

## ACT OF THE UNION.

### War, Murder, Rapine, Confiscation.

Why Does the Imperial Parliament Seek to Continue the Union?—A Federal Government Sanctioned by the Constitution—Individuals and Governments Compared—Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Cape Breton—Common Sense Arguments.

In our last article we briefly summarized all our preceding articles on the Act of Union under five distinct heads. We quoted from speeches of anti-Unionists during the debate in the Irish Parliament to show how disastrous such an unholy wedlock would prove to the best interests of both nations. We did not quote from the most illustrious galaxy of the anti-Unionists—these have been so often quoted, but from less brilliant, yet as noble, as patriotic and incorruptible; as the Grattans, the Floods, the Currans, the Charlemonts, Bushes, Burghs, Yelvertons, Brownlows, Parnells, Ponsonbys, Plunkets, and a host of others whose names shall illumine the pages of Irish history to the latest posterity. We quoted from Sir John Davies to show that the spirit of the English Lords and gentry of his day; and for centuries previous, viz., war, murder, rapine, confiscation and extermination is as strong in the Salisburys, Cranbrooks, Devonshires, Balfours, Chamberlains, Saundersons and Russels of our day as at any period since the invasion of 1172. Their speeches and attitude on the Home Rule Bill, in the Lords and Commons conclusively prove the truth of our assertion. We have shown how the Act of Union was brought about—by Pitt and Castlereagh fomenting a rebellion as a means to an end—by bribery and corruption on such a gigantic scale—open and secret, that it stands unparalleled in the annals of corruption, in ancient or modern civilization. We ventured to recommend that the contract uniting the two countries in unholy wedlock should be reopened as the G. O. M. has done; to condone the most infamous scandal that has disgraced the pages of English history. To every true Englishman the union of England and Ireland is a badge of shame and disgrace. We have pointed out the lines upon which the contract could be reopened without prejudice to the interests of either country. That the existing contract is disastrous to the best interests of both none will deny, excepting the Unionists, hoodlum Orangemen, and the party of ascendancy whose continental ancestors formed the mercenary troops accompanying the usurper Billy.

In the sacred name of humanity, and in the language of common sense, let us ask, what object can the Imperial Parliament have in retaining this unholy power? It has not time to attend to Irish business, nor will it allow the Irish to attend to it themselves. Is it their object to make the Irish people miserable and discontented? It is known to every man, who pretends to a knowledge of the existing connection between the two countries, that the local grievances are the principal causes of the distress and dissatisfaction of Ireland—why should England make herself obnoxious to the people of Ireland by upholding these grievances? Is it to please the fanatics and murderous spawn that have given "a local habitation and a name," to such spots as Sandy Row? The Irish people—of course we exclude from our people the heroes of Belfast, etc.—who make war on old women, young girls and little children—heroes of the Flanagan type, who would "kick the Crown into the Boyne Water"—are sincerely attached to the English connection; the most simple peasant knows its continuance to be for his advantage, and at no period since the reign of Henry II. were the people more anxious to reciprocate good feelings with England. If any hostility exists to English connection, which we emphatically deny, it arises from an opinion that it is English power that upholds those needy adventurers who speculate on the miseries and riot in the oppression and the plunder of the Irish people. Dublin Castle infamies and the enrollment of the scum of society—the Orangemen—beneath the folds of the yellow banner of pestilence has left an indelible seal on their opinion. What better hands could

the affairs of Ireland be placed in, than those of the Queen, Lords and Commons of Ireland? They are the proper authorities to regulate the interests and rights of the contending parties which now divide Ireland. Let the Imperial Parliament be the great arbitrator; let it hold the balance; let it throw the weight of its influence on the side of justice, and it will be sure to prevail. Justice pure and simple is the object which the Irish people have been and are still in pursuit of; it is the true object of all civil government, and it will be pursued until it is obtained, or Ireland, her liberties and her people perish in the struggle. Catholic Emancipation was wrung from a greater man than Salisbury. He, too, had his phalanx of "hayseed and countrified lords," as Harold Frederic describes Salisbury's noble four hundred, at his back, to no purpose. Every reform for England or the Empire at large, has been vigorously opposed by some Salisbury and his "hayseed and countrified lords," but only for a time; in the end the rights of the people prevailed over pigheaded aristocratic obstinacy. So will it be with Home Rule.

