, have you murdered the good man who kept us all from starving? If I knew the man that did so, I would shoot him, though I were to lose my own life by it." M'Evoy had great difficulty in saving the life of Eldon, as Andrew Farrell swore he would kill him, and made a stroke of a sabre at him. Such were the scenes enacted on every side during the first days of the insurrection.

An alarm was spread among the rebels of Prosperous, by an express from their friends at Clane, who sent for assistance, as they had been beaten off in their attack on that place, and they left their prisoners to march out and join their friends.

Clane, which was only three miles from Prosperous, was garrisoned by a company of the Armagh militia, commanded by a captain Jephson, and a few of the Clane yeomanry cavalry. Early in the morning of the 24th of May, a large body of insurgents entered the town unperceived, and beset the houses in which the soldiers were billeted, but the latter managed to fight their way out, and succeeded in forming in rank, after the loss of two killed and five seriously wounded. They then drove the rebels out of the town. These made another attempt to take the place by surprise, by sending in advance some of their men dressed in the uniform and mounted on the horses of the Ancient Britons slain at Prosperous, but they failed again, although captain Jephson narrowly escaped with his life. It was about three o'clock when captain Griffith, the commander of the Clane yeomanry, received intelligence by express at his seat of Millicent, of the attack on Clane. He hastened thither, and found the little garrison pursuing the defeated insurgents, and burning the house on the common in which they had taken refuge. They killed a good many of them, and took six prisoners, four of whom were captain Griffith's tenants. One of them was hanged at the drum-head in Clane; and the other five were hanged the same day at Naas. On his return to Clane, about five in the morning, captain Griffith heard of the slaughter of the garrison at Prosperous. On mustering the guard, he found his second lieutenant, a sergeant and seventeen privates, one of whom was severely wounded; the other three had deserted with their arms, and those belonging to other yeomen of his troop. He had hardly time to draw up the yeomen and militia in the street, when a party of rebels, mounted on the horses and furnished with the arms and accoutrements of the Ancient Britons, made a charge into the town; but one well-directed volley brought down six or seven of them, and the others fled precipitately, and took shelter behind a strong party of rebel infantry, which were approaching from Prosperous, and made a formidable appearance, with the arms, and scarlet coats and helmets, which they had taken from the soldiers killed at Prosperous. As the troops were not strong enough to attack so numerous a party, they took post on an elevated spot near the common, where they could not be surrounded or out-flanked; and there they waited the attack of the enemy, who began a smart

fire on them, but without effect, on account of their position. The troops, with their fire, killed and wounded a considerable number, on which the rebels fled in great dismay, and were pursued by the captain and his sixteen yeomen, who cut down many of those who were armed with the helmets of the Ancient Britons, or the hats of the Cork regiment. In their flight they dropped a great quantity of pikes, pitch-forks, muskets, and sabres.

It was on the march of this party back to Clane, that captain Griffith received private information of the treason of Dr. Esmond, and that it was he who had commanded the attack upon Prosperous; and the doctor himself, with his hair dressed and in his uniform, as though he had hastened to show his loyalty, joined them. When they halted in Clane, captain Griffith put Esmond under arrest, and he was subsequently tried and hanged at Dublin.

Scenes like those described above occurred at almost every military post in the districts to which the insurrection extended, and the plan of cutting off the soldiery had been so generally and well-concerted, that nothing but the loss of the leaders of the conspiracy and the consequent discouragement hindered it from being carried into effect. The garrison of Ballymore-Eustace was deceived in the same manner as that of Prosperous, for the commanding officer had been so entirely thrown off his guard by the pretended submission of the peasantry, who brought in a quantity of arms and obtained protections on the 23rd, that he sent away three-quarters of his force, and was only awakened from his security by an attack by surprise early in the morning of the following day. Fortunately his soldiers were not so much scattered in the houses, and though two or three were surprised and murdered, the remainder assembled together and drove away their assailants. They had time to break open the jail, and set the prisoners at liberty. The rebels, repulsed from Ballymore-Eustace, turned their force against Dunlavin; and the commanding officer there, when he heard of their approach, and of their proceedings at Ballymore, sallied out to meet them, but found himself obliged to return to the shelter of the town. In his alarm, he had the political offenders taken from the prison, and those who were most desperate or notorious were shot, that they might not be liberated to increase the force of the insurgents.



CHAPTER III.

THE INSURRECTION IN KILDARE AND CARLOW.

THE insurrection was now becoming centred in Kildare. The mass of the population of this county were bigoted catholics, and, assisted by the influence of lord Edward Fitzgerald's name, the united Irishmen had spread their principles here with great success. General Dundas, who commanded the troops in this district, was stationed at Kilcullen, and the army was scattered in small divisions over the county. The officers and army throughout this part of the country had been lulled into a false security by the apparent eagerness with which the disaffected had for several days brought in pikes, and obtained protections; and they were taken by surprise when intelligence was brought in on every side of the rising of the peasantry during the 23rd of May. General Dundas had skirmishes with parties of the insurgents in the morning of that day, and, alarmed by the intelligence he received from Dublin, he was anxious to collect his force together, and be prepared to march immediately to the assistance of the capital, in case of necessity. He accordingly recalled from Kildare the troops stationed there under the command of general Wilford. The messenger who carried general Dundas's orders, a private in one of the corps of yeomen cavalry, was shot before he entered Kildare, and survived only long enough to deliver his dispatches. About two o'clock in the afternoon general Wilford commenced his march to Kilcullen, having sent orders to captain Winter, who commanded a detachment at Monastereven, to follow him. In passing through Kildare, captain Winter received the promise of the inhabitants to defend their town, and protect the baggage of the army which was left there.

Yet barely half-an-hour had passed after this officer, with the last of the king's troops, left Kildare, when the inhabitants rung the market-bell as the signal of insurrection. About two thousand rebels, led by a man named Roger M'Garry, marched into the town, and at once seized upon the baggage of the army, and the arms which had been

surrendered during the preceding days, and then they proceeded to the work of plunder and massacre. Fortunately, most of the protestant inhabitants had taken the alarm in time, and fled to seek refuge in Naas or Monastereven, but all the protestant houses were destroyed. Such protestants as had not been able to make their escape were murdered with horrible atrocity. Among these was an old soldier, named George Crawford, who lived at Kildare on his pension, with his wife and grand-daughter, the latter only fourteen years of age. They had reached the outskirts of the town, when they were met by a party of the rebels, who offered to drive them back, because, as they said, they were heretics. One of the ruffians struck the lady with a musket, while another stabbed her in the back with a pike. Her husband attempted to save her, and was immediately knocked down with repeated blows of a musket. In the scuffle which followed Mrs. Crawford slipped between the assailants, and contrived to escape by concealing herself behind a hedge. Thence she beheld her husband murdered in the most barbarous manner with the pikes of the rebels; and her grand-daughter having thrown herself on him to supplicate for mercy, she received so many wounds in the breast, head, and other parts, that she soon expired. Their bodies were thrown into a neighbouring ditch. A faithful dog fought bravely for his master, and shared his fate. In plundering the house of another protestant they found a favourite dog which had been accidentally left behind, and they immediately hanged it, and fired several shots at it, because it was the dog of a heretic.

The Limerick mail-coach, imperfectly aware of what had taken place, reached Kildare about eleven o'clock at night, when it was stopped by the rebels, who shot the foremost horse, plundered the coach, and proceeded roughly to examine the passengers. One of these was a young officer, seventeen years of age, lieutenant Gillard, of the eighty-second regiment, who was proceeding to Dublin. When he courageously confessed who he was, and that he was a protestant, they held a consultation together, which ended in proposing to him

that, as they wanted officers, he should swear to be faithful to them, and take the command in the attack upon Monastereven, where they were preparing to march, threatening him with instant death as the only alternative. He refused to listen to their proposal, and, declaring his resolution to die a loyal man, drew forth a brace of pistols to defend himself. Escaping from this party by his activity, he vaulted over a wall six feet high, and made for a house where he saw lights, and heard people talking. It was, unfortunately, the house of George Crawford, and lieutenant Giffard was encountered instantly by the party who had murdered the old man and his granddaughter, and after a hard struggle he was killed and thrown into the same ditch.

The night was thus spent in plunder and destruction until one o'clock in the morning, when "captain" M'Garry, at the head of from thirteen to fifteen hundred of the insurgents, marched out to the attack of Monastereven. On their way they murdered all the protestants they met, and plundered and burnt their houses. Fortunately their victims were not numerous, for the country had been in such a state for some time as to force the loyal inhabitants, wherever they were able, to seek refuge in the garrisoned towns.

The force which remained to defend Monastereven consisted only of a corps of yeomanry cavalry and another of infantry. Their vigilance had been roused very early on the morning of the 24th of May, and between four and five o'clock in the morning one of the videttes galloped into the town, with the intelligence that the rebels were advancing. One column was accordingly seen approaching by the canal, covering the road to a great extent; these were opposed by the volunteer infantry, commanded by lieutenant Bagot, on which the rebels retreated, with an intention of attacking the town in another quarter. The cavalry, commanded by captain Haystead, fell in with another body, whom they routed, after killing many of them. The third column made their way into the main street of the town, where the conflict was carried on with great obstinacy. The yeomanry defended their post with the utmost bravery, and at length the well-directed fire of the infantry compelled the assailants to fall back. The cavalry, taking advantage of their confusion, charged them, and pursuing the fugitives, killed and wounded a great number of them,

no less than sixty dead bodies of insurgents being found in the streets, while the loss of the military was small. A priest, named Prendergast, who had compromised himself in this affair, was hanged at Monastereven immediately after it. It was stated against him, that a day or two before the insurrection broke out he called on a protestant gentleman in the neighbourhood, for whom he had a particular regard, and informed him that he was very desirous of saving him and his wife, but that he feared it would be impossible to do so, unless they would consent to be christened, to confess to him, and to embrace the Roman catholic religion; that on such terms he would save also his brother, but that he could not save his wife, as she was an orangewoman; meaning that she was the sister of a man who had distinguished himself by his activity in the service of the government.

