

SPEECH TO THE IRISH
PARLIAMENT ON THE
WRONGS OF IRELAND
AND INDIA

NAPOLEON



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This speech, written and prepared by Talleyrand for Napoleon, was among the 'Lost Manuscript Material of Irish History,' discovered by Dr. Eugene O'Curry, president of the Catholic University, Dublin, in the archives in Paris, A. D. 1868, of which he took a copy which is now in Trinity College, Dublin. France three times sent expeditions against England—first under St. Ruth, who participated with Patrick Sarsfield at the battle of Aughrim (Gaelic—a place made bare from the grazing of horses)—from which emanated the treaty of Limerick. In the second invasion the French fleet encountered a typhoon on the south-west coast of Ireland and was completely destroyed. Napoleon desired that his ever-living enemy—England—should be conquered, and his first act would be to free Ireland, that unhappy country, from her vile oppressors, and to deliver this speech before the Irish Parliament. This expedition on the way encountered the Danish fleet, and the invasion of England and the freedom of Ireland was postponed.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

The English have fled. It is now proper to lay before you the cause of my coming, and the objects of my victories. First, however, I advert to the obloquy with which my enemies and your oppressors have loaded me. I have been called an usurper. Be it so. What throne, what government ever yet existed, which has not been founded in usurpation? The fact which is universal, can never be a particular imputation. Least of all does such a charge become those from whom it has flowed. I might retort it, but to what end? No family which had once attained sovereign power, and afterwards lost it, but lost it by its own folly or its own vice. But I am charged with usurpation. Examine the facts. I was bred to the trade of arms; but it was owing to the depraved ambition of those families whose thrones I have overturned, that, in Europe, arms had been made a trade. Before I took any part in public affairs, the vices of some, and the weakness of others of the Bourbons, had overturned their own throne. Public authority was seized and abused in the name of a republic. From without, France was

threatened by enemies, acknowledged to be destitute of all principles of justice. It was natural for a man bred to the trade of arms, to seek for employment from those who could give it to him. I did so. The enemies of France were chased through Europe. I carried the military glory of the country which employed me to a height which it had never known. The rulers of France abused its victories. My success neither gave peace to the country, nor security to myself. The more conspicuous I became, the more my fame, fortune, and life, were put to the hazard, under the government of a set of blockheads, who continually quarrelling among themselves for public spoil, continually enfeebled the state. The best officer England possessed fell a victim to the caprices and ignorance of system and faction in London, similar to that which in Paris I subdued. It became obvious that the government of one person was necessary to preserve France. My services pointed me out as that person, and my own safety joined in a common interest with the safety of France to induce me to the attempt. I succeeded. France was redeemed from anarchy. She obtained a government—a government of rigor, which the times required, but a government which gave internal peace, permanence in property, and a regular administration of justice according to known laws, to its distracted inhabitants. Do not believe calumniators, when they tell you, that the people of France, or that any people in their situation, would not acknowledge the blessing of such a change. They acknowledge it and obey. My calumniators call mine a military government. I have repeatedly left my empire, containing thirty millions of inhabitants, with a smaller number of troops, to preserve my authority, than my calumniators could entrust their preservation in this island to, which contains five millions.

The history of mankind will inform you that the question which should interest them is, not who has usurped power, but what use has been made of power when usurped? Let France now, contrasted with France when I received it, answer. France was then blotted from the map of Europe. She now fills that map. Yet still my calumniators, concealing that the usurpation of power is only a contest among individuals, but that the use of power is the real instrument of public happiness, will return to their clamour of usurper. Let their advocates

and their own countrymen answer. In order that they may, I call your attention to the *sole* statute which now connects your kingdom with England—the *statute of Union!* In the debates of the parliament of England I find some observations on that measure, made by a statesman, of whose ability, and, although an Englishman, of whose integrity all Europe seems to hold the same opinion as his countrymen; I mean Mr. Fox. His own words are as follow:

‘SIR,—We have heard to-night a great many most acrimonious invectives against Bonaparte. On his arrival in France, he found the affairs of the republic in a very unsettled state. He thought it necessary to reform it, just in the way that a military man may be expected to carry on a reform—he seized on the whole authority himself. I am certainly not for reforming governments by such expedients; but how THIS HOUSE can be so violently indignant at the idea of a *military despotism* is, I own, a little singular; when I see them regard it as a frame of government most peculiarly suited to the exercise of a free opinion, on a subject the most important of any thing that can engage the attention of a people. Was it not the system which was so happily and so advantageously established of late all over Ireland, and which even now government may proclaim over the whole of that kingdom? Are not the persons and property left in many districts, at this moment, to the entire will of military commanders? And is not this held out as peculiarly proper and advantageous, at a time when the people of Ireland are freely, and with unbiassed judgments, to discuss the most interesting question of a legislative union? Notwithstanding the existence of martial law, so far do we think Ireland from being enslaved, that we think it precisely the period and circumstances under which she may best declare *her free* opinion! Now really, Sir, I cannot think that gentlemen who talk in this way about *Ireland*, can, with a good grace, rail at *military despotism* in France.’¹ These observations of Fox, were confirmed by him a short space before his death, and when he was secretary of state. He then declared ‘that the *Union with Ireland* was atrocious in its principle, and abominable in its means. It was a

¹ Mr. Fox’s speech, 3rd February, 1800, p. 32

measure the most disgraceful to the government of the country that ever was carried or proposed.’² Yet Fox spoke under the prejudices of his country, and of the assembly, equally greedy of power and of gold; and, although worn out in the pursuit, not yet palled with the domination of poverty in Ireland, nor with the plunder of wealth in India—*quos non oriens, non occidens satiaverit*. The testimony of Fox is good against his country, though it should be received with hesitation against me. By their own evidence, then, *your connection with England* is now founded on an act of *military despotism*. Let them give up their own title, or let mine rest. There is no act of mine, either here or in France, which, by their own testimony, will not remain on as good a moral foundation as their act of *Union*.

But it is said, I have used my power tyrannically. What? Have I put one half of my subjects out of the protection of the law, so that the other half might oppress, spoil and kill them without control? Has it been said of me and my subjects, that I would not in peace govern them by law, nor could in war root them out by the sword? What land proprietors have I hanged in France, in order to bestow their territories on greedy cowards of the one sex, or lavish prostitutes of the other? Have I decreed, that if any Italian should lay down a bale of silk on the banks of the Po, his property should be forfeited, and that if he attempted to export it, he should be sent into France, tried there, and transported to Cayenne.³ Have I made a decree to tax the industry of my subjects, and the bread of their children, for a pecuniary reward to stimulate avarice to do what nature refused? Have I decreed my forfeiture of the estates of any Protestant subject to his Roman Catholic relation, until, through a profession of what he did not believe, he redeemed by his hypocrisy, what my law had transferred to his kinsman on account of his profligacy? Do I exclude from the honors and emoluments of my state four-fifths of my subjects on account of any speculative opinions? Do I disarm, by my decrees, two-thirds of my dominions, that the other third may play the master? Do I permit

2 Morning Chronicle, 4th February, 1806. Debates in Parliament.

3 10 and 11 Will. 3. c. 10. 5 Geo. 1. c. 11. 5 Geo. 2. c. 1.

insolent and profligate factions, as if they were playing at balls and counters, to make sport of the former and liberties of their fellow-creatures?

Turning from this scene of cruelty in the west, can relief to humanity be found in the transactions of England in the east? Can it be said of me, that I have made the fairest portion of the earth, rich in its territory, rich in the mild and industrious habits of 70 or 80 millions of inhabitants, no better than a jungle for wild beasts?⁴ Have I reduced any district in Europe, containing 46,000 square miles, from the highest state of cultivation, and rich in the hoarded frugality of thousands of years?—Have I reduced such a country, so that it could have been affirmed that not one person of substance or property, landed or commercial, or monied, excepting two or three bankers, who were the necessary deposits of the general spoil, were left in the whole region?⁵

Such have been the effects of the dominion of England.