A Federal Government of the nature of that which we venture to recommend is not altogether new; it is sanctioned by the practice and more by the spirit of the Constitution. Poyning's law gave superintending authority of the most objectionable nature to the English Parliament until the year 1782. From that period till the Union, the same power was exercised, but by even more objectionable means, by influence and corruption, the operation of which, though less visible and direct, was not less effective. The debates on Orde's celebrated Commercial Propositions in 1785 must convince every man that there was a dangerous defect in the constitution of the political machine, that there was a necessity of having a superintending power lodged somewhere, that there was a link wanted to preserve the unity of the Empire. The British Minister did not, or would not, discover what this should be; he, therefore, exerted the whole weight of his influence, his power and his money, to wrest from Ireland her domestic Legislature, to take from her the substance of government, and give her in exchange the gaudy shadow. Had he not been influenced by an all-grasping, insatiable love of power, he would only have required of the Irish Parliament to give up as much of its authority as was necessary to strengthen the general government for all general purposes; and he would have offered as an equivalent, a due share in the direction of that general power. If he had been either a wise or an honest minister he should not have asked or taken more; he should have said to the Irish Nation: "We are two independent countries, united under one common Sovereign; that link is not sufficient to bind us; it is necessary to form a lasting, indissoluble union, on terms of the most perfect justice and reciprocity; it is necessary to have our general affairs managed by a general government, in which you shall have your full share, retaining all power over your local concerns."

Had such a Union been formed in 1800, Ireland would now be prosperous and contented, and not crying out for a re-opening of the contract which binds the two countries in unholy wedlock. There would be no cry for Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, or curses loud and deep against Salisbury and his four hundred "hayseed and countrified Lords," whipped up from their grouse, pigs and bulls to vote against a measure of justice.

If we may be allowed to compare the transactions of private individuals with those of Governments, we would, for the purpose of illustration, suppose the case of an extensive mercantile house, driving a trade to all quarters of the world, and whose managing partners resided in London, while several of the other persons interested in the concern lived in various distant countries. What opinion, let us ask, would be formed of the wisdom of the managers of this establishment, should they have the absurdity to undertake, not only the conduct of the commercial affairs of the house, but also the management of the private estates of the respective partners, one of whom might live in Jamaica, another in Calcutta, another in Ireland, a fourth in Montreal, and the rest in countries equally remote from each other? Is it not evident that, in such a case, either the general interest of the firm, or the private interests of its several mem-

bers, would necessarily be neglected? Or, rather, would not both, in all probability, fall into decay and ruin? That this is no painful illustration, all acquainted with Irish local interests and their government will admit. But we are incapable of drawing an illustration, depicting the state and government of the Irish people, from either ancient or modern legislation. It has remained for England alone to formulate a Draconian code, more sanguinary and more debasing in their effect, "than ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

To prove the possibility of the existence of a superintending power concurrent with local power, it is sufficient to know, as we have already observed, that it existed, either absolutely or by influence, to the period of the Union. It exists, in fact, at this moment, as many of the most important powers of legislation and taxation remain in the corrupt and irresponsible hands of the local authorities of Ireland. We have now only to reconcile the local Parliament that is sought for Ireland to the practice and spirit of the Constitution.

Before the declaration of Irish Independence, the Irish was a mere local Parliament, and of the worst description, bound hand and foot by Poining's Law. But it is unnecessary to confine ourselves to Irish examples.—the necessity of the existence of local powers for the management of local concerns has been universally recognized—the Constitutional history of England abounds with examples. The Corporations, in Towns and Cities, were intended as local Legislatures, containing a due portion of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy—until, by continual inroads on the privileges of the citizens and inhabitants, they were reduced to their present state of corruption, the civil rights of the people usurped, and their public property plundered. It is not, however, from such charnel houses we shall take examples:—