At no great distance from Monastereven stood Eagle-hill, the seat of Mr. Darragh, an active magistrate, who had been shot with two pistol-balls, on his own lawn, in the month of March, and who had lain ever since in great suffering. In the night of the 23rd of May a party of the soldiers from Monastereven had proceeded to his house, for the purpose of carrying him to a place of greater safety, but they found him in too dangerous a condition to be removed. It was about three miles from Eagle-hill to Knockawlin-hill, where was the principal camp of the Kildare insurgents. From this camp, on the 24th of May, a numerous body of rebels marched to attack the house at Eagle-hill. It was defended by Mr. Dalton, Mr. Darragh's brother-in-law, Mr. Bolton, his surgeon, two other gentlemen, two soldiers, and two servants; the whole under the direction of Mr. Dalton, who fought with great bravery, the rest of his domestics having joined the rebels. They had just time to place the barricadoes to the windows, which Mr. Darragh had been obliged to make use of to defend his house for twelve months before, and to distribute the ammunition. As the rebels approached the house they raised a terrific yell, and swore they would carry off on their pikes the heads of all the inmates. The latter had but two guns, three pistols, and two swords, besides the soldiers' muskets, for their defence. A furious attack was made on the house, and many volleys were fired into the windows of the ground-floor and middle story, some of the balls finding their

way through the port-holes into the drawing-room where Mr. Darragh lay, accompanied by his wife, with her mother, sister, the maid-servant, two men-servants, and two soldiers. After a short struggle the assailants were at last beaten off, with a considerable number of killed and wounded. They, however, carried off their dead, except one who fell when he was endeavouring to break open, with his pike, a window near the hall, and who proved to be a man living in the neighbourhood, who had experienced much kindness from Mr. Darragh's family.

At Kilcullen the king's troops were less fortunate. On the afternoon of the 23rd intelligence came from various quarters, leaving no doubt of the extensive character of the rising. Towards evening general Dundas was informed, it appears erroneously, that there was a plan for taking him by surprise. About half-past eight o'clock two horsemen, sent out to reconnoitre, fell in with a large body of insurgents, and gave the alarm. Still the night wore away without any attack, and at midnight it was discovered, by a rebel who had been captured, that they were all gone to the attack upon Naas. Towards morning they returned in considerable force, and established themselves at Old Kilcullen, where three hundred of them were strongly entrenched in the churchyard, which was defended on one side by a high wall, and on the other by a quickset-hedge with a dike before it.

Against this force general Dundas rashly ordered a body of cavalry to advance about seven o'clock in the morning, the only result of which was to show the inefficiency of cavalry against a steady body of pikemen. The troops had to charge up a steep road which was occupied by the insurgents, and after having made several attempts to dislodge them with exemplary bravery, they were obliged at last to desist, after having lost their two commanders, captains Cooke and Erskine, with a great number of men. Defeated in this design, general Dundas retired with his little force to the village of Kilcullen-bridge, where he was joined by a party of the Suffolk fencibles, under captain Beale. The rebels were elated with their victory at Old Kilcullen, and, resolved to follow it up, the main body making a circuit, and fording the Liffey a little below Castle-martin, took a position between Kilcullen and Naas, with the design of cutting off general Dundas in his retreat. Their

number had been greatly increased, and they drew themselves up in a regular line, three deep, with three stands of green colours. Dundas marched boldly up to them with the Suffolk fencibles in front, and the cavalry behind. The rebels began the attack by firing four rounds, accompanied with loud shouts, but the steady fire of the fencibles soon threw them into disorder, and then the cavalry charged in upon their broken ranks, and made great havoc among them. About three hundred of the insurgents fell in this affair, killed either in the fight or in the pursuit.

General Dundas's position was still not a safe one, and after the battle he determined on abandoning Kilcullen altogether, to retire upon Naas, and concentrate his forces there. As soon as he had departed the insurgents rushed into the town, and began destroying the houses of the protestants. Most of the latter had escaped with the troops to Naas, but such as from inability or accident had remained behind were put to death immediately.

At the town of Rathangan the insurgents committed still greater atrocities. This place was occupied only by a company of the South Cork militia, under captain Langton, who was kept in constant alarm during the day of the 24th, by the frequent appearance of large parties of rebels. From the tops of their houses the inhabitants could trace by the fires the devastation which was going on in the country around; and the consternation was increased by the number of protestants who crowded in to escape the pikes of the ravagers. One of the principal inhabitants was Mr. Spencer, an active magistrate, but one who was distinguished for his generosity and humanity to all around him, and to whom the town owed much of its prosperity. Captain Langton had received orders to join his troops to those with general Dundas, but he was persuaded by Mr. Spencer to remain at Rathangan during the day, and a messenger was sent to Kilcullen with an excuse. The alarm at Rathangan was not lessened when this messenger returned, severely wounded, with the intelligence that Kilcullen was in the hands of the rebels, and that the troops had retreated from it. Captain Langton remained till next day, and then, having received peremptory orders to follow general Dundas, he marched off to Naas, taking the greater part of the protestant inhabitants with him. Mr. Spencer, imagining himself in no dan-

ger, refused to leave Rathangan, and some of the protestants remained with him.

The inhabitants of Rathangan, deserted by the small body of military on whom they relied chiefly for protection, watched in arms during the night of Friday the twenty-fifth, but no enemy appeared till early on the Saturday morning, when the rebels in great numbers and variously armed, took possession of the town. Mr. Spencer, who was agent to the duke of Leinster, the most popular of the Irish peers, was deservedly esteemed and respected by the whole county, and such was his confidence in the attachment of his neighbours, that he did not consider it necessary to take any extraordinary measures of security. He remained peaceably at his house, with his wife and two daughters, one of whom was married to the honourable and reverend Mr. Pomeroy, son of lord Harburton, who also remained with his father-in-law. The family were at breakfast, when a band of infuriated ruffians entered the lawn in front of the house. Mr. Spencer rose from table, went to the hall door, and kindly asked them what he could do for them, pretending to suppose that they came to require his services as a magistrate. They instantly seized him, saying that they were now come to do for him, threw him down upon the steps of the door, and sawed off his head with a cross-cut saw. They then went into the parlour, laid the head upon the breakfast table, helped themselves to what they pleased in the house, and going away, took the head and kicked it like a football about the lawn till it was torn and broken to pieces. Mr. Spencer was upwards of seventy years of age; he had almost entirely built the town of Rathangan, and had rendered it and its neighbourhood more wealthy and independent than any other district of the county. It was observed that several of those most active in this outrage were persons indebted to him and his family for continual acts of kindness.

Mr. Spencer was the captain of a corps of yeomanry, the greater part of which, being catholics, had joined the rebels as soon as the insurrection in this part broke out. His first lieutenant, Mr. Moore, was an English gentleman who had retired to live in this neighbourhood; and on the arrival of the rebels, he had collected about fifteen of the yeomen infantry, with some others who were protestants like themselves, and posted them in the house of a quaker named Neale, which was the most defensible house in the

village. When summoned, these men refused to give up their arms or surrender. The insurgents then assured them that they should receive no injury, if they would surrender, and Mrs. Spencer and some of the ladies of the place, who were in the power of the assailants, were brought to the front of the house, and, with the assurance that no harm should be done to them, they fell on their knees and urged them with tears to accept the terms that were offered. Thus pressed, the protestants in the house yielded, and gave up their arms; but the rebels had no sooner gained possession of them, than they dragged the protestants one by one into the street, and butchered them with savage exultation. Other protestants in the village were murdered with circumstances of great atrocity. A woman—for the women were particularly active in these sanguinary scenes—urged them to kill a physician named Bagot, an aged and infirm gentleman, who was well-known for his charity to the poor. One of the rebels said, “No, he is a good man;” on which the woman replied, “You should get rid of him, for his children sing, Croppies lie down.” He was however saved, because it was decided that he might be useful in dressing their wounds, and he was only compelled to wear a green wreath in his hat. Among other victims of their ferocity was a quiet inoffensive man named Michael Shenstone, whose only crime was being a protestant. They dragged him from his house into the street, where in a moment he received eighteen stabs of pikes. As he still showed some signs of life, a woman named Farrel, who was infamous for her activity in these sanguinary proceedings, reproached her comrades with not knowing how to kill orangemen. A ruffian at once stepped forward, and firing a pistol close to Shenstone’s head, the ball entered near the ear, and came out under the eye, fracturing the cheek bone in a shocking manner. Some hours afterwards he was put into a cart with the bodies of seventeen other protestants, and driven to the churchyard, but an alarm hindered the burial, and Shenstone remained all night in the cart among the dead. Next morning his wife obtained possession of the body, and observing some signs of remaining life, she procured assistance, and after long and severe suffering, he eventually recovered.

The rebels continued in possession of Rathangan till Monday, the 28th, when lieutenant-colonel Malone marched against

them with a detachment of the seventh regiment of dragoon guards, and some yeomanry cavalry from Tullamore. Before they reached the village, colonel Malone divided his force into two bodies, one of which was sent round by a circuitous road, so that they might attack the place at once from both sides. The rebels kept close in their houses, so that when the division which marched direct into the place passed through, they met with no molestation, and saw no signs of resistance. Having rejoined their comrades on the other side, they returned in a close body; but just in the midst of the village a tremendous fire of musketry was opened upon them from every window around, which killed three men and wounded eleven more or less severely, and killed six horses and wounded twelve. Colonel Malone, whose horse was shot under him, was made a prisoner. One of the rebels was observed stabbing a dead horse repeatedly with a bayonet, and at each blow he exclaimed, "Take that, protestant."