It has been said that I am insatiable of victory, and that I have conquered the nations of Europe; a falsehood. I could not conquer those whom I did not fight. I have conquered those families who were the tyrants of Europe, and their mercenary forces. The nations of Europe, themselves, did not enter into the quarrel. They were wisely passive. But if I have fought, I have fought for GLORY. My triumphs have been over armies strong in discipline and bravery, and numbers. My triumphs have been over the highest military science, and the most daring bravery in the world. I have not resorted to a defenceless, ignorant and enervated race, incapable of steadiness or combination, to manifest *my courage* in the slaughter of millions, who almost bowed their necks to the sword. I have not exhibited the waste which avarice, destitute of either courage or science, can make its proudest boast. It is said that I have not adhered to treaties. I answer that I had to deal with races of sovereigns, of whom not *one* ever adhered to a treaty longer than it was for his *own interest*. But it cannot be said of me, that with the sovereigns of 100 millions of people, there is not a single prince,

4 Lord Cornwallis' dispatches.

5 Carnatic.

great or small, whom I have not *sold*. Nor a *single* treaty that I have ever made that I have not broken.⁶ Nor is there a prince or state, that ever put trust in me, that is not utterly ruined; and that none are, in any degree, secure or flourishing, but in the exact proportion of their settled distrust and irreconcilable enmity to me. I did not *SELL*, (perhaps the most exalted sovereign in the world, an amiable and accomplished man) the descendant of Tamerlane—the sovereign of sovereigns. I did not *SELL* the whole nation of the Rohillas—and *SELL* them to utter extirpation. I did not *SELL* Hafiz Rhamet—one of the bravest men of his time. I did not cut off his head, and deliver it for money to a barbarian. I did not *SELL* Seraja Dowla to Mir Jaffier; nor Mir Jaffier again to Mir Coffim; nor did I *SELL* Mir Coffim to Mir Jaffier again. I did not *SELL* the successor of Mir Jaffier to his eldest son. I did not *SELL* the Maratta empire to Ragoba; nor did I again *SELL and deliver* Ragoba to the Peishwa of the Marattas. I did not then offer to *SALE* both Ragoba and the Peishwa of the Marattas to the Rajah of Berarr. I did not *SELL* the Subah of the Decaa to the Nabob of Arcot; nor to the same Nabob did I *SELL* Hyder Ali and the Mysore; nor to the same Nabob did I *SELL* the kingdom of Tanjore; nor, after all, did I *SELL* the same Nabob of Arcot and his lawful successor, to his second son, Amir ul Omrah. Nor in all these *sales of Sovereigns*, equally carried into execution with allies and enemies, and in all this waste of country, and destruction to the human race, can it be said of me, that in the whole space of two thousand miles, the proceeding of fraud, avarice, and cruelty, was so uniform, that whatever was done in one part, would apply exactly to the other?

I have, when circumstances varied, departed from the letter of some treaties. But it has not been said of me, that there is not a *single treaty* I have ever made, that I have not broken. Yet this has been the case with the English, through the whole territory of India.

In Europe, and in the year 1762, this *honest* nation was in alliance with Frederic of Prussia, who was then assailed by France, Russia, Austria, and Sweden. The death of the Empress Elizabeth, and

⁶ Reports of Committees on affairs of India. Mr. Burke, &c.

succession of Peter the Third, produced a peace between Russia and Prussia. Yet did England, this FAITHFUL ALLY of Prussia, send a pressing proposal to Russia, to prevail on Peter to continue the war against Prussia.⁷ ENGLAND pressed to have the war continued against her OWN ALLY! The Russian Emperor, indignant at such treachery, sent the English papers to Frederic. These records of unexampled baseness, remain now in the archives at Berlin. This was one of the first acts of the first administration, appointed by the pious sovereign who now rules England.

I did not break the articles of Limerick. I did not break the solemn covenant between England and Ireland, made by the statute of renunciation, and acknowledgement of the independence of Ireland, in 1782. So much for the faith of England in external negotiation.

The English assert, my ambition is without bounds. They have, by the coalitions which they have excited against France, deprived themselves of all proofs of such an assertion. Such has been their pertinacity in exciting coalitions, that it became manifest no peace could be obtained, no safety for France or myself could exist, until I had so far reduced Europe, as to render any further coalition *impossible*—by that alone it could be prevented. I wanted not, nor desired the thrones I have subdued. I have given them away.

