

## ACT OF THE UNION.

## A BILL PROHIBITING IRISH CATTLE.

Sir William Temple's Testimony—A True Statement of the Deplorable Condition—Address to the Queen for the Liberty to Export Their Linen Manufactures to the Plantations—The Money Bill—Extracts From the Commons Journal—The State of Pensions—Irish Rents Increased.

We stated in our last paper that it was not a new thing to have Irish cattle prohibited, and that other articles of Irish produce were also prohibited, until it was discovered by England to be an advantage to admit them. To prove this, and other matters connected with Irish trade, we have again to draw upon the author of the "Choice of Evils" for the following extract:—

"In the reign of Charles the Second, a Bill was brought into parliament against the importation of Irish cattle, a bill evidently against the interests of the English, and ruinous to the Irish nation. The counties of England most immediately concerned opposed it, and the council of Ireland remonstrated to the king, who was so much moved therewith, that he declared that he could neither in justice nor in conscience consent to such a bill—that he was equally king of all—especially if the benefits to the one were not proportionable to and as evident as the damage was to the other; and upon these grounds he recommended to them to give such a stop to this bill that it might never be presented to him—for if it were he must positively reject it.

"The letters from the council in Ireland did not make the same impression on the Lords of the Council, some of whom insisted much, that in a point evidently for the advantage and benefit of England, Ireland ought not to be put in the scale, because it might be some inconvenience there.

"It was urged in parliament, as an argument for prosecuting it, that if this bill did not pass, all the rents in Ireland would rise in vast proportion, and those in England fall as much, so that in a year or two the Duke of Ormond would have a greater revenue than the Earl of Northumberland. By this means the bill for prohibiting Irish cattle was carried with such fury that the Commons refused entering upon the Bill of Supply till they saw the fate of the other bill.

"Yet, in a few years after, this same bill was repealed; not because it might be some inconvenience to Ireland, but because it was thought expedient to divert Ireland from agriculture and manufactures, and to convert it into a grazing stock-farm for England. And from this inhuman policy, the very first blessing of nature, the superlative fertility of Ireland has turned out one of its greatest curses, and continues at this day to disgrace and depopulate Munster, one of the fairest provinces that the sun beholds. For if this bill had never been repealed—if a stop had been put to the exportation of live cattle, the body of the people would have been one degree, at least, farther removed from that pastoral state in which, like their Scythian ancestors, they have so long languished. They must have had more butchers to kill their cattle, more coopers to make casks for their beef, more salters, more packers, more tanners, more chandlers, more ship-carpenters, and more seamen—to say nothing of that agriculture which must have been increased to maintain increasing numbers. But, lest any should suspect this reasoning to be airy and speculative, I appeal to the fact, as strongly attested by Sir William Temple, in the following words: 'After the Act in England had wholly stopped the transporting of cattle, the trade of this kingdom was forced to find out a new channel. A great deal of land was turned to sheep, because wool gave ready money for the English markets, and, by stealth, for those abroad. The breeders of English cattle turned much to dairy, or else, by keeping their cattle to six and seven years old, and wintering them dry, made them fit for the beef trade abroad; and some merchants fell into care and exactness in barrelling them up; and hereby the improvements of this trade were grown so sensible in the course of a few years, that in the year 1639 some merchants in Holland assured me that they had received parcels of beef out of Ireland which sold current and very near the English, and of butter which sold beyond it, and that they had observed it spent as if it came from

the richer soil of the two. 'Tis most evident that if the Dutch war had not broken out so soon after, the improvements of all these trades (forced at first by necessity, and growing afterwards habitual by use) would in a few years have much advanced the trade and riches of this Kingdom, and made it a great gainer instead of being, by the Act, against transportation of their cattle."

"The author of the "Choice of Evils" quotes at considerable length from "The Commercial Restraints of Ireland Considered," which adverts to a representation made by the Irish House of Commons to Queen Anne, styled: "A true state of our Deplorable Condition," as also to the Statutes, Parliamentary Journals and various other authentic records. The following passages from this work are particularly worthy of attention. We would particularly recommend their perusal to the Unionists, Orangemen and all the other Knownothings, who prate so loudly and blatantly about the severance of the golden link, and the utter destruction of Protestantism in Ireland, once Home Rule is established there. The author of that rare and celebrated pamphlet says:

"If, in a period of four-score years of profound internal peace, my country shall appear to have often experienced the extremes of poverty and distress; if, at the times of her greatest supposed affluence and prosperity, the slightest causes have been sufficient to obstruct her progress, to annihilate her credit, and to spread dejection and dismay among all ranks of the people; and if such a country is blessed with a temperate climate and fruitful soil, abounds with excellent harbors and great rivers, with the necessaries of life and materials of manufacture, and is inhabited by a set of men, brave, active, and intelligent, some permanent cause of such disastrous effects must be sought for.