In the afternoon of the same day the city of Cork militia, commanded by colonel Longfield, arrived, with a detachment of dragoons and two field-pieces, upon which the rebels fled in the utmost confusion. Fifty or sixty were killed in the pursuit, and several who were captured were immediately hanged.

The most disastrous engagement to the rebels which occurred to the south of Dublin, at the commencement of the insurrection, was the attack upon Carlow. The mail-coach from Dublin always reached Carlow in the morning about eight o'clock; and as its not arriving on the morning of Thursday, the 24th of May, was to be the signal for rising there and in its vicinity, the rebels did not make their intended attack on that town till the morning of the twenty-fifth. About two o'clock on that morning they assembled in great force, mostly from Grange, Hacketstown, Tullow, Leighlin, and that part of the country between Rathvilly and Borris, headed by one Roche, a farmer. They gave a most dreadful yell as soon as they entered the town, where they were joined by most of the lower class of the popish inhabitants, and numbers of the people who had been secretly coming into it the whole of the preceding day and night. They marched, in number about two thousand, through Tullow-street, till they arrived at the potato-market, where their progress was interrupted by two sentinels posted at

the collector's door, and a loyal protestant who joined them; and they, by a constant and well-directed fire defeated their design of uniting with the Queen's county rebels, who were to have met them at Graigue-bridge, and drove them across the potato-market towards the gaol, where two sentinels, with equal spirit, checked them in their career, and forced them to retreat through Bridewell-lane towards the court-house, where having received a few shots from the house of a loyal protestant, they cried out that they were surrounded by the soldiers, threw down their arms, and in the greatest consternation, endeavoured to retreat by the road through which they had at first advanced; but fearing to meet the army in that direction, numbers of them retired into the houses in Tullow-street, which it is believed were inhabited by their associates; for when the soldiers set fire to them, to make the rebels bolt, there was not a woman or child in any of them. Some rushed out through the flames, and were shot or bayoneted; others remained in the houses till they were consumed. The others who had taken different routes, were shot by the loyal inhabitants from their windows; and such of them as escaped, were pursued and killed by the soldiers and yeomanry; so that the streets, and the roads, and fields contiguous to the town, were strewn with dead bodies. That evening and all next day, nineteen carts were constantly employed in conveying the dead bodies to the other side of Graigue-bridge, where four hundred and seventeen bodies were buried in three gravel-pits, and covered with quick lime. On the whole, it was believed, that no less than six hundred of the unfortunate wretches perished, including those who were consumed in the houses, and those who fell in the roads and fields, and were secretly interred by their friends.

The Queen's county rebels were to have met and joined those of the county of Carlow, at Graigue-bridge, but having heard that there were two pieces of cannon posted there, they changed their route, and headed by one Redmond, and one Brennan, who had been a yeoman, they burned some protestant houses in the village of Ballyckmoiler, and attacked the house of the reverend John Whitty, a protestant clergyman, near Arles, about five miles from Carlow; but it was bravely defended by himself and eleven protestants, who kept up

a constant fire, killed twenty-one rebels, and baffled all their attempts to storm or burn it. The conflict continued from three till six o'clock in the morning; when Mr. Whitty's ammunition being nearly expended, he sent two of his party to a neighbour to borrow more, but they were surrounded and overpowered after a gallant defence. The corpse of one of them, whom they killed, was mangled in a barbarous manner.

Treachery was active again in this attack upon Carlow. One Heydon, a yeoman of sir Charles Burton's troop, had led the rebels into the town, and was considered as their leader. When he saw that their defeat was inevitable he changed sides, took his place in the ranks of the yeomanry, and joined in slaughtering his late companions. But his conduct had been observed, and sufficient evidence appearing against him, he was tried immediately after the battle, and executed. Among the victims of martial law on this occasion there were none whose fate deserved so much commiseration as that of sir Edward Crosbie. Sir Edward's seat was Viewmount, near Carlow, where the rebels assembled before marching against the town. His steward was deeply involved in the insurrection, and fled after the defeat of the rebels on this occasion; his servants and labourers were engaged in it, and they attempted to force him to be their leader, but this he refused, and, according to his own account, he expostulated with them on their conduct. But it appears that sir Edward had the reputation of being a warm advocate of republican principles, and he was known to be opposed to ministers. He was arrested and brought into Carlow, and there tried before a court-martial, at which some of the insurgents, to save their own lives, swore that he had been concerned in arranging the attack upon the town. Witnesses who could have cleared him are said to have been kept away by those who wished him to be sacrificed, and after a hurried trial and sentence, sir Edward was hanged.

Scenes like those above-described were taking place in every part of the counties that were in insurrection. Mr. Rawson, of Glassealy, near Athy, had raised a troop of yeomanry for the defence of that district, and the rather numerous protestant families who occupied especially the parish of Narraghmore. On the 24th of May an express arrived from Dunlavan to general Campbell, who commanded in this part, and intelligence was brought to captain Rawson, in-

forming them of the extent of the insurrection. At the request of the protestant inhabitants of Narraghmore, the general sent an express to Dunlavan, with directions how they were to proceed in self-defence; and captain Rawson sent another to Narraghmore, with orders to the loyalists to fall back on Glassealy, with an assurance that a party would soon go to their assistance; but both the messengers were murdered by the way, and such of the unfortunate protestants of Narraghmore as could not effect their escape remained in the village without any assistance. General Campbell sent a detachment of the Suffolk fencibles, under the command of major Montresor, by Glassealy, to the assistance of the Narraghmore loyalists, whilst he went with another towards Mullaghmast-hill. Early in the day James Murphy, of the water-works, as principal in command, with a number of rebel captains, had collected the whole country, man, woman, and child; in short, every one capable of bearing a pike, and they, with their united force, proceeded to attack the village of Narraghmore. Nine loyalists, who retired into the courthouse, successfully resisted them for two hours, and at last beat them off. But one John Jefferies, the permanent yeomanry sergeant of the Narraghmore corps, having a house with much property, which he wished to defend, imprudently led his little party into it. The routed rebels were met by Daniel Walsh, a yeoman who had deserted that corps, and was afterwards hanged, and they were by him rallied and brought back to the attack. Jefferies' house was set on fire, upon which its defenders parleyed, and the rebels promised that their lives should be spared if they would surrender their arms, but the instant they came forth the pikemen fell upon them, and proceeded to massacre them. No less than six were stabbing together at Thomas Young, but the clashing of their pikes, and the confusion which arose from their eagerness to shed his blood, having suspended his fate for a moment, Fitzpatrick, one of the deserters of the Narraghmore corps, cried out to the pikemen to clear his way, and he instantly blew out the brains of his fellow-soldier with the musket which he had received to serve the king. He then seized a pike, and transfixed the body to the ground, crying out, "That is the way to kill a heretic!" Thomas Alcock and Moses Borroughs, the latter an old man of eighty

years of age, whose venerable locks should have protected him, were next inhumanly butchered. The other six were reserved to be hanged in the adjoining wood of Narraghmore. The rebels then set fire to every protestant's house in the town, in which the women were particularly active. On their retiring, the mangled body of poor old Borroughs was seen by Fitzpatrick, who thrust a pike into it, and pitched it into a dyke of water, exclaiming, "Fogh! I smell a protestant carrion!" This man was captured by the Athy loyalists, tried by a court-martial, and executed on the spot where he had committed some of his enormities. Lieutenant Eadie, of the Tyrone militia, who had been stationed for some months at Ballitore, was ordered, on the morning of the 24th of May, to join his company at Calverstown. Having proceeded with twenty-three privates, by Narraghmore, he arrived too late to save this village. As he approached it he heard the shouts of the insurgents exulting over their victims, as they carried them off for execution. He immediately placed his men behind a low wall, and when they came within thirty yards gave them a volley, which killed many of them. They fled precipitately, and left their prisoners, except Jefferies and William Ashe, behind them. They were rallied and brought back to the fight by a heroine, whose spirit and animation so far encouraged them that they returned to the attack. In their turn the rebels attacked lieutenant Eadie's little party for many hours; but he kept on the defensive, until at length he completely routed his assailants, taking the heroine prisoner. She was stripped of her riding-coat and cap, after which lieutenant Eadie gave her her liberty. The rebels, after their defeat, retreated to Ballitore, where they gained a reinforcement, it was said, of some thousands, and attributing their want of success to irreligion, they formed in the street, knelt down, and compelled Cullen, the parish-priest, to give them his blessing. Then, under the command of Redmond Murphy and Malachy Delany, two rebel leaders, they broke into a house where lieutenant Yates, the son of a respectable magistrate of the neighbourhood, was prisoner, butchered him in a most barbarous manner, and threw his body into the street, to be devoured by the pigs. They then murdered a poor travelling soldier who had sought protection in one of the houses of Ballitore, and they put to death some soldiers of the

Suffolk fencibles who lay sick there, hanging several of them out of their windows. They took prisoners two ladies, wives of the Suffolk officers, and lodged them in the house of Abraham Shackleton, of Ballitore, under a guard of rebels. They then proceeded to murder Jefferies and Ashe, but the priest, Cullen, saved and concealed them till they made their escape to Athy.