But the conduct of England rendered it necessary for my safety, that I should break the great masses of European power into such parts, as to render their *coalition again* impracticable. This has been my policy. A policy forced upon me by England.

The English say that I am cruel; and the death of the *Duc d'Enghien* is adduced as the instance. The *Duc d'Enghien* was a natural-born subject of France. I was sovereign (at least *de facto* of France). The *Duc d'Enghien* engaged in a plot *within* France against my throne and life, and to facilitate it, placed himself upon the edge of my territories. I seized him—tried him by a special commission—proved the facts—and being condemned, I had him executed.

⁷ Oeuvres de Frederic Roi de Prussia. Gillie's history of Frederic II. The English memorial was delivered to prince Gallitza, then at Vienna, and by him transmitted to Peter, who sent it to Frederic.

Contrast this with the treatment which was given by England to a man more highly born, and more interestingly circumstanced than the *Duc d'Enghien*. You have all heard of the attempt made in 1746, by the grandson of James the Second, to recover the throne of his ancestors. A young man personally every thing that could excite pity and respect—beautiful, brave, generous and unfortunate. His faithful band of peasant soldiers were defeated at Culloden. He fled, and endured every hardship that human nature could undergo, in effecting his escape from the unmanly and unrelenting pursuit. The pious and generous government of England then set the price of thirty thousand pounds on the head of the offspring of kings.⁸ It did not succeed. For although England could produce a prince who could stoop to offer thirty thousand pounds for the head of an unfortunate youth of royal descent, Scotland could not produce a peasant who would stoop to earn the reward. England, therefore, did not succeed in the assassination. But you have an adage in your language, ‘that an offer is as good as a blow’: and you have a law, which makes a conspiracy to murder, an equivalent crime to murder itself. The common feeling of mankind justifies the law and the adage. To pursue the standard of relative cruelty, contrast my conduct to the rebels in *La Vendée* with the conduct of England to the Scotch, in 1746. I found *La Vendée* in an open rebellion, which the utmost cruelty of the republic had not extinguished. By sober mercy, I restored in a short time peace and good order, and without bloodshed, to that distracted province. Now let me recall, in the words of an English historian, the mild conduct of the house of Brunswick to the unhappy Scotch peasants in 1746. After the battle of Culloden, ‘the Duke of Cumberland advanced with the army into the highlands, as far as Fort Augustus, where he encamped; and sent off detachments on all hands, to hunt down the fugitives and lay waste the country with fire and sword. The castles of Glengary and Lochiel were plundered and burned; every house, hut, or habitation, met with the same fate, without distinction; all the cattle and provisions were carried off; the men were

8 To this infamous proclamation, Prince Edward replied by a proclamation, prohibiting his adherents from any attempt on the person of the reigning king, or any prince of the house of Hanover. *Voltaire siècle de Louis 15th*.

either shot upon the mountains, like wild beasts, or put to death in cold blood, without form of trial; the women, after having seen their husbands and fathers murdered, were subjected to brutal violation, and then turned out naked, with their children, to starve on the barren heaths. One whole family was inclosed in a barn, and consumed to ashes! Those ministers of vengeance were so alert in the execution of their office, that in a few days there was neither house, cottage, man, nor beast, to be seen in the compass of fifty miles; all was ruin, silence, and desolation.’⁹

The actor in this scene was not a fanatic and profligate republic: nor yet was it a strolling band of ignorant and ferocious peasants; no, the ‘master mover in this business,’ was a mild prince, of the pious house of Brunswick; inculcating, to the best of his sober judgment, the love of peace, by this bright example of humanity. This act was not committed on foreign enemies:—no, it is the method taken by England to reclaim misled subjects. I forbear to reclaim misled subjects. I forbear to particularise your own case in 1793. The whip, yet moist with the blood of the tortured; the gallows, yet vibrating from the convulsion of its victims, will explain the principles and progress of English reformation.

