

country. Before a measure became law it had to pass *first* through the Commons and *then* through the Lords. Hence the Irish Commons in regard to the Act of Union, stood in the same position as did the Irish Legislature to the legislature of Great Britain ; for, if they refused to admit the Act, the House of Lords would be powerless ; whereas, if they passed the measure, its final success might be more hopefully entertained. What confirms this reasoning is the shameful alacrity with which the Irish Lords adopted the proposal for Union, even the first time it was broached. The Irish House of Commons, therefore, is to all appearances responsible for the passage of the Act of Union.

But here three suppositions are possible. The Irish House of Commons acted in conformity with the wishes of Irish people ; or on their own private convictions, or again, by the persuasion of William Pitt.

Neither of the first two suppositions can be held. To assert that the Irish Commons were guided in their action by the prevailing sentiment of the Irish people, is to misread history. In the first place, no one can legally authorize himself to act for a second party ; he must have been appointed by the party he would represent. Now, the Irish legislature was not appointed by Ireland ; it represented only a portion of the Protestant minority ; it represent nothing, as to the vast majority of its members, except a few noble families and great borough-proprietors. Therefore, it had no right to speak for the Irish nation.

But, you ask, why then if Ireland did not agree to the Union, why did she not rise as one man and denounce it ? Look at the state of the country. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended ; martial law was in force ; 126,000 soldiers swarmed over the country. Meetings called to discuss the question were dispersed by the military. Public opinion was not wanted. Menace and bribes were alike exhausted by the wily Castlereagh to keep the country from giving vent to its sentiments, in order that it would appear to the world as if Ireland gave her consent to the Union scheme.

Individuals indeed, were found, and Catholic Bishops and priests among the number, who did much to discourage resistance to the policy of Pitt, But did they act thus because they wanted