The insurgents in Ballitore, who had increased to the number of three thousand, now learnt from their scouts that lieutenant Eadie had missed the road to Calverstown, and they pursued him. Meanwhile major Montresor had proceeded with his detachment to Glassealy, where a party of rebels from Fonstown, under the command of Paddy Dowling and Terry Toole, who were on their way to burn the mansion-house there, fled at his approach. The major then proceeded to the village of Narraghmore, but too late to do any essential service there, as no human being was found except the mangled victims of the fury of the insurgents, and every protestant house was destroyed or burnt. The major then marched to the place of his destination Redgrasshill, while captain Rudd with thirty men flanked him through the woods of Narraghmore, and having been joined by lieutenant Eadie, they followed the route which major Montresor had taken. At the end of the bog road near the turnpike they were attacked and surrounded by the three thousand rebels from Narraghmore, on whom they kept up a brisk fire for near half-an-hour, which brought the major and his party to their assistance. The rebels having perceived his approach, placed a number of wool-packs on carts, which happened accidentally to be passing by, and some of their marksmen concealed behind them fired and killed seven of the Suffolk fencibles, and then retreated to their main body. But the major pursued, and attacked them with such effect, that in a short time two hundred lay dead, and as many more were wounded. In those different conflicts, and in the scenes of carnage, conflagration, and plunder, which occurred in the course of that day, sixty yeomen of the Narraghmore corps in their uniforms fought with the rebels; for which, eighteen of them were subsequently shot, several were hanged, some fled the country, and others came in under the proclamation offering pardon to repentant rebels, and received protections.

The main object of the rebels in that part

of the county of Kildare was to join those of the Queen's county and the county of Carlow; and notwithstanding their different defeats, they collected a party of one thousand two hundred, and were proceeding to accomplish their original plan, when, in passing through Castledermot to Carlow, they were attacked by captain Mince, with a small party of the sixth regiment of foot. They were thus quickly routed, and several of them were killed, and sir Richard Butler, who went with his troop of yeomen cavalry to the assistance of captain Mince, pursued them and took many prisoners, of whom two were hanged.

General Campbell, having received intelligence that the rebels were in great force in Ballitore, that they had taken many prisoners, and that they obstructed the approaches, not only to Athy, but even the great Munster road to the metropolis, by felling large trees across them, formed a plan for dislodging them, and ordered the troops from Carlow and Baltinglass to march to one side of the town, while he approached on the other. At twelve o'clock on the night of the 27th he marched from Athy with his whole force, except a few yeomen under the command of captain Rawson, who were left in charge of the town, but the person who undertook to guide his party mistook the road and led him by the woods of Narraghmore, through which he sent a flanking party. As they passed by the mansion-house of Narraghmore some of the rebels fired at the troops from it; on which general Campbell ordered it to be attacked with cannon. After some discharges of the artillery it was set on fire, and the fellows who had fired at the troops were killed in the woods, as they were endeavouring to make their escape. Atrocities were acted on all sides. When the general entered Ballitore, he found it deserted by every male inhabitant, except a surgeon, named Francis Johnson. Some of the Tyrone regiment declared they had repeatedly seen this man commanding the rebels, and one of them, without further parley, stabbed him in the breast with a bayonet, and he fell. He rose again, laid his hand on his wound, and strongly and with many oaths asserted his innocence; but several of the soldiers cried out, that they had frequently seen him at the head of the rebels, and an opening being made, five of the Suffolk fencibles presented their muskets at him, and he fell pierced with as many balls. When general Campbell en-

tered the village, he liberated colonel Wolsey and his lady, two wives of the Suffolk officers, and others, who had been detained there prisoners by the rebels.

Finding that they were everywhere unsuccessful, the insurgents now sent a deputation to general Campbell, offering to surrender their arms, and about three hundred gave up pikes and other arms at Ballindrum, near the moat of Ardsclull, and great numbers besides went to Athy, and obtained protections. In about ten days general Dundas thought it necessary to order the garrison at Athy to march to Kilcullen to reinforce him there, and the town was evacuated by the military, the yeomen, and all the protestants, the latter well knowing that they would be massacred without the protection of the former. When they had marched about ten miles they received an order that the yeomanry should return to defend the town, which gave the greatest joy to the loyalists, as all their property would have been destroyed in their absence. They arrived there about twelve o'clock at night, and concluded that the rebels were in possession of it; but though they had been waiting to attack it some nights before, they were afraid to enter, suspecting that its evacuation was a feint, and that the general meant to have attacked them as soon as they had got possession of it. The next evening they approached it in great force, but finding the yeomen ready to receive them they fled from a small patrol who had been sent to reconnoitre. From this period the country round Athy became tolerably tranquil, and no body of rebels appeared in force; but still it was not safe for a protestant to appear even in the roads alone.

These frequent successes of the king's troops and the loyal yeomanry discouraged the insurgents to such a degree that in many parts they became now anxious to escape the consequences of rebellion by returning to their duty and allegiance. On the 28th of May, a rebel chief named Perkins, who was at the head of two thousand men encamped on Knockawlin-hill, on the border of the curragh of Kildare, sent a message to general Dundas, stating that his men were ready to surrender their arms, provided they were allowed to retire unmolested to their homes, and that a brother of Perkins should be released from Naas jail. Dundas consulted with general Lake, and the offer of the insurgents was accepted, upon which they dispersed with every appear-

ance of joy, after surrendering thirteen cart-loads of arms.

Other parties showed an inclination to follow this example, although in one or two instances these offers on the part of the rebels were treacherous. On the day after the surrender at Knockawlin, a party of rebels, encamped at Timahoe, sent their delegate father Murphy, a priest, to sir Fenton Aylmer, who was posted at that time at Kilcock, with the Donadea cavalry which he commanded, consisting of one captain, one lieutenant, three sergeants, and thirty privates, to assure him of their determination of surrendering their arms; and to request that he would go to their camp, which he might do with the utmost safety, as they had the greatest respect and regard for him. He, agreeable to their desire, having gone there, accompanied by one friend, and escorted by two dragoons, had a long conference with their leaders; and in consequence of the strong assurance of their pacific disposition, and of their desire to return to their allegiance, he repaired first to general Dundas, and afterwards to lord Camden, to obtain an amnesty for them. While sir Fenton Aylmer was conferring with the rebel chiefs in their camp, his friends perceived two of the inferior rebels steal behind a hedge and present their muskets at him, on which he told the leaders, that he and his friend would instantly shoot them, if the assassins did not immediately desist; on which the chieftains made an excuse, and said it was done without their knowledge. They then, at their instance, accompanied them to a place about a mile from the camp; and as a proof of their sincerity, they observed that they had no arms; but they no sooner arrived there, than they saw six rebels with their muskets, going behind a hedge, to shoot at them. Subsequent to this, they treacherously made an attack on Kilcock with their whole force stationed at Timahoe, which is about seven miles distant, on the Monday following, saying, "That all they wanted was the bloody sir Fenton Aylmer, and Michael Aylmer his lieutenant, and their bloody orange crew." One of his videttes having informed him of their approach, he advanced with his corps, with an intention of charging them, but perceiving their great superiority of numbers, he made his retreat, after having narrowly escaped being surrounded. The rebels then entered the town, and searched every recess, and every chimney in

the inn, for him and his officers. Sir Fenton had fallen back, and joined a small corps of yeomen infantry, commanded by captain Jones, about a mile on the other side of the town, with whom he determined to give the rebels battle. He took his ground for this purpose in sir Percy Gethin's lawn, but he then found to his mortification, that the infantry had retreated, and that all his corps, except fourteen who were protestants, had deserted him; the remainder, who were Romanists, not being able, as they said, to mount their horses in the hurry, remained behind; and the rebels were so friendly to them that they only deprived them of their arms, without offering them any molestation. The papists in captain Jones's corps retired to their respective houses, in the same manner, without being molested by the enemy. The rebels then burnt the house of Joseph Robinson, a protestant, an active constable, and clerk of the parish church of Donadea; they also burnt the barrack, and afterwards destroyed Courtown, the seat of lieutenant Aylmer, swearing at the same time that they would burn the house of every protestant. They next proceeded to Donadea, to burn the house of sir Fenton Aylmer, but were diverted from doing so, by being informed that their own friends had lodged many valuable articles in it for safe custody; but they gave orders to have them removed, that they might execute their purpose. But having been engaged in other enterprises, they fortunately forgot it. Nicholas Newenham, one of sir Fenton's videttes at Kilcock, having advanced too far, was taken prisoner by the rebels, and was a witness of the destruction of his father's house, close to Donadea, which they burnt, because he was a protestant. Having led young Newenham to their camp, they compelled him to dig his own grave; and during five or six days they carried him often to the brink of it, and threatened to throw him in and bury him alive. Each time they compelled him to say his prayers at the edge of it, while they mocked his religion, and cursed him as a heretic. At last one of them, more humane than the rest, shot him, threw his body into the grave, and covered it lightly with earth.

In spite of a few occurrences like this, the insurgents of the county of Kildare seemed generally disposed to follow the example of their brethren at Knockawlin, when they were checked by an unfortunate occurrence. Three days after the

surrender of the camp at Knockawlin, another body had assembled on the curragh for the same purpose, according to an agreement made with general Dundas. In the meanwhile general sir James Duff, who was quartered in Limerick, receiving alarming accounts of the insurrection, and without certain information on the condition of Dublin, as the communications were intercepted, had resolved on marching to the relief of the government. He had under his command seventy of lord Roden's fencible cavalry, and two hundred and fifty of the city of Dublin regiment of militia, with two light six-pounders. They were joined on their way by about two hundred of the South Cork regiment of militia, with their two battalion guns, and by about fifty of the fourth dragoon guards, and a party of yeomen. They thus presented a formidable

force when, by forced marches, they reached Kildare. There their feelings were excited by finding the mangled bodies of old Crawford and his grand-daughter, and of the unfortunate lieutenant Giffard, the latter of whom they buried with military honours. Hearing of the body of insurgents assembled on the curragh, they immediately proceeded against them, and summoned them to surrender unconditionally. One of the rebels, by accident or design, fired off a musket, which the king's troops mistaking for an act of hostility, immediately charged, broke, and pursued them, with a great slaughter. About half-an-hour after the error was explained by the arrival of general Wilford, who had been deputed by general Dundas to receive the proffered submission of this body of rebels.

CHAPTER IV.

STATE OF DUBLIN AND THE COUNTRY ROUND; BATTLE OF TARA; INSURRECTION IN WICKLOW.