Need I multiply instances, the colours of which totally dim those the *Duc d’Enghien*. Need I mention the murder of the Rajah Nundcomar, a prince of exalted and revered blood, who was, by an insult on every thing that India holds sacred, hanged, in the face of all his nation, by the judges sent to protect it; hanged for a *pretended crime*, upon an *ex post facto* English act of parliament, in the midst of his evidence against Hastings. The accuser, a prince, the people of India saw *hanged*. The culprit, without acquittal or inquiry, triumph on the ground of that murder. I know such names sound harshly, perhaps contemptibly, to an European ear. But they are names entertained with profound veneration by a people, until they were cursed by English government, more cultivated, more wealthy, and more refined than ourselves. But England thinks there is a morality for Europe, and a

⁹ Smollett’s History of England, vol. 3, lib. 2. c. 9.

morality for Asia. Her fall will teach her the knowledge of justice, and make her feel the sentiments of humanity. England says *she* did not do these things. It was her India company. What! Did she *sell* to that company, for money paid to her, the power of treachery, murder, and devastation—does she support that company in the full exercise of such rights—does she *sell* them again and again to the company, and still talk of innocence and justice?

So much for the comparative conduct of England, in her external relations. The comparative view of her internal conduct will be short.

England complains that I force my subjects into the military service, by the law of conscription. I compel young men, within a certain age, not encumbered by families, to serve for a limited and short period. This law is not partial; it extends to all fit for service. Is the audacity of a nation to be endured, who makes such a system a ground of accusation, and at the same moment carries into daily execution its own law of the press-gang? A law of compulsion the most severe of all branches of military service; and of partiality, in extending only to a particular class. A law, which in its compulsion knows no limitation from age or length of service, or family incumbrance. A law which seizes, not the vigorous youth, for five years, but the worn-out mariner, returning, after an age of service, with the hard-earned amount of his saving, to an anxious and depending family. A law which seizes the gallant *veteran* in the moment of merited repose, and condemns him anew to the same perilous career—a career unlimited in time, place, or climate. This is the nation which presumes to censure. Examine the mode in which England recruits for her land service. Into the most innocent and remote village she sends the most profligate serjeant in her army. He debauches the *minds* of *twenty peasants*, to gain the *body* of *one* for the service; and this legalised system of general debauchery England dares to call *liberty*. That is, the agents of government enjoy the liberty of destroying the morals of its own subjects. England boasts of the equal justice administered by her laws respecting private property. Equal law, must mean law within the reach of the poor as well as of the rich. But the gates of your law are shut against the poor man.

The rich man enters at ease. Is it of any moment that the interior of the temple remains undefiled?¹⁰

By the criminal law of England Lord Melville was acquitted. A lesser culprit received *sentence of death* for returning from transportation; and he had been transported for receiving one shilling for the carriage of a goose that had been stolen, and of which stealing he declared he was ignorant. The essence of the charges against both was connivance at stealing.¹¹ Thus the poor are slaves, and the rich are tyrants.

Having placed the merits of my government, and that of England, in a fair balance, it remains to state to you the objects of my coming.

It is said my object is revolution. There are two kinds of revolutions. The first is a revolution of the government merely, in which the former possessors are displaced, but individual property and the general principles of laws and customs remain untouched. The second is, where the revolution acts, not only upon the possessors of the government, but also upon the property of individuals, and on the laws and customs. The different effects which followed in England and in Ireland, from the conduct and success of the Prince of Orange in 1688, will explain the distinction. In England the enterprise of the Prince was supported by some—opposed by few. The bulk of the people remained quiet spectators: and on the vote of the convention to give the throne to the Prince, the acquiescence of the people of England was general. The consequence of this conduct was, that in England the

10 A suit at law for the smallest sum, and the most slightly contested, will now cost from 300*l.* to 200*l.* A suit in equity, in the quickest termination, for 50*l.* will cost 300*l.* or 400*l.* The charges increase in proportion to the obstinacy of litigation. This oppressive expense is occasioned principally by what are called sinecure offices in the courts of justice. Enormous annuities, raised from the unfortunate, and bestowed by profligate ministers on worthless favourites.

11 Although Lord M. was acquitted, yet the Chief Justice voted him guilty on five of the charges. It is now manifest, by the event, that Lord M. would have been found guilty in the King's Bench, if he had been tried there. But Mr. Pitt was Lord M.'s friend. He had the prosecution removed from the King's Bench to the Bar of the Lords—and his friend was acquitted. What a power of *divination* Mr. Pitt possessed in a land where *equal justice is administered*.

policy of William was to change as little as possible. Whatever was changed, beyond the change of the dynasty, appears to have been reluctantly assented to by William. But in Ireland the policy of William became directly the reverse. He here found a people attached with equal enthusiasm and folly to their former master. William was therefore forced by this conduct into a revolution, not merely of the government of the country, but on the property of individuals, and of the general laws. Hence the extent of the forfeitures of private property, and the commencement of that system called the popery laws. Two circumstances which changed the whole moral and political state of Ireland. Into these changes William was forced. They were not the effects of his general policy, nor can such courses ever be the policy of any man of sense. But he may be compelled to that which he abhor.

From this short view, you will perceive that the choice of what is now to be pursued, depends upon yourself. It remains with you to determine whether your courts of justice, your exchanges, your markets, may not, under existing laws, open to-morrow, for the transactions of business. Such may be the case, if this assembly make a full and satisfactory declaration of the intentions of the nation. The gradual reform of such abuses, as time and a corrupt government have introduced into your domestic departments, and into your representation, may be then steadily and cautiously proceeded on. Equal laws, and *equal access to those laws*, and equal political and civil rights, are the basis on which the future welfare of your country should be raised.

It will be suggested to you that it is neither my interest nor my intention to forward you in such a plan. I hasten to meet these objections.

What is my plan? That plan which an oligarchy in England has compelled me to adopt—to break the powers of Europe into such parts, as that it shall be impossible hereafter to form such coalitions against France as the oligarchy in England has hitherto been the parent of. To break down the power of that oligarchy then, so as to take away from it the capacity to injure, which it has hitherto exercised, must be one principal object to me. Ireland, therefore, can be no longer wielded by

the caprices of the oligarchy of England. But you will be told that Ireland, even if she had a resident government established to-morrow, which, in the course of years, by the birth of hereditary successors among you (as was the case of the house of Brunswick in England) should give you the strongest pledge of pursuing your interest—you will be told, I say, that Ireland has not physical capacity to maintain an independent station. Your island is said to be too small; your population too weak. *The weakness of nations is not in themselves, but in their governments.* Look at Prussia under Frederic, and under its present king. Prussia, under Frederic, was not equal to Ireland now, neither in population or revenue.¹² Infinitely weaker than Ireland in its geographical position. Yet Frederic not only maintained his hereditary dominions, but preserved his *conquest* against the combined powers of Austria, Russia, France and Sweden. Prussia, *now* governed by enterprising women, and enervated counsellors, fell, almost without a blow, before France alone. Such is the effect of governments.

But you will be told I am governed by interest, and that it is not my interest Ireland should be an independent kingdom. If I am to choose between Ireland independent, and Ireland dependent upon an oligarchy in England, there can be no hesitation in my choice. The question, whether it be for the interest of France that Ireland should not be a province of either England or France, requires some closer examination.

12 The population of the Prussian states, at the commencement of the seven years war, did not amount to 5,000,000 of people; and the revenue of Frederic, including the English subsidies, was short of 5,000,000*l.* sterling. Yet Frederic, at the end of the war, had large sums in reserve. Gillies' history of Frederic II. But the resistance made by the Dutch to Louis the XIVth, is still more remarkable. Voltaire tells is concisely. '*Contre Turenne, Condé, Luxembourg, Vauban, cent trente, mille combattans, une artillerie prodigieuse, et de l' argent, avec lequel on attaquait encore la fidelité des Commandans des places ennemies, la Holland n'avait a opposer qu'un jeune prince d'une constitutione faible q'ui n'avoit vu ni sieges ni combats, et environ vingt-cinq mille mauvais soldats, en quoi, consistait alors toute la garde au pays. Siecle Louis XIV.*' The power of states consists in the earnestness of the people and the talents of the leaders.

To determine the future, we should look to the past. Ireland has been, by the uniform policy of England, reduced infinitely below her natural scale of physical strength, and infinitely below the moral scale of improvement, which she would have attained without purposed obstruction.

Was it to the wanton cruelty and arbitrary disposition of England alone, to which Ireland owed her depression? Not so. Another passion more steady and more deadly threw even the cruelty and ambition of England into the shade. England viewed Ireland as a *rival*. And Ireland was sacrificial, not to cruelty and ambition alone, but to jealousy and avarice. Can France ever desire the dominion of Ireland, in order to keep down the prosperity of a rival?—seems then to be the first question. France never can consider Ireland as a *rival*. The total dissimilarity in extent, nature of productions, numbers, and consequent political strength, preclude the possibility that any growth of Ireland could ever amount, in the eye of France, to a dangerous rivalry. The *difference* of natural productions, and of consequent manufactures, may be a source of wealthy and liberal exchange, and may find endless mutual advantage in their mutual growth, but can never become *rival* objects. The silks, and wines, and oils of France, can never *envy*, but may find the source of their increase and their measure of value in the wool, the linen, and the provisions of Ireland. The *interest* of France, therefore, points out Ireland, in time of peace, as a powerful friend, with the happy quality of an incapacity for rivalry. Look then to the trade-laws of England, born in *jealousy*, and see what is the difference of *interest* which England has proved in herself, and that which *must* exist in the situation of France. The jealous spirit which has paced your land for six hundred years, which has been nourished by the exhaustion, and whose track has been in your blood, sleeps not yet. Do you want a proof? Look at the speech of the minister Howick, where he openly avows the English policy of taking off the danger to England, by *wasting* what he calls your *superabounding* population. At this instant, then, England avows *her safety* can be maintained but by the *destruction of your offspring*. And this is the nation that talks of the waste of my conscription!

But I will, in argument, for a moment concede all that England can, on such a question, desire. I will suppose that the unqualified desire of domination, too frequent among nations, should supersede even interests, and induce France to make a province of Ireland. Even, if so, you are not *lowered*. You are a province now. A stranger to all the advantages of native government, and national interest. But is it better you should be a province of a jealous rival, or of a nation whose interest must be that of a cherishing friend? The English historian, Hume, has already investigated the question for you. In his 4th essay, his general position is, that the provinces of those states, calling themselves free, are always under more severe government, and meet more cruel treatment, than the provinces of those governments called absolute monarchies. As an illustration of his general rule, he draws a contrast between the situation of the French Netherlands (called the *pays conquis*) and Ireland—The Netherlands, the most cherished, the most wealthy, the most orderly, sober and industrious part of Europe; and Ireland, under the blessings of the glorious constitution of England, exhibiting nothing but raggedness, poverty, dissention, and oppression. A reason, which may appear paradoxical, exists, why the lot of Ireland, even as a province, would be milder under the government of the glorious constitution of England. It is the total dissimilarity of laws, customs, and language, between the other countries of Europe and Ireland. Many of the evils which have fallen upon Ireland, have been owing to the *similarity* between her and England in these particulars, which, having been gradually introduced, have been at length established. To this *similarity* has been owing that the hours of peace have, for Ireland, been almost as wasteful as those of war. To this *similarity* has been owing that continued influx of English governors' civil officers of law, finance, and revenue, and ecclesiastical adventurers, tempted by your bishopricks, whose path into Ireland having been so smoothed, have continually occupied so large a share of the government, patronage, and property of the country, without departing, for one moment, from that ineffable contempt, and rancorous jealousy towards it, which they had imbibed from their English birth, and by their English education. To this *similarity* has been owing the

still more wasteful and disgraceful efflux of what is called your absentees to England. If it has not been for this *similarity*, Ireland could never have beheld a body of her proprietors expending, in a foreign country, a revenue of between two and three millions, drawn from her industry, without contributing one shilling to the support of her state. Without this *similarity*, Ireland could never have beheld the proprietors of her soil imbibing, in a foreign land, all the rancorous prejudices of a jealous rival, and adding strength to those prejudices by the consciousness that they were hated, and deserved to be hated at home. Arthur Young, the English agriculturalist and traveller, has given a strong instance, in his account of the state of the Milanese, under the government of Austria, of the advantage arising to a province, from a *dissimilarity* in language and customs to the governing country. In Milan he observes that the landed proprietors and nobility remained at home, resided upon their estates, and never went to Vienna in search either of amusement or employment. They were happily not familiarised with the laws and language of their masters. The consequence was, that the duchy of Milan was in a high state of improvement—and the population more than double the proportion to the square mile that Ireland possesses, though the lands are not so fertile.

But the supposition that it can ever be in the intention of France to keep Ireland in a state of a province, I admit only for a moment. Such a conduct would be directly against the interest of France, in her great plan of European policy, dictated by the situation of France, the great use to which Ireland can be applied, is to form in her an impregnable barrier to the turbulent ambition of the oligarchy of England. The windward position of Ireland, and its ports, like the chosen spot for a frontier fortress, point her out as that barrier for the peace of Europe. But to render Ireland impregnable to the ambition of an English oligarchy, she must be strengthened internally, and to her utmost capacity. How can she be so strengthened? Never by being subject to the provincial government of any nation.

No people ever yet threw out the fulness of its power under any provincial form. Ireland, then, can never become that impregnable

barrier, that *sure* check to her neighbour's ambition, but under a *native* government. To cultivate a *native* government, then, in Ireland, must, by all the relations which France has established between herself and the rest of Europe, be the true object of her policy. Ireland can never serve an useful purpose of liberal policy but by such means. ***** in the experience of Ireland for six hundred years, has the most certain security that Ireland will never voluntarily submit to involve herself in the policy of an English oligarchy ever again. The sole object of ***** then, must be to enable Ireland, by her own strength, to avoid it. In a collateral view, and in all contemplations of trade, the wealth of Ireland must, in time of peace, be of proportional consequence to ***** in the exchangeable value of commodities. In the cultivation of Ireland, to the highest degree that art and industry can reach, ***** will, by her exchanges, command an inexhaustible fund of those commodities of which she stands in most need. Comparing the soil of Ireland with the soil and population of parts of Europe, there appears no cause to prevent Ireland from maintaining a population of more than double her present numbers; particularly, if to the fertility of her soil be added the fund of sustenance she may derive from her fisheries, in a country no part of which lives more than 50 miles to the sea. With such a population, on an island in a windward station, and the finest ports in Europe, and a native government, whose revenues must return instantly to stimulate the industry of her people, the policy and the ability of Ireland will probably make her a stedfast ally, but it must be the effect of her own corruption if she again become the slave of any nation.

You will be told that private property in Ireland will not be safe from depredation, while I have adherents to reward. Those who served me have always been rewarded; but I shall not therefore be under the necessity of touching the private property of any Irishman. The precedent of English principles will justify and supply me. It has been the custom of English warfare to seize on the seas (where alone England could seize) the property of French subjects, and to confiscate it. This called for retaliation. Wherever, therefore, on land, I found English property, it was seized also, and confiscated. England has vested in the funds of Ireland about fifty millions sterling, producing

an interest of nearly two millions, annually remitted to Englishmen. This capital, and the growing interest, I seize, by the law of confiscation of enemies' property, established by England herself. In this fund I find more than sufficient to reward the zeal and fidelity with which I have been served since my arrival here.

In recommending you to the advantages of a native and resident government, you are not to suppose, that in offering you liberty, I mean to control you. If your allegiance prompt you to continue the subjects of the house of Brunswick, it lies within your choice. I have no more objection to that house retaining the monarchy of Ireland, than I had to Francis retaining his hereditary states of Hungary. But I sent him to *reside* among them. I relieved the Hungarians from the jealous restraints which the influence of the duchy of Austria had on the weakness of their sovereign. My object is to release you, and to free Europe from the effects of that oppression which an oligarchy in England has exercised over their own sovereign and you—England has for six hundred years retained to herself the presence of your mutual sovereign. It is time, then, and it is but equal justice, to give you the same advantage, for six hundred years to come. I am ready to conclude an honourable and advantageous peace with your king, on the part of Ireland. My differences with England rest upon other grounds. If your statute of union be, in point of form, a bar to such a negociation, it should be repealed.

I now leave you, my lords and gentlemen, to your *free* deliberation.