We shall take up the history and follow across the Atlantic those noble-minded men, who, forced by the tyranny of the base and infamous Stuarts to leave their homes and country, sought other homes and other countries in a new and distant world—and who preferred liberty and the wilds of America to despotism in their native land. It is in these we shall find the workings and development of glories principles of the British constitution. Though oppression might have deprived them of every thing else, they carried with them the best inheritance of Britons—the right and the determination of being subject only to laws to which themselves or their representatives assented, and the privileges of forming their infant governments on the basis of the matchless constitution of their mother country. Under this revivifying and animating influence, the almost impenetrable woods, barren plains, and stagnant marshes, where savage barbarism had long reigned with unbounded luxury and unresisted sway, soon became the happy seats of science, civilization and industry—the wolf and the deer, which roamed through the boundless forests, without a human voice to interrupt their progress, save only when occasionally hunted by the "untutored Indian," scarcely less wild and savage than the beasts which he

pursued, had to fly for refuge to more distant abodes—the germ of cultivation burst through her matted woods and ascended her highest hills—cities, towns and villages rose up on the sites of her once gloomy wildernesses—the busy hum of trade and commerce was heard from her numerous harbors—and peace, plenty and liberty blessed her happy people—"proving to demonstration, that liberty is the parent of commerce, the parent of health, the parent of knowledge, the parent of every virtue." It was under the fostering protection of British liberty and law that these wonderful and glorious inroads were made on the boundless dominions of barbarism in America. The first settlers were allowed to manage their own affairs, in their own way, under the superintending power of the Parent Government. The folly of wicked, unscrupulous ministers has since severed those countries for ever from the British Empire, yet they still retain all the leading principles of the constitution of England for their government. Some of the independent States of America, may be said to be governed at this moment by the same laws under which they were governed before the Declaration of American Independence. The great federal government, that wields the might energies of forty independent States, separated from each other by a distance of thousands of miles, is not very different from the imperial general government; both are admirably suited for their respective objects. The American system could not possibly answer in Great Britain and Ireland, nor the British system in America; yet, as it has been happily said, by Prince Talleyrand, there were monarchical principles strongly infused into the American, and democratical into the British system. Along with it being the ancient practice of England to grant to her colonies all the powers of local legislation, it is her modern practice also. These privileges were granted to the Canadas, to Nova Scotia, to New Brunswick, and even to the insignificant settlements of Cape Breton and Prince Edward's Island, countries first settled by the French, and afterwards ceded to Great Britain—Nova Scotia, by the treaty of Utrecht, in 1712, and the Canadas and other parts by the treaties of peace signed on the 10th of February, 1763, that followed the fall of Quebec and Louisburgh. Nova Scotia had a colonial government granted to her in 1758; and it was only 1791 that Mr. Pitt introduced his celebrated Canada bill, which secured to this country the advantages of constitutional government, the attempt to rule it by a Governor and a council possessing legislative power having completely failed. The introduction of the English system, as is well known, had many difficulties to contend with, arising out of the incongruity of the French laws, in which were retained some of the most absurd principles of the feudal system; yet, notwithstanding all obstacles, Pitt persevered in his intention, and carried his Bill of 1791, which then caused much excitement in England, and was the subject of most interesting debates in both Houses of Parliament. We shall quote a short passage from a speech made on the occasion by one whose name must be ever endeared to the lovers of constitutional freedom—the "statesman, yet friend to truth," the noble, the generous, the humane Charles James Fox. A few scraps from the debates on that occasion, and from the report of the committee of the House of Commons, on the civil government of Canada, while serving to elucidate and fortify our arguments and opinions in the premises, must prove exceedingly interesting matter to the general reader and the student of Canadian history.

"The governments (said Fox) now established in North America were in his opinion the best adapted to the situations of the people who lived under them of any of the governments of the ancient or modern world; and when we had a colony like this, capable of freedom, and capable of great increase of population, it was material that the inhabitants should have nothing to look at to excite their envy. Canada must be preserved to Great Britain by the choice of its inhabitants, and it could not possibly be kept by any other means; but it must be felt by the inhabitants that their situation was not worse than that of any of their neighbors. He wished them to be in such a situation, as to have nothing to envy in that part of the King's dominions—but this would never prove

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