MEANWHILE Dublin had remained in a state of blockade, for the whole country round was in open rebellion, and all communication with the interior of the country was cut off. Scenes similar to those described above had taken place in various parts of Meath, and even in the county of Dublin, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital. The country around presented one universal scene of plunder and devastation, over-run by numerous bodies of peasantry who scarcely left a house untouched. There were very few troops in this district, and the yeomanry were so scattered about that it was found necessary to begin by gradually concentrating that force on one point. When intelligence of the outrages committed at Dunboyne and Dunshaughlin reached Navan, on the morning of the 24th of May, the people of that town were taken by surprise, and in their alarm a dispatch was sent to captain Molloy, who commanded at Kells, to beg that he would

send such troops as he could spare to their protection. Captain Molloy immediately marched with the yeomanry cavalry and infantry of Kells to co-operate with the Navan cavalry; but he found that Navan was not threatened with an immediate attack, and returned with the main body of his force to Kells to protect that place, which contained an important depôt of ammunition. It was resolved, however, that the Kells cavalry, with a detachment of the Navan troop, should march towards Dunshaughlin and reconnoitre the enemy. They soon found that the insurrection had taken a serious character, and captain Molloy lost no time in sending dispatches in every direction to call the yeomanry to arms.

On the night of the 25th of May, the Reay fencibles arrived at Navan, on their way to Dublin, and they were prevailed upon by captain Preston to join with the Navan cavalry, which he commanded, in an attack upon the rebels at Dunshaughlin. They were joined by other bodies of yeomanry from the adjacent country, and marched from Navan at day-break on the 26th; but

when they reached Dunshaughlin they found that the rebels had changed their position, and could obtain no information as to where they were gone. It was soon, however, discovered that the insurgents of Meath and Dublin were gathering on the hill of Tara, about eighteen miles from Dublin, and that their numbers were already formidable. The united force marched against them, amounting to about four hundred men, consisted of three companies of the Reay fencibles, with a field-piece, lord Fingall's troop of yeomen cavalry, and captain Molloy's company of yeomen infantry.

The hill of Tara is very steep, its summit being surrounded with ancient intrenchments, within which on the highest point stood the church, surrounded by a wall. This post was occupied by about three thousand insurgents, who had hoisted white flags in their camp. They had plundered the houses of the country around of provisions, and then were occupied in cooking at about forty fires when the king's troops came in view. As soon as the rebels saw them, they put their hats on the tops of their pikes, uttered dreadful yells, and at the same time began to jump and put themselves in strange attitudes as a sort of savage mode of expressing defiance. They then began to advance, firing in an irregular manner.

Meanwhile the infantry of the little army opposed to them, formed in line, and advanced to within fifty yards of them before they fired. The cavalry was divided into two bodies, one of which was sent to each end of the line to prevent the rebels from out-flanking and surrounding the infantry, which they attempted to do. The insurgents showed no want of courage, for they made three desperate attacks, in the last of which they laid hold of the cannon; but the officer who commanded the gun had just time to apply the match before he was surrounded, and about a dozen of the assailants were destroyed by the explosion. They now began to give way on every side before the steady fire of the Reay fencibles, and after a struggle of about half-an hour, and a loss of about four hundred killed and wounded, they dispersed and fled in the utmost confusion, throwing away their arms and ammunition, and everything that could encumber them. The Reay fencibles had had twenty-six men killed and wounded, and the upper Kells infantry had one killed and five wounded.

This victory was, under the circumstances

of the moment, of very considerable importance. Not only did it open the communication of the metropolis with the north, but it no doubt hindered the rebellion from extending itself over Meath, and ultimately through Munster and Ulster. From the confessions of some of the prisoners, it appeared that they were acting on a preconcerted plan, and that their success was to be the signal for rising in all parts of the counties of Meath and Westmeath, Louth, Monaghan, and Cavan. Their intention was to have proceeded that night to plunder Navan, and then to attack Kells, and they were fully informed of the unprotected state of the munitions in the latter place. Many of the fugitives retired to the bogs of Meath and Kildare, whence they continued for three weeks to sally forth on plundering expeditions.

The United Irishmen were still active in Dublin, and they contrived to keep up a correspondence with their friends in the country around, and to give them information to enable them to surprise convoys and small parties of troops. The loyal citizens were continually alarmed with reports of discoveries of secret manufactories of pikes and other arms, and of meetings of conspirators even in the heart of the capital. Political murders were not uncommon in the streets. All these subjects of alarm called forth the utmost vigilance of the magistrates, who were continually issuing proclamations forbidding the citizens to be out of their houses at late hours, and urging them to watchfulness. The rebellion had taken a character different probably to that which the United Irishmen themselves had expected, for it was becoming a mere war of extermination between catholic and protestant. This circumstance now alarmed the loyal part of the catholics themselves, who began to foresee that if it went on they would ultimately be the sufferers, and they exerted themselves to convince the government of their determination to give it their support. On the 30th of May, an address was presented to the lord lieutenant, signed by many of the Roman catholic nobility, gentry, and ecclesiastics, in which they said, "We the undersigned, his majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Roman catholics of Ireland, think it necessary at this moment publicly to declare our firm attachment to his majesty's royal person, and to the constitution under which we have the happiness to live. We feel, in common

with the rest of his majesty's subjects, the danger to which both are exposed, from an implacable and enterprising enemy, menacing invasion from abroad, and from the machinations of evil and disaffected men, conspiring treason within his majesty's kingdom. Under these impressions, we deem it necessary to remove, by an open and explicit declaration, every idea of countenance afforded, on our part, to a conduct bearing even the appearance of indifference or indiscretion, much more to a conduct holding forth symptoms of disaffection and hostility to the established order of government in this kingdom, in the preservation of which, though we differ from it in some points of spiritual concern, we feel too deeply interested to look, with an indifferent eye, at its overthrow. Allow us, then, to assure your excellency, that we contemplate with horror, the evils of every description which the conduct of the French republic has produced on every nation weak enough to be deluded with its promises of liberty and offers of fraternity; we anticipate similar misfortunes are awaiting this his majesty's kingdom, in the deprecated event of successful invasion; with confidence we shall state our determination, not to be outdone by any description of our fellow subjects in zealous endeavours for averting that calamity, and that, although anxious to enjoy, free of every distinction, the full benefit of our constitution, we reject, with indignation, any idea of removing the restrictions under which we still labour by any means of foreign invasion, or by any other step inconsistent with the known laws of the land. We prefer, without hesitation, our present state to any alteration thus obtained, and with gratitude to the best of kings, and to our enlightened legislature, we acknowledge such a share of political liberty and advantage already in our possession as leaves us nothing to expect from foreign aid, nor any motive to induce us to look elsewhere than to the tried benignity of our sovereign, and the unbiased determination of the legislature as the source of future advantage. We cannot avoid expressing to your excellency our regrets at seeing the general delusion of many (particularly the lower orders) of our religious persuasion engaged in unlawful associations and practices; yet we trust that your excellency's discernment will lead you to make every just allowance for the facility with which men, open to delusion from their

situation in life, are led astray from political duty: it shall be our endeavour to recal such men to a sense of that duty, how inconsistent their conduct is with their real interests, and how contrary to the maxims of religion which they profess; nor shall we less endeavour, by our conduct to convince all descriptions of our fellow subjects, how much we are impressed with the necessity of laying aside all considerations of religious distinctions, and joining in one common effort for the preservation of our constitution, of social order, and of the christian religion, against a nation whose avowed principles aim at the destruction of them all. We request your excellency will make these our sentiments known to his majesty, and we rely with unfeigned confidence on your excellency's acknowledged candour and generosity, that you will represent us in that light to which we venture to hope our conduct and principles have given us a just claim."

The alarm was the more intense in Dublin, because the rebellion existed in its greatest violence through the extensive districts immediately adjacent to it on the south. The missionaries of the United Irishmen had been extraordinarily active in exasperating the minds of the catholic peasantry of the mountains of Wicklow. The insurgents were strengthened and encouraged by the desertion of many of the catholic yeomen, who carried arms and a certain amount of knowledge of military discipline to the rebel cause. One of these, named Thomas Kavanagh, a deserter from lord Aldborough's corps, became one of the principal leaders of the rebels of Wicklow. At the commencement of the rebellion, Kavanagh collected four or five hundred of the insurgents in the neighbourhood of Stratford-upon-Slaney, a small manufacturing town about twenty-six miles from Dublin, and they marched into the town and began to pillage it. But while thus occupied they were suddenly attacked by a small party of the military who are said to have killed upwards of a hundred of them before they effected their escape.

The yeomen of the county had been collected in garrison at Newtown-mount-Kennedy, a few miles nearer Dublin, where some of the regular troops were also posted. On Tuesday the 29th of May, a small party, consisting of ten of the Ancient Britons and as many of the Newtown-mount-Kennedy cavalry, were sent to Roundwood, with orders to reconnoitre the Devil's Glen,

where the rebels were reported to be encamped in considerable force. As they approached Roundwood, they fell in with several small parties of insurgents, whom they attacked and cut off. Soon after this, they received information that the rebels were burning the houses of protestants, and that they had begun with that of Mr. Hugo of Drummeen, who was an officer in the Wicklow cavalry. As this place was only about three miles distant, they hastened to it, and arrived in time to save the dwelling-house, though the offices were already in flames. They however attacked and defeated the perpetrators of this outrage, and destroyed the village of Clohogue, in which they took refuge.

