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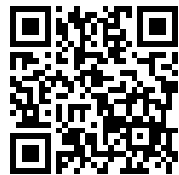
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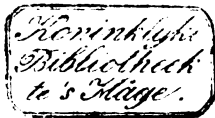


PAMFLET

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**THE REPEAL**  
OF  
**THE UNION**  
BETWEEN  
**GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND**  
COMPARED WITH  
**THE SEPARATION**  
OF  
**BELGIUM AND HOLLAND.**

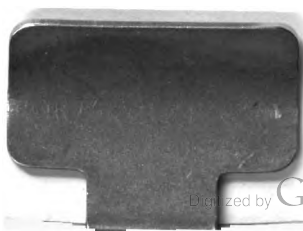


BY **FRANK FAIRPLAY.**  
*J. Horstman!*

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**MERCHANT, PRINTER, INGRAM-COURT, FENCHURCH-STREET.**



THE  
**REPEAL OF THE UNION,**  
&c. &c.

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ALMOST every periodical paper has warmly taken up the question of the Repeal of the Union, and deprecated and stigmatized with much severity and acrimony, as mischievous in their origin and disastrous in the future results, all attempts to separate Ireland from Great Britain, and no one will contend, in doing so, they have not taken the right course; but the impartial and reflecting may question the consistency of many writers, who, in doing this, have, at the same time, defended, nay applauded the separation of Belgium from Holland; it, therefore, naturally occurs to examine what similarity there is between the two cases, for, on the face of it, there exists an evident contradiction in applauding the one and condemning all attempts at separation in the other. Nay, in implicitly copying the generally fallacious Belgic statements, are not the writers of the periodical press furnishing forcible arguments to the

agitators of Ireland to persevere in their plan for the repeal of the Union? The first effects would be a separate legislature, and which might lead to the total and final separation of Ireland from Great Britain, to the evident detriment of both.

It is true that in the language of the British Government there has all along existed a perfect consistency in this respect ; for, in the speech from the throne, the conduct of the king of the Netherlands was called enlightened, and regret was expressed that it had not had the desired and expected results ; but many of the writers in the daily and periodical papers have censured this observation, and defended the attempts of the Belgians to erect themselves into a separate and independent state, while, at the same time, they strenuously condemn all similar efforts in Ireland.

In making a comparison between the two cases, it is natural to commence with the Union itself ; in adverting therefore to the Union of Ireland what do we find? It is generally admitted that it was carried by a manœuvre, if not by corruption, or, as it has been stated in other words, foul means were used to attain a good end. If what has been stated in regard to Belgium be quite correct, and in no way coloured for the purpose of justifying an insurrection against a legal and mild government, it would



only follow that the origin of both was equally vicious and irregular. It has been stated that, when the constitution and the incorporation of Belgium with Holland was submitted to the people, the majority was doubtful, but that the government interpreted it as favourable, and in the affirmative: this rests, however, upon mere assertion of those who were discontented, and wanted an excuse to cut the tie asunder. The probability is, that the Belgians at that time, having since a number of years seen their country continually overrun and devastated, changing every now and then of masters, without even enjoying any control or even nominal independence of their own, distrustful of the future by the experience of the past, they were not very forward to express their cordial approbation of the plan then proposed to them, to form with Holland the establishment of a new state of the seventeen united provinces of the Netherlands, and that their approval was rather a tacit acquiescence than an enthusiastic consent. And how, in this respect, is this union worse than that of Ireland?

Supposing both to have been alike irregular in their origin, the next question will be, what were the effects in each, and what urgent reasons were there to justify a violent separation in one case while it is agreed there are none in the other?

What are the alleged grievances in Ireland?

That which is most generally admitted is the great number of absentees. Whether a repeal of the Union would remedy the evil or not, I do not pretend to decide, but this at least cannot be alleged in regard to Belgium; on the contrary, the presence of the court, the legislature, and the great number of strangers that were attracted to Brussels, occasioned an increase of trade and of wealth, such as had never been known before, and thus the union was greatly advantageous to Belgium, whereas, at least as far as Dublin was concerned, Ireland could only lose by not having any longer a legislature of their own in their country.

The next essential complaint of the bulk of the Irish population, who are Catholics, is the tithes to the Protestant church, as they deem it a great hardship to maintain a splendid establishment for the clergy of a different creed, and to have to provide besides for their own ecclesiastics. Without pretending to censure or to defend the maintenance of the Protestant church in Ireland, on its present footing, I shall only observe that this complaint does not, and could not exist in Belgium; not only because there are no tithes at all in the Netherlands, but also, because the clergy of all persuasions throughout the Netherlands are chiefly maintained by their respective communities, and the stipends which the government allow besides are equally enjoyed by the

Catholic and Protestant clergy. Therefore, again in this respect there could be no cause for complaint in Belgium, while the Irish Catholics allege it as a great grievance with them.

As far as we have hitherto proceeded, it is obvious that on the part of the Belgians there was not, and could not be, even a shadow of complaint; and of course no cause for a separation; whereas, in regard to Ireland, those complaints, at all events, may admit of discussion and argument.

But we now come to matters of more similarity in the two cases. In regard to both, it is alleged that their interests were not or are not sufficiently represented in the legislature; that they had not or have not the proper weight and influence in making the laws; that a separate legislation and separate administration only can duly attend to the concerns of the country. Let us now see which of the two, Ireland or Belgium, can make the most of this objection.

It has been alleged that the Belgians were not sufficiently represented in the Chambers; that, having a population of about four millions, and the Dutch only of two millions, the Belgians had only the same number of deputies as the Dutch. This is certainly very specious. But if we examine the matter a little more closely, far from being a grievance, not merely sufficient for a remonstrance to Government, but even for a

revolt and a violent separation, we shall find there was no injustice at all in the case. We take for basis of our argument that payment of taxes entitles to vote, and adopt this mode of argument the more readily as on that very principle the new Constitution of Belgium is framed: that is to say, the person who pays a certain amount of taxes has a right to vote for a member of the Congress. Now, it is proved that Holland paid as much amount in taxes as Belgium; and therefore, there appears no hardship nor injustice that each should send an equal number of deputies to the Chamber.

I will not decide whether Ireland sends as many members to Parliament as the proportion which she pays to the wants of the state entitles her to; but so much, however, is obvious that there are only a very few Irish Catholics in the Lower House: therefore, practically, the Irish Catholics, who form the bulk of the population, are evidently scarcely represented at all. And does the matter stand differently in the House of Lords? How many Irish Catholic lords have a vote or seat there? Now, if all the clamour which the Belgians have raised, and which has been re-echoed here by so many writers, of their not being sufficiently represented, has any foundation, (which I think I have proved it has not,) how much more powerful is the argument used by the agitators in

Ireland for a repeal of the Union. Those writers, therefore, who have so strongly advocated the Belgic cause must, on their own principle, have furnished undeniable arguments in favour of the repeal; and yet these very writers are constantly combatting all attempts at the repeal, and very properly so: but is this impartial and consistent?

If matters are further compared in regard to the formation of government, or rather of the administration of the country, we shall come to a similar result. And, to begin with Ireland: The lord lieutenants of the counties, the magistrates, and so forth, are most all Irish Protestants; *very* few Catholics. The lord chancellor and higher functionaries of the law are often English. The lord lieutenant, the secretary of state, the commander of the forces are almost exclusively and constantly Englishmen, sent on purpose to govern Ireland.

If, in a similar manner, Dutchmen had been exclusively employed in the administration of Belgium, matters would only be on a par; and no consistent writer could reprobate the one, and urge it as a justification for a separation in one case, without applying the same argument and recommending the same remedy in the other. And yet, because Dutchmen were often, but certainly not exclusively, employed in Belgium, the revolt has found admirers in this country, though such

appointments were counterbalanced by employing Belgians in Holland; and there was no complaint of an abuse of power in the Dutch governors of Belgic provinces: on the contrary, we find that the people of Liege stated they had no fault to find with their Dutch governor, but that he was no Belgian; and that declaration was voluntarily made at the moment of the greatest effervescence. The King wanted to amalgamate the two people; in which he was only acting up to the spirit of the treaties by which the two countries had been united. Military commands were more generally entrusted to Belgians than to the Dutch; which may account for the rapidity with which the revolt spread. General Duvivier, who had taken the oath of allegiance and fidelity to the Government of William the First, and went over to the insurgents, whom he now serves, is a Belgian. So is General Daines, who was Governor of Maestricht, and had been ordered to Utrecht, but who, instead of complying with his orders, was the first to raise the standard of rebellion in Limburg. General Van Geen, who has now the chief command of the Dutch troops, is a native of Ghent; and, in fact, the Belgians who had military commands far outnumbered the Dutch. But even if it were otherwise; if, on that score, a violent separation is to be defended, then it will apply much more powerfully to Ireland. The

writers already alluded to may make their choice, but should be consistent.

If we pursue the comparison to the formation of the ministry, or cabinet, we shall find, it is true, in the Netherland ministry most Dutch and but *few* Belgians. Whether this arose from want of talent or aptitude on one side, or jealousy or pertinacity on the other; whether it was imposed by circumstances or not; whether it was wise or not; whether it was a matter of choice or necessity, I leave undecided. But if this be a solid ground for a revolt and a forced separation in regard to Belgium, how much more must this be the case in regard to Ireland, as in the British cabinet there is not one solitary Irish Catholic !

It is not pretended to maintain that the Netherland government committed no fault, did not sometimes hurt individual vanity, might not have erred in retaining the obnoxious minister, Van Maanen, against the wishes of the people; but if wrong steps, either actually so or only considered as such are to be answered by insurrection, then Ireland should have revolted when the Marquis of Anglesey was recalled, and the Duke of Northumberland appointed Lord Lieutenant: and many instances will still occur in which, according to such a mode of argument, the Irish will be quite right in having recourse to an open rebellion for the

redress of their real or fancied grievances. Mr. Van Maanan was a firm man; and the King might have thought firmness was necessary under the then existing circumstances. We do not even now know whether he was right or not. We do not know whether mildness would have caused a different result, whether it would have impeded or accelerated disaffection; but so much we know that, when it first began to shew itself, conciliation was tried, Mr. Van Maanen was dismissed; but as fast (and faster still) as concessions were made, fresh demands were made also; first grievances were stated; but, before time was allowed for consideration, insurrection was resorted to; by and by, it was not enough to have expressed a desire for a separation, and that the government had, in consequence, assembled the States to consider of it, as, according to the Constitution, it did not depend upon him to grant it; but this demand was enforced by arms in hand; the King, however, was not only bound by the Constitution, but by the treaties by which the Union had been concocted. It is quite possible that, in some instances, impolitic measures were resorted to; but it should not be lost sight of, that it is very easy to censure after the event; but that in difficult circumstances, among a people at once ignorant and vain, bigotted and presumptuous, noisy and daring, it is often the result alone



which shews, even to the most clear-sighted, what would have been the right course to follow, if indeed right course there be, amidst so many shoals to a safe harbour. And, further, that if injudicious measures were sometimes adopted, they only affected individuals, who might think themselves wronged, and even erroneously so; but the measures affecting the people at large were solely and invariably for their good; of which a few words will be said afterwards; but, as religion has had much to do with these matters, it becomes necessary to notice this first.

And, in this respect, we find a great similarity. William the First as well as William the Fourth are both Protestants; the ancestors of both owed their elevation to their adherence to that creed; part of the country under the dominion of each is chiefly inhabited by people of a different religion, and those people not the most orderly, nor the most quiet; the clergy are not the least intriguing, nor the most harmless in their objects, nor the most learned, nor the most charitable in religious matters, nor the most liberal in their notions. Catholics are not the same in all countries; in France they are rather indifferent than zealous; in Holland they are naturally tolerant; in Germany generally enlightened and liberal minded. The clergy in Belgium rather resemble those in Spain and Portugal; they have been the main-spring of

the insurrection ; and yet what else had they to complain of but that the King was a Protestant ? However, in that Belgium only resembled Ireland ; there was no emancipation there long withheld, and finally extorted from an unwilling administration, through fear and compulsion. In Belgium, the Catholic was, from the beginning, placed in every respect, and without any restriction or distinction, on a par with the Protestant ; if, in regard to Ireland, the emancipation has (in theory more than in practice) removed a grievance of the Catholics, in Belgium this never had an existence. One complaint has, indeed, been made against the Netherland government, from which the British is exempt, and a curious one it is ; it could only be made by Catholics, who had still some Spanish blood flowing in their veins ; it could only be urged by hypocrites or Jesuits. Government beheld a priesthood in Belgium totally uninformed on every subject, not even those excepted which belonged to their calling. With the view to afford the clergy an opportunity to extend their knowledge, it instituted a Philosophical College ; but most of the priests perceived, in an extension of knowledge, a diminution of their influence and of their power over the minds of the people ; they raised the hue and cry that the Government was going to meddle with the religion of the people, and the King abolished

the college. And here two observations must strike every one: the one that, in Belgium in this instance, as in a hundred others, the most beneficial views have been strangely misrepresented and perverted, which has been re-echoed even here: the other, that the King, though often accused of too great a pertinacity, knew, at all events, how sometimes to recede and to abandon an object, for the abolition of the Philosophical College took place long before the revolt.

If we compare the advantages enjoyed in Belgium and in Ireland since the respective Unions, we shall find, I think, that those in the former outweigh those in the latter; and if, notwithstanding the existing and still increasing prosperity throughout the whole country, the Belgians deserved the applause bestowed on them by some writers in this country, for their revolt and final separation, then the Irish agitators must be still more in the right to make the Irish do the same.

It is alleged that though Dublin, in losing the seat of her legislature, has experienced a loss of her internal trade; though the Irish colonial and foreign commerce, as well as generally her manufactories, have, of late years, been on the wane, and be almost annihilated; yet that these privations have been more than compensated by other great advantages; that the immense exports of her agricultural produce to Great Britain are alone

more than sufficient to outweigh by far all the little advantages she may have formerly enjoyed, and which she now misses ; that, as an integral part of the common country, she finds a ready and excellent market for her cattle ; that her oats, wheat, and barley are admitted duty free, while foreign corn is taxed, as hers naturally would be, in case of a separation ; that Ireland is rising in prosperity, and that nothing but the commotion and agitation, which continually pervade the country, prevent her enjoying the greatest ease and comfort. All this may be true ; but still these advantages will not equal those which Belgium enjoyed and derived from her connexion with Holland ; and, by the bye, one contingent drawback may be pointed out to the advantages accruing to Ireland, which, at the same time, shews, I think, an incongruity in some writers, who strongly reprobate (and I do not say unjustly) the existing Corn Laws, and inveigh against a tax on bread : they want foreign corn to come in free of duty, or else at a very small duty ; but what then will become of the protection or privilege of the Irish, now so much extolled ; what great benefit will it be then to them that their principal commodities, oats and wheat, can come in duty free, when the foreigner shall nearly enjoy the same advantage ?

In Belgium the benefits which have resulted

from her union with Holland have been nearly quite unclogged with any great privations; in those few instances where her interest militated, the interests of others were sacrificed to please her. In imposing taxes, her convenience, her wants, either real or alleged, were generally consulted to the detriment of the Dutch, who murmured a little, but acquiesced. Holland had been a sort of granary, an entrepot for foreign corn; but the Belgians desired a duty should be imposed; a duty was imposed, and Holland ceased to be any longer a store for corn, where the native and the foreigner could be supplied at any time. Many instances of a similar nature could be adduced, but a recapitulation of notorious facts would be tedious. Liege, Verviers, Ghent had the monopoly of their commodities for the home consumption in Holland, as well as for the exports to her colonies, which were quite Dutch, and to which the Flemish could not else pretend to participate in any degree: they were acquired by the arms of the Dutch, and with Dutch, and not Belgic, money. The Dutch had, however, to pay for their cotton goods from Ghent 20 to 30 per cent. dearer than they could have procured them from Manchester and Glasgow, and that only to please those who, as experience has proved, were determined not to be pleased with any one thing. The trade of Antwerp, to the detriment of Amsterdam, rose

to an unprecedented degree of prosperity, mainly if not exclusively, by means of Dutch capital. A bank was established at Brussels by the assistance of the King and of Dutch capital, with a branch-bank at Antwerp; and, as if this were not facility enough, the traders at Antwerp sent their bills, even on Antwerp, for discount to the Bank of Amsterdam, which discounted freely such Antwerp paper, and only required that it should be taken up a day or two previous to the bills falling due, in order that they should not have to send to Antwerp for their money.

Can there be greater instances of good will and liberality than acts like these? and yet, with unparalleled ingratitude and effrontery, the Belgians have reproached the Dutch that they sought constantly to injure them wherever they could. So, only very lately, it was stated that the former government would never permit the sluices at Ostend to be opened, with the express aim that it should not be cleared of the sand, and become sufficiently deep for large vessels. Such trash has been copied by English prints, and what else must the English reader, unacquainted with details of this kind, think (as Dutch indolence, or contempt, gives no contradiction,) than that it is true. Those who are conversant with the matter know that, so far from entertaining any jealousies of this sort, the Netherland government were continually devising means to

create and facilitate every improvement that could tend to the prosperity of the country in every part. The canal of Sas Van Ghent, made under the former government, by which large vessels are enabled to enter Ghent from sea, is the best answer to such absurd aspersions. Ever since the Union, during fifteen years, Belgium, in the towns, as well as in the country, has been in a continued rapid progress of prosperity : the taxes were comparatively light, because there were continually ample incomes flowing in to pay them with ; yet the taxes have been complained of by those who would never be satisfied if they had not the superlative and perfect good, without any alloy ; wanting, probably that they should enjoy *all* the advantages and the Dutch pay *all* the taxes ; like the greedy and selfish handy-craftman, who required all his wages should be paid him, and that strangers should, at their expense, provide him with tools and instruments, by which he earned his wages.

The Belgians are now an independent people ; we shall see, ere long, how they will prosper ; hitherto nothing augurs much in their favour, nor is it likely, from the nature of things, it should. When the excitement becomes a little abated, experience will bring reflection. Thousands of people are thrown out of work and nearly starving. Instead of wages, they now beg alms of

their former principals, who are themselves rapidly going to decay. The cotton manufactories at Ghent and the cloth manufactories at Verviers have, since many months, ceased to work, without the prospect of a change. Liege, which constantly, not even longer than six or eight months ago, exported her muskets and her iron-wares to every part of the world, now gives orders to Birmingham. Anarchy already begins to show herself. One party want to be French ; another to remain Belgic ; a third to be again what they were ; but this party want confidence to show themselves, and put on a mask. Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels dare not yet avow that they were best off united with Holland, and are about petitioning to be ruled by the Prince of Orange ; not, as yet, daring to go further. The re-union with Holland would now be difficult, if not impossible, even if opinion and feeling underwent again a revolution in Belgium ; the Dutch would never venture upon a second embrace, as the first occasioned wounds which, perhaps, will never quite heal. Naturally they would distrust the sincerity or the constancy. Not much longer than a year ago the King travelled through Belgium, and was every where received with applause and acclamation ; at Antwerp and other places the people were at a loss how to receive him well enough, and seemed to think that, when they called him the



“Father of the People,” they scarcely said enough. What has arisen since? Nothing in Belgium, but in Paris there was a revolution, and the Belgians thought what was good and necessary in Paris must be the same in Brussels.

The revolution in Paris was as rational in its origin, and legitimate in its object as that in Belgium was the reverse. In Paris, it upset the attempts of the Bourbons to bring back the old regime, of which bigotry formed a part; and as bigotry was at once one of the objects, and one of the instruments, it is no wonder that, in France, the Bourbons and bigotry were exiled together. In Belgium, on the contrary, the King of the Netherlands had to struggle with superstition, which was opposed to his enlightened views. The clergy was not, as in France, generally for him, but generally against him. In one word, in France, illegal use of power and superstition were foiled; in Belgium, disorder and bigotry were seated on the vacant throne: as an instance of which, it may be mentioned that the very small number of Protestant clergy, which the devout Catholics had suffered to exist in Belgium, have been all driven away. Yet there is already some little indication of a change in the sentiments and wishes of this inconstant people. Already it seems as if regret were felt at what has passed, and a desire to retrace their hasty and inconsiderate steps. Already they whisper the name of the Prince of Orange pretty audibly;

but what could that prince do for them now? How docile and reasonable they are has been seen and felt, and he must be a bold or an ambitious man who tries and trusts them again. Whether the declaration of the Prince that he was a Belgian, that he was putting himself at the head of the insurrectionary movement, has inspired the Belgians with confidence in him or not,—whether he possesses the character and requisites to rule an almost ungovernable people or not,—so much appears probable, if not certain, that, from the nature of things, he could not give satisfaction, and most likely he less than any other, because, from him, it would be expected, through his family connexion, (notwithstanding the separation of Belgium,) that he would rid them of all debt and taxes, and at the same time restore to them the privileges and advantages which they had enjoyed during the Union; which is, however, not only in itself absurd to expect, but such an attempt would create in Holland, throughout the country, a total alienation from the government, and is, on that account, quite impossible. Fashion having now made separation prevalent, and requiring a departure from all the treaties made to consolidate the peace of Europe, the subdivision may make further progress; and things moving quite in an opposite direction to what they did under Napoleon, who was for uniting, and made every body, from Trieste to Amsterdam and

Hamburg, Frenchmen, we may now see take place the very reverse of all this. Liege may have her Prince Bishop again, and sleep once more in apathy, with some occasional starting fits of frenzy. Verviers may either hoist her own peculiar banner, or else the three-coloured flag, hoping to find an easier vent, in France, for her cloth, which, it must be admitted, she was hitherto at some pains to get rid of in distant parts of the Old and New World, as the home-market in Holland is but small. Antwerp may wish to become a free port, and order a flag span new. Ghent may hoist, also, an independent flag, or else the Dutch flag, in hopes of finding good customers again in the Dutch trading-companies. Brussels — agitated by contrary impulses of members of congress and of provisional governments, of lawyers, shopkeepers, merchants, bankers, and the rabble, assisted by French volunteers from Valenciennes and Paris, and headed by a Spanish-Belgian, or Belgic-Spaniard, who once luckily escaped the Spanish inquisition, and, lately, an imprisonment of the Belgians, whom he had served— Brussels, pushed, by contrary motions, from one side to another, may at last not know where to rest; but rest she must, however, once, as all motions tire out. To what settlement Belgium will come at last it is difficult to guess; and, if she should not be benefitted by the change, she

may still console herself with the reflection that, as she has enjoyed fifteen years of prosperity, she can afford to pass fifteen years of agitation and misery,—it will still make (what is called in the city) a good average.

It is to be hoped that the Irish will not be so silly as to be duped in the same way, but that they will lend a deaf ear to the call of a *separation*, which, in the end, might turn out to be synonymous with *devastation*, and that they will consider that, though they *love a bit of fighting*, they might chance to get too much of a good thing, by first undergoing many changes, and getting, at last, a King of Ulster, a King of Munster, a King of Leinster, and a King of Connaught, as it is much better to live quietly and happily under one king, and that king a frank and generous monarch; let them also be assured that, as a William the Third did them much good with a little harm, so a William the Fourth means to do them nothing but good, bearing in mind that it is much more pleasant to *read* of the times and of the deeds of Fingal than to live in such days of turbulence and strife!

THE END.

MERCHANT, PRINTER, INGRAM-COURT, FENCHURCH