"After the Restoration, from the time that the Acts of Settlement and Explanation had been fully carried into execution, to the year 1688, Ireland made great advances, and continued for several years in a most prosperous condition. Lands were every where improved; rents were doubled; the Kingdom abounded with money; trade flourished, to the envy of our neighbors; cities increased exceedingly; many places of the Kingdom equalled the improvements of England; the King's revenue increased proportionably to the advance of the Kingdom, which was every day growing, and was well established in plenty and wealth; manufactures were set on foot in divers parts; the meanest inhabitants were at once enriched and civilized, and this Kingdom is represented to have been then the most improved and improving spots of ground in Europe.

"The policy of James the Second, after his arrival in Ireland, ruined its trade and revenue; but that the nation must have been restored in the reign of King William to a considerable degree of strength and vigor, their exertions in raising supplies to a great amount, from the year 1692 to the year 1698, are some proof. They taxed their goods, their lands, their persons, in support of a prince whom they sincerely or servilely called their deliverer and defender, and of a Government on which they believed their own preservation depended. Our exports increased in 1696, 1697 and 1698, and our imports did not rise in proportion, which occasioned a great balance in our favor, and this increase was principally to the woollen manufacture. In the last of those years the balance in favor of Ireland, in the account of exports and imports, was £419,442.

"But in the latter end of this reign the political horizon was overcast, the national growth was checked, and the national vigor and industry was impaired by the laws made in England restraining, in fact, prohibiting, the exportation of all woollen manufactures from Ireland.

"The Irish House of Commons, in 1703, laid before Queen Anne, a most effecting representation, containing, to use their own words, 'A true state of the deplorable condition,' in which they set forth the vast decay and loss of its trade; its being almost exhausted of coin; that they are hindered from earning their livelihood, and from maintaining their own manufactures; that thereby their poor are become very numerous; that great numbers of Protestant families have been constrained to remove out of the kingdom, as well into Scotland as into the dominions of foreign Provinces and States, and that their foreign trade and its returns are under such restrictions

and discouragements as to be then become in a manner impracticable—all though that kingdom had by its blood and treasure contributed to secure the plantation trade to the people of England.

"In a further address to the Queen, after mentioning the almost total loss of trade and decay of manufactures, they apply 'for liberty to export their linen manufactures to the plantations, to preserve the country from utter ruin;' yet all they could obtain was leave to send out brown and white linens, clogged with the prohibition of bringing anything back in return, which made the worthless concession of not effect.

"In a subsequent part of this Session, the Commons resolve, *nem. con.*, 'that, by reason of the great decay of trade, and discouragement of the manufactures of this kingdom, many poor tradesmen are reduced to extreme want and beggary.' And in the speech from the Throne, at the conclusion of the Session, it is mentioned, that the Commons could not provide for what was owing to the civil and military lists. The great distress, cannot be doubted. The period from thence to the death of Queen Anne is marked with the strongest circumstances of national distress and despondency. The representatives of the people, who were the best judges, and several of whom were members of the House of Commons before and after these restraints, have assigned the reason—the suppression of manufactures, and consequent decay of trade; no other can be assigned. The woollen manufactures were the great source of industry of Ireland.

"And comparing this period, subsequent to the year 1699, with that immediately antecedent, from the restoration, we learn this melancholy truth—"that a country will sooner recover from the miseries and devastation occasioned by war, invasion, rebellion, massacre, than from laws restraining the commerce, discouraging the manufactures, fettering the industry, and, above all, breaking the spirits of the people.

"If the cause of the poverty and distress of Ireland in the reign of Queen Anne has since continued to operate, though not always in so great a degree, yet sufficient frequently to reduce to misery, and constantly to check the growth and impair the strength of that kingdom, and to weaken the force and to reduce the resources of Great Britain, that man ought to be considered as a friend to the British Empire, who endeavors to establish this important truth, and to explain a subject so little understood.

"The great scarcity which happened in the years '28 and '29, and frequently before and since, is a decisive proof that the distresses of this kingdom have been occasioned by the discouragement of manufactures:—if the manufactures have not sufficient employment, they cannot buy the superfluous produce of the land; the farmers will be discouraged from tilling; and general distress and poverty must ensue. The consequences of the want of employment among manufacturers and laborers must be more fatal in Ireland than in most other countries; of the numbers of her people, (2,500,000), it has been computed that 1,887,220 live in houses with but one hearth, and may therefore be reasonably presumed to belong for the most part to those classes.