The officer commanding at Newtownmount-Kennedy was lord Rossmore. During the latter days of the month of May large bodies of insurgents were seen on the surrounding mountains, which led him to believe that an attack was intended. The neighbourhood was in such a condition at this time, that on the twenty-ninth of May two dragoons bringing a dispatch from Dublin to Lord Rossmore, were attacked, and one of them killed before they could enter the town, while the other narrowly escaped with the dispatches. The garrison consisted of forty Ancient Britons, twenty of the Antrim militia, forty of the Newtownmount-Kennedy cavalry, and forty dismounted men, who had only received their

arms the preceding day. About one o'clock on the morning of the thirtieth of May, the town was suddenly attacked by about a thousand rebels, well armed, who marched resolutely into it, and set fire to several of the houses, and to the stable of the Ancient Britons, whose horses had fortunately been removed. The military were immediately at their posts to repel the attack, but they at first suffered severely. Captain Burgany of the Ancient Britons was killed, and captain Gore of the Newtownmount-Kennedy cavalry dismounted and dangerously wounded, at the first onset. The rebels, however, were soon routed, and pursued to a great distance, losing many of their comrades and dropping a great number of pikes in their flight.

For some time after this battle, the county of Wicklow was the scene of no very remarkable event, the principal insurgent leaders having proceeded to a new and more animated scene of action. Yet the county was so generally overrun by them, that there was no safety for the loyalists or protestants except in the garrisoned towns. As a proof of this we are told that captain Beauman, who commanded the Coolgreney corps, being at Arklow when the insurrection broke out, though his own house was but five miles distant, was able neither to visit it nor to receive any intelligence from it for three weeks, all communication was so entirely cut off.

CHAPTER V.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE INSURRECTION IN THE COUNTY OF WEXFORD; CAPTURE OF ENNISCORTHY, AND OF WEXFORD.



THE violence of the insurrection seemed to be gradually abating in the districts where it had first shown itself, it suddenly burst out with redoubled force in the county where it was least expected. The history of the rebellion in the county of Wexford affords a striking illustration of the

baneful effects of the agitation spread abroad by the United Irishmen. It was one of the last districts brought into the "union," and before it was visited by the missionaries of the United Irishmen its population was the most industrious, the happiest, and the most contented in Ireland. Many English families had settled in it, it had few absentees, and there was a general good feeling between the landlords and the tenantry. The consequence was that the latter were

slow to listen to the new political tenets, and the United Irishmen themselves acknowledged that they had nowhere so much difficulty in making converts as here, and that it was only by continual reports of intended massacres by orangemen, and similar means, that they at length succeeded in forcing the peasantry of Wexford into that degree of maddened excitement which drew down upon them the burnings and floggings necessary to drive them into open revolt.

The county of Wexford was one of the principal scenes of the exploits of William Putman M'Cabe, whose extraordinary success as an emissary of revolution gained him the entire confidence of lord Edward Fitzgerald, who is said to have regarded him as his "right-hand man." Endued equally with cunning and courage, with great powers of persuasion, and inimitable talents in mimicry, M'Cabe traversed the country in all sorts of disguises, and his adventures and escapes would fill a volume. A writer who derived his information from some of M'Cabe's friends and party, has put on record several of these adventures, which show us the extraordinary zeal and activity of the preachers of French political doctrines in Ireland in the period preceding this eventful year. In the north, the first scene of M'Cabe's labours, it was not unfrequently his practice to cause it to be announced that "a converted papist would preach the Word in a certain barn on an appointed night, and explain how he became convinced of the true doctrines of presbyterianism." This naturally collected a crowd, and M'Cabe would rise in a strange dress, and, with an assumed voice, lead on his hearers from religion to politics, until after a few lessons from him they were prepared to be sworn into the union. On one occasion some magistrates, hearing strange reports of a new preacher in their neighbourhood, determined to arrest him. The place of meeting, and the night on which the clergyman should hold forth, were communicated to them. A captain of yeomanry was directed to bring his men to the appointed barn, which they were to surround, and upon a given signal to enter and arrest the preacher. The barn was an old solitary building in a place where there was no habitation within two miles. On the evening announced as that when the unknown divine was to discourse, the well-clad, stoutly-mounted presbyterians might be seen making their way, while the ragged and shoeless catholics were also observed

hurrying thither in crowds. A few minutes before the appointed hour, after night-fall, the building was crowded to excess, and many were wondering why the preacher had not come, when, at the end of the valley, a middle-sized man was noticed, hurrying forward, the outline of his figure was concealed by a long dark coat, which trailed after him, like the *soutans* with which the catholic clergy are invested in their churches; a broad-brimmed hat, like a quaker's, overshadowed his features, which were still further disguised by a pair of green goggle spectacles. He entered the barn, ascended a table, and commenced preaching on charity. At first his discourse was that of a christian pastor; he impressed upon the different sects by which he said he knew he was surrounded, the duty they owed to one another of forbearance, of forgiveness of injuries, of reconciliation, and of union. He then diverged into the state of the country, showed how their dissensions had been taken advantage of, how injurious had been the conduct of England to all Irishmen, no matter what their creed or politics, and besought of them to unite for their deliverance from oppression. He then called on every friend of Ireland to come forward and to take the oath of the United Irishmen. His address was delivered with that energy and earnestness which were suited to his auditory, and those who had heard him express himself under any excitement of his feelings, could well imagine that in such a discourse there were not wanting outbursts which produced an extraordinary effect upon his auditors. His object was thus gained, numbers were coming forward to swear, when a loud whistle was heard, and immediately the scarlet coats of the yeomanry filled up the only entrance to the barn. The captain demanded the surrender of the man who had been addressing the people. "Put out the light!" exclaimed the preacher, at the same time thrusting his broad hat on the candle which was nearest to him. In a few minutes all the other candles in the barn were extinguished. The officer ordered a party to guard the door, and to permit no one to pass without an order from him, and then called again on the preacher to surrender. In the meantime a soldier said he had left his musket outside, and asked permission to bring it in, which was given unsuspectingly. The soldier passed, uttering imprecations on the "croppies." The voice of the preacher was soon

heard outside the barn, calling upon the people to forget their feuds, and be faithful to each other and their native country. The call was not in vain, and that night M'Cabe stated that about two hundred persons were added to the muster-roll of the county Antrim. This exploit of M'Cabe got talked about, he became suspected, and suspicion was confirmed when it was subsequently found that the United Irishmen, resolving to display their physical strength, took advantage of the opportunity of making up in one day the harvest of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who, by his conduct, had rendered himself very popular. A certain time was fixed upon for the exhibition of their numbers and their unanimity of purpose, and upon that day, as it had been agreed upon, thousands of the peasantry were seen marching from different parts of the country, and concentrating upon a certain point, where the leader, M'Cabe, mounted on horseback, was to command their movements. They marched regularly under his orders to the place where their operations were to begin, accomplished their task, and in the evening quietly dispersed to their homes.

By the employment of means like these Wexford soon became a turbulent county. M'Cabe wandered among its peasantry in the various characters of a mendicant, a farmer, and a pedlar, always with the same object and the same perseverance; and an ardent writer of his party tells us that on his return to Dublin, "although he had not initiated the great body of the peasantry, they were maddened into discontent, and were ready for revolt." Yet it was the indiscreet zeal of the protestant yeomanry which most probably completed the work that M'Cabe had commenced. On the eve of the insurrection many of the catholics of Wexford had addressed the lord lieutenant, through the medium of the earl of Mountnorris, protesting their loyalty, and pledging themselves to arm, if permitted, in defence of government whenever there should be occasion. Not above six hundred men, at most, of the regular army or militia were stationed in this county, the defence of which was almost abandoned to the troops of yeomen and their supplementaries, while the magistrates in the several districts were employed in ordering the seizure, imprisonment, and whipping of numbers of suspected persons. These yeomen being prejudiced against the catholics, by tra-

ditionary and other accounts of the former cruelties of that religion in Ireland, fearing such cruelties in case of insurrection, and confirmed in this fear by papers found in the pockets of some prisoners, containing some of the old sanguinary doctrines of the Romish church, which authorised the extermination of heretics, acted with a spirit ill fitted to allay religious hatred. As the insurrection in Wexford was far more considerable than that in any other district, we have far more circumstantial narratives of its various events by those who lived amidst them, and we shall have little difficulty in tracing through them its details. How far the assurances conveyed through earl Mountnorris, of the loyalty of the catholics of Wexford was the cause of that fatal security on the part of the government, which proved so fatal to the lives and property of so large a part of its population, it is not easy to say. At all events it was a dangerous experiment to excite so violent an irritation by floggings, imprisonments, and a variety of insults, without sufficient means to enforce obedience. Government was also blamed for the institution of yeomen cavalry instead of infantry, which left a mass of the population unarmed, who might have been an efficient force to crush the rebellion in its commencement. In the neighbourhood of Gorey, we are told that the terror of the whippings was so great that the people would have been extremely glad to renounce for ever all notions of opposition to government, if they could have been assured of permission to remain in a state of quiet. As an instance of this terror, Gordon, a contemporary writer, relates the following circumstance: "On the morning of the 23rd of May a labouring man, named Denis M'Daniel, came to my house, with looks of the utmost consternation and dismay, and confessed to me that he had taken the United Irishman's oath, and had paid for a pike, with which he had not yet been furnished, nineteen-pence halfpenny, to one Kilty, a smith, who had administered the oath to him and many others. While I sent my eldest son, who was a lieutenant of yeomanry, to arrest Kilty, I exhorted M'Daniel to surrender himself to a magistrate, and make his confession, but this he positively refused, saying that he should in that case be lashed to make him produce a pike which he had not, and to confess what he knew not. I then advised him, as the only alternative, to remain quietly at home, promising

that if he should be arrested on the information of others, I would represent his case to the magistrates. He took advice, but the fear of arrest and lashing had so taken possession of his thoughts, that he could neither eat nor sleep, and on the morning of the 25th he fell on his face and expired, in a little grove near my house." Still Wexford was slow in following the example of the counties to the north, but the standard of rebellion was at last raised between Gorey and Wexford on the night of the 26th of May, by John Murphy, catholic priest of Boulavogue, commonly known by the denomination of Father John, who was coadjutor, or assistant curate, of the parish priest, a man of shallow intellect, a fanatic in religion, and, from the latter circumstance, too well qualified to inflame the superstitious minds of the ignorant multitude. The signal for rising was given by lighting a fire on a hill called Corrigrua, which was immediately answered by another on an eminence close to father Murphy's house at Boulavogue. In an attempt to disperse a body of the insurgents, at the head of a part of his troop, Thomas Bookey, a brave young man, first lieutenant of the Camolin cavalry, was killed, as he incautiously advanced before his men to harangue the rebels; and his house, about seven miles from Gorey, was burned. From this commencement of hostility the commotion spread rapidly on all sides, and the assembling of rebel parties was greatly promoted by the reports disseminated of numbers of people shot in the roads, at work in the fields, and even in their houses, unarmed and unoffending, by straggling parties of yeomen. Urged on by these reports, which certainly were not without too much foundation, great numbers took refuge with their friends in arms, inasmuch that on the following morning, which was Whitsunday, the 27th of May, two large bodies were collected on the hill of Oulart, nearly midway between Gorey and Wexford, about eleven miles to the south of the former, and on Kilthomas-hill, an inferior ridge of Slieve Bwee mountain, about nine miles westward of Gorey. Each party, especially that of Oulart, where the number of combatants was less than at Kilthomas, consisted of a confused multitude of both sexes and of all ages. Against the latter body of insurgents, consisting of two or three thousand men in arms, a body of yeomen marched on the same morning, between two and three hundred in number,

infantry and cavalry, from the neighbouring town of Carnew, in the county of Wicklow. The infantry of this little army, flanked at a considerable distance on the left by the cavalry, advanced intrepidly up the hill against the rebels, who were posted on the summit. The latter, if they had been sensible of their advantage, and known how to improve it, might, as appeared by subsequent events, have surrounded and destroyed this little body of brave men; but they were struck with a panic, and fled, after a few discharges of musketry from the yeomen, at too great a distance to make any considerable execution. About a hundred and fifty of the rebels were killed in the pursuit, and the yeomen, exasperated by the death of lieutenant Bookey, and other violent acts, burned two Romish chapels, and about a hundred cabins and farm-houses of Romanists in the course of a march of seven miles.

The event of battle was very different on the same day, on the hill of Oulart, where father John commanded in person; a detachment of a hundred and ten chosen men of the north Cork militia, under the command of lieutenant-colonel Foote, marched from Wexford, and attacked the rebels on the southern side of the hill. The rebels fled at the first onset, and were pursued at full speed by the militia, who were so little apprehensive of resistance that no rank or order was observed. While the rebels were making their escape with precipitation toward the northern side of the hill, they were admonished that a large body of cavalry had been seen that morning advancing against them in the opposite direction, apparently with the design to intercept their flight or co-operate with the militia in a double attack. As these insurgents were as yet totally unacquainted with warfare, the onset of cavalry was in the imaginations of many of them more terrible than that of infantry. They therefore, ignorantly supposing the cavalry to be marching directly against them, and urged on by father John, who told them that they must either conquer or perish, turned against the militia, who were now arrived near the summit, almost breathless, and charging them with their pikes, killed almost in an instant all the detachment, except the lieutenant-colonel, a sergeant, and three privates. According to the accounts given by some of the insurgents engaged in this massacre, no more than about three

hundred of their number ventured to make this furious attack, of whom only six were armed with firelocks, the rest carrying pikes, with which they made so sudden and close an assault that only three of them were killed and six wounded by the disordered soldiery. The body of cavalry, who terrified the rebels into this feat of courage against the militia consisted of two troops under captain Hawtrey White, which had marched from Gorey very early that morning with the design of attacking the insurgents; but after a march of twelve or thirteen miles, the number and position of the enemy were imagined to be such as to render a retreat necessary; and after the killing of some few unarmed stragglers, and some old men who had remained in their houses, they returned to Gorey quite ignorant of the intended march of troops from Wexford.

While the country exhibited a scene of distress and consternation, houses in flames, and families flying on all sides for asylum to the towns or the hills, the body of the rebels, under father John, marched from Oulart, flushed with victory, and perpetually augmenting on its way by new accessions. They first took possession of Camolin, a small town six miles westward of Gorey, the loyal inhabitants of which had taken refuge in the latter; and thence advanced to Ferns two miles further, whence the loyalists had fled six miles southward to Enniscorthy, whither they were followed by the rebels. The number of the latter, on their arrival at Enniscorthy, which they attacked at one o'clock in the afternoon, amounted to about seven thousand, of whom about eight hundred were armed with guns. The town, situate on both sides of the river Slaney, was garrisoned by about two hundred and ninety men, consisting of militia, yeomen infantry and cavalry, beside some volunteers. At the western side of the town, called the Duffry-gate, whither the yeoman infantry had marched to meet them, the rebels, driving before them a number of horses and other cattle to disorder the ranks of their opponents, a stratagem which had been practised by other bodies of insurgents at Tara hill and elsewhere, and raising loud and horrible shouts, according to their universal custom on such occasions, made an irregular but furious onset. As the north Cork militia, whose commander, with a conduct not easy to be comprehend-

ed, had not without the utmost difficulty, and most earnest entreaties, been persuaded to lead his men from the bridge, and to form a left wing to the defending army, retreated to their former station, the yeomen, who composed the right wing, finding themselves totally unsupported, and unable to withstand alone the multitude of assailants, retreated after a few discharges of musketry to the market-house, where they made their stand. A disorderly fight was maintained in the town, which, to render it untenable, was fired in many parts by the disaffected part of the inhabitants, some of whom also aimed shots from the windows at the garrison. The assailants in a short time extending themselves around, and making dispositions to ford the river in several places, were galled from the bridge, which was now become the station of defence, by the fire of the militia, who, doubtless, if their force had been properly directed from the beginning of the attack in conjunction with the yeomen, would have either entirely repulsed the rebels or committed such a havoc among them as greatly to check their ardour for the prosecution of their schemes. Notwithstanding the little assistance, except at the bridge, received from the military by the yeomen and volunteers, so fluctuating for some time was the success of the day, that many persons, to avoid the fury of each prevailing party in turn alternately hoisted the orange and the green ribbon; at length, when the rebels, wading across the river, which was then low, both above and below the bridge, up to the middle in water, some to the neck, had entered the eastern part, called Templeshannon, and set some houses on fire, the garrison, after a gallant defence of above three hours, in which the Enniscorthy infantry, commanded by captain Joshua Pouden, fired above forty rounds each man, abandoned the town, and retreated in great disorder to Wexford. The loss of the garrison, including volunteers, amounted to near ninety, among whom was John Pouden, of Daphne, Esq., a gentleman universally beloved; that of the rebels, who certainly suffered a very galling fire, was said to be five hundred, though perhaps this number was overstated. Before the yeomanry quitted the town they had expended their ammunition, though they had repeatedly fill their pouches from the militia magazine. Captain Snowe, who commanded on this occasion, published a vindication of his conduct in this disas-

trous affair. He says that he expected to be attacked by two columns of rebels at once, one on each side of the river, which would have been the case if they had been skilfully conducted, and that he therefore took post on the bridge, the only station whence he could hope to defend the whole. Finding that they had advanced in one column only, he marched with his whole force to support the yeomen at the Duffrygate; but when he was proceeding to post his men in order of battle, he was advised by captain Richards of the yeomen cavalry to file to the left to oppose a body of rebels, who were taking a circuit to enter the town at the rear of the army, by what is called the Daphne road. Observing that this body, instead of facing his men, took a wider circuit to cross the river, and to seize the now unguarded part on the opposite side, he was obliged to retreat with all possible haste to his former post, where he arrived soon enough to make a great slaughter, and to frustrate their intention at the time. Captain Snowe is said to have been deserted by his two subaltern officers on this trying occasion.

Most of the loyal inhabitants of Enniscorthy, and a multitude of others who had come thither for protection, fled through the flames towards Wexford, and providentially the direction and weakness of the wind favoured their escape, for they could not otherwise have passed through the burning streets. The terror, consternation, and

distress of these fugitives is not to be described, flying for their lives in a confused multitude, without distinction of rank, sex, or age, almost all on foot, and leaving all their effects in the hands of their enemies. The state of their minds may be somewhat conceived from the circumstance, that women, habituated to all the indulgence which an affluent fortune affords, not only fled on foot, but also in that situation carried their infants on their backs to Wexford, the distance of which from Enniscorthy is about fourteen English miles. Some ladies, however, were utterly unable to perform this march, and must have been abandoned to their fate if they had not found some means of conveyance. Mrs. Handcock, wife to a very respectable clergyman, fell, in her attempt to escape through the street, on a heap of burning matter, from which horrible situation she was with difficulty raised by her husband, assisted by a soldier, and could proceed no farther until she was accommodated with a horse by the humanity of a yeoman. In the deplorable condition of those fugitives, some circumstances were favourable to their escape; the weather was remarkably fine, and they were not pursued; if they had been pursued, most of them must have been destroyed or captured. Some, who found not the opportunity of escape, were butchered in the streets, or imprisoned and reserved for future slaughter by the rebels.*

* In the account of the progress of the Wexford rebels up to this point I have followed Gordon. The following rather singular account was afterwards found on a paper taken from one of Father Murphy's attendants, which appears to be the commencement of a personal journal which he never completed.

"Saturday night, May 26, at 6 A.M., 1798. Began the republick of Ireland in Boulavogue in the county of Wexford, barony of Gorey, and parish of Kileormick, commanded by the reverend doctor Murphy, parish priest of the said parish, in the aforesaid parish, when all the protestants of that parish were disarmed, and amongst the aforesaid a bigot named Thomas Bookey, who lost his life by his rashness.

"26. From thence to Oulart, a country village adjoining, where the republick attacked a minister's house for arms, and was denied of, laid siege immediately to it, and killed him and all his forces; the same day burned his house and all the orange-men's houses in that and all the adjoining parishes in that part of the country.

"The same day a part of the army, to the amount of one hundred and four of infantry, and two troops of cavalry, attacked the republick on Oulart hill, when the military were repulsed with the loss of

one hundred and twelve men, and the republick four killed, and then went to a hill called Carrigrua, where the republick encamped that night, and from thence went to a town called Camolin, which was taken without resistance, and the same day took another town and *sate* of a bishop [Ferns]. At three in the afternoon, the same day, they laid siege to Enniscorthy, when they were opposed by an army of seven hundred men, there they were forced to set both ends of the town on fire, and then took the town in the space of one hour, and then encamped on a hill near the town, called Vinegar hill, where they remained that night."

With this singular journal we may compare the following narrative of a protestant, named Samuel Whealey, who escaped, and who afterwards deposed on oath to what he had seen. He declared that on "Saturday evening the twenty-sixth day of May last, about sunset, examinant saw a fire kindled on an adjoining hill, called Corrigrua, in said county, and that examinant saw a few minutes after another fire, on a rising ground, contiguous to the house of father John Murphy of Boulavogue in said county, and about a quarter of a mile from the house of examinant; and that soon after the said John Murphy and some other men repaired to the house of one William Goff, a near neighbour of examinant, and

The fate of Dr. Burrowes, rector of Kil-muckridge, one of the first of father Murphy's exploits when he set up the standard of rebellion, caused more sensation than any other single outrage of this period. Having heard that his house was threatened, the doctor barricaded it, and prepared to defend it with the assistance of some of his protestant neighbours who had taken refuge with him. Several shots were fired both by the besieged and by the assailants, but at length the fire that was gaining rapidly on the house obliged them to parley. Father Murphy assured them that if they would surrender their arms, they should not be injured, but they no sooner left the house than Mr. Burrowes and seven of his parishioners were put to death, and his son, a boy only sixteen years of age, so severely wounded that he was left for dead. Mrs. Burrowes, her four children, and a Miss Clifford, remained before the burning house weeping over the dead, and assisting the apparently dying youth, till they were all

that the said John Murphy cried out aloud, 'Pull him out! pull him out!' to which answer was made, 'Aye, aye;' and that soon after examinant saw the houses of John and Robert Webster, both protestants, in a state of conflagration, and which houses were set on fire by the said John Murphy and his party. Examinant saith, that said John Murphy and his party proceeded to a townland called Mullaunree, in said county, and set fire to the house of James Dennison, a protestant farmer, after having put him and his family to flight. That he and his family sat up all night, as the said John Murphy and his party were proceeding in their destructive progress; and that being very much alarmed and terrified, one of this examinant's sons, a private in the Ballaghkeene cavalry, repaired to captain White, who commanded said corps, to inform him thereof; and his other son went to Enniscorthy, to communicate intelligence thereof to the yeomanry and king's troops quartered there. That early on the morning of Whitsunday last, the said John Murphy, after having burnt many protestant houses in the neighbourhood, attacked that of the reverend Mr. Burrowes, a protestant clergyman, and that soon after examinant saw the house of the said Mr. Burrowes on fire. That the said John Murphy proceeded in his destructive progress, burning the houses of protestants, until he arrived at the hill of Oulart, in said county, where the said Murphy encamped with a numerous body of rebels, and where he, the said Murphy, was joined by one Edward Roche of Garrylough, attended also by a considerable body of rebels. Examinant saith, that having been informed that the said rebels meant to burn his house on the night of Whitsunday, he, this examinant, ordered his family to take the furniture thereout, and which they accordingly did; that on the said night, as soon as it grew dark, the said rebels, headed by said John Murphy and the said Edward Roche, went to the house of examinant

conducted to a wretched inn about half-a-mile off, and they were taken thence to be held prisoners, until they were liberated by the surrender of Wexford to the king's troops.

The fugitives from Enniscorthy found the inhabitants of Wexford labouring under the same apprehensions as themselves. On the breaking out of the rebellion in this county there were in Wexford between three and four hundred men of the north Cork militia, and the Wexford yeomanry cavalry and infantry. The suspicions of the magistrates and officers had been lulled by the apparent quiet of the neighbourhood, and by the readiness with which the tenantry came forward to take the oath of allegiance; but on the night of Saturday, the 25th of May, it was thought advisable, as a measure of security, to arrest three gentlemen of considerable influence, who were believed to favour the insurrection, Beauchamp Bagenal Harvey, of Barrycastle; John Henry Colclough, of Ballyleigh; and Edward Fitz-

and burned the same; and that examinant lay concealed in a ditch, so close to the said house while burning, that examinant could with difficulty bear the heat thereof. Examinant saith, that the said rebels carried off or destroyed the whole of examinant's furniture; that a great number of rebels went the next day in quest of examinant, in order to put him to death, but that examinant lay concealed in ditches. That two or three days after the burning of his house, the two daughters of examinant dug a hole in the bawn of said house, and having laid some oak planks thereon, and having covered the same with straw, and afterwards with the ashes of his house so burned, examinant lay concealed in said hole for about the space of one month; and that examinant during that time was supplied by his wife and daughters with food, but in the night only lest he should be discovered. Examinant saith, that during his concealment, the rebels came often and examined the ruins of the said house, and the fields and ditches in its vicinity, for examinant, declaring at the same time they would put him to death, and that the said rebels often said during their search, at one time that he was a bloody orangeman, though examinant saith he never saw an orangeman, nor knew what they meant by that appellation, except that examinant has been universally informed that they meant a protestant by the word orangeman. . . . Examinant saith that during his concealment at Dranay, aforesaid, a great number of protestants were shot contiguous to examinant's house by said rebels, as they were flying across the country from various quarters from the merciless rage of said rebels. That when the king's troops were victorious at Vinegar hill, examinant's daughter called to his relief three of the Ancient Britons, who conveyed examinant to Oulart on horseback, as examinant was unable to walk, having had a bad fever in his confinement, and that he was afterwards conveyed by his two sons to Gorey."

gerald, of Newpark. All these were imprisoned at Wexford. It was from this town that the detachment of the north Cork militia was sent against the insurgents, which joined with the Shilmalier yeomanry under colonel Le Hunte to make the disastrous attack at Oulart hill next morning; and when news of this affair arrived in Wexford, the remainder of the force were so eager to march forth and revenge their unfortunate companions, that their officers were obliged to lead them out of the town over the bridge, where they succeeded in persuading them to return. Mr. Hay, a gentleman of the county, who was then present in Wexford, describes the state of anxiety and alarm which appeared in the town during the whole of the Sunday. "The lamentations of the unfortunate widows and orphans of the soldiers who had fallen in the encounter increased the general consternation. These, clapping their hands, ran about the streets quite frantic, mixing their piteous moanings with the plaintive cries of their children, and uttering their bitterest maledictions against the yeomen, whom they charged with having run away, and left their husbands to destruction." The soldiery in the town cried aloud for revenge, and threatened to put to death the prisoners, but they were appeased by their commanders, and measures were taken to protect the prison. The night of Sunday was spent in continual apprehensions of an attack, but on Monday morning they learnt that the insurgents had marched against Enniscorthy, and in the middle of the day they could distinctly see the smoke arising from that town, which was set on fire in the attack as already described. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when the fugitives from Enniscorthy began to enter Wexford, and an inhabitant of this town has left us an account of the impression it made there. "The inhabitants who had escaped from Enniscorthy and its neighbourhood," he tells us, "pushed into the town in crowds; persons of the first fortunes in that part of the country, covered with dust and blood, with their infants in their arms, and their wives clinging behind them; and such women as had not been able to procure a horse or seat with their husbands, endeavoured to keep up with the mob of fugitives, with their children in their arms, and others hanging on them—women who, but a few hours before, were in possession of every comfort

life could afford. The inhabitants of Wexford, still more terrified by the spectacle now before them, were each endeavouring to secure a berth for their wives and children on board some one of the vessels lying in the harbour, every one of which was soon filled as full as it could hold. The gallant husbands and fathers now returned to their respective parades, apparently fortified with a double portion of courage, since the objects of their tenderest care seemed to have been placed in safety. The next morning, Tuesday, the 29th of May, a party of the Donegal militia arrived, with two pieces of cannon, and brought news that more assistance was advancing; but about twelve o'clock we received intelligence that a party of artillerymen with cannon and howitzers had been taken by the rebels. Orders were now given that all the fires should be put out, and that such houses as had thatched roofs should be immediately stripped, to prevent the disaffected party from following the example of their associates at Enniscorthy, by setting fire to the town during the time of its being attacked."

Before the arrival of the Donegal militia every preparation had been made for the defence of the town. The garrison had been increased by the arrival of the Shilmalier yeomen infantry, under the command of the right honourable George Ogle. They had barricaded the several avenues leading into the town, and placed cannon at the different entrances. The inhabitants offered to join the ranks and perform military duty, and upwards of two hundred were embodied under the command of officers in the army or volunteers who happened to be in the town. A greater number might have been raised, but there were no more arms. Every precaution was taken to prevent a nocturnal surprise, which was the kind of attack the inhabitants expected. On the arrival of the two hundred Donegal militia from Duncannon fort on the morning of the 29th, a dispatch was sent to general Fawcett, at Duncannon, to press him to hasten with further reinforcements. The Taghman yeomen cavalry arrived in Wexford soon after.

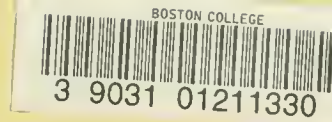
Although the number of men under arms in the town was now considerable, they were still alarmed by the reports of the numbers and power of the insurgents, and their confidence had been destroyed by the disaster at Oulart-hill and the loss of Enniscorthy. It was determined, therefore, at least to try and gain time by parleying. It was sug-

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