"In the year 1731, there was a great deficiency in the public revenue, and the national debt had considerably increased. The Speaker, in offering the money bill, prays, that they may enjoy a share of the public tranquility, by the increase of their trade, and the encouragement of their manufactures.' But in the next Session of 1733, they are told from the Throne what this share was to be, viz.,—"Peace must enable them to improve those branches and manufactures which are properly their own; meaning the trade and manufacture of linen. Whether this idea of property was kept inviolate, will hereafter appear.

"The following paragraphs from the Commons' Journal, show what was the sense of Parliament, in the year 1772, in regard of the breach of the national stipulations in the year 1698:—"England has never been known to keep word or honor with her less fortunate and weaker neighbor Ireland."

"At this time a considerable progress was made in the linen manufacture, and they became so successful in raising hemp, from thence to the year 1750, as to export considerable quantities of duck,

or sail-cloth, yearly, previous to the duty imposed in Britain, of two pence per yard, and four pence per yard on all sail-cloth of the value of fourteen pence or upwards, that had received the bounty of encouragement in Ireland, granted on sail cloth made of Irish hemp; by which means a stop was put to the further cultivation of hemp in Ireland, and the sail-cloth manufacture, in a great measure, restored to the Russians, Dutch, and Germans—the imports of foreign duck or sail-cloth into England being as follows, at the following periods:—In the year ending Christmas, 1730, 507,764 yards; in the year ending Christmas, 1751, when the tax in England took place, 521,741 yards; and in the year ending Christmas, 1770, 537,068 yards."

"Thus it is obvious, while Ireland has been deprived of the benefits proposed to her by the sail-cloth manufacture, that foreign countries have reaped the advantage, by an increasing trade, that might have been at this day in a great measure supplied from Ireland."

"Checked, striped, printed, painted, stained or dyed linens, of the manufacture of Ireland, are not allowed to be imported into Britain, although there is no reservation tending thereto in the address of the Lords and Commons of England, or in the King's answers, or in the proposition, by the speech from the Throne to the Irish Parliament, in 1698."

"For about fifty years after making those restrictive laws (says the same author), Ireland was always poor, and often in great want, distress and misery, though the linen manufacture had made great progress during that time. The strict economy of old times was no longer practised; the representatives of the people set the example profusion, and the Ministers of the Crown were not backward in following it. A large redundancy of money gave a delusive appearance of national wealth."

"Though what a nation spends is one method of estimating its wealth, yet a nation, like an individual, may live beyond its means, and spend on credit which may far exceed its income. This was the fact as to Ireland in the year 1754, for some years before, and for many years after. It appeared in an enquiry before the House of Commons, in the session of 1755, that many persons had circulated paper to a very great amount, far exceeding not only their own capitals, but that just proportion which the quantity of paper ought to bear the national specie."

"The revenue for the reasons already given, decreased in 1755, fell lower in 1756, and still lower in 1757. In the last year, the vaunted prosperity of Ireland was changed into misery and distress; the lower classes of the people wanted food."

"The adoption of a principle so expensive in practice as the *bounty* upon the land carriage of corn to Dublin, proves that we in this country know to be a certain truth, that there is no other market in Ireland on which the farmer can rely for the certain sale of his corn and flour—a decisive circumstance to show the wretched state of the manufactures of this Kingdom. The expenditure on corn bounties to Dublin, in the year ending Lady day, 1778, amounting to £71,533 1s 0d., and in that ending Lady day, 1779, £67,864 8s 10d.

"In the year 1762, a national evil made its appearance, which all the exertions of the Government and the Legislature have not since been able to eradicate—I mean the rising of the Whiteboys. They appear in those parts of the Kingdom where manufactures are not established, and are a proof of the poverty and want of employment of the lower classes of our people. Lord Northumberland mentions, in his speech from the throne, in 1763, that the means of industry would be the remedy; from whence it seems to follow, that the want of these means must be the cause. To attain this great end, the Commons promise attention to the Protestant charter schools and linen manufacture. The wretched men who were guilty of those violations of the law were too mature for the first, and totally ignorant of the second; but long established usage had given those words a privilege, in speeches and addresses, to stand for everything that related to the improvement of Ireland."

"The state of pensions remained nearly the same. In the year 1777, they rose to £89,095 17s 6d. This is independent of the drain from absentees. And from the year 1651, to Christmas, 1778, the sums remitted to pay the troops serving abroad amounted to the sum of £1,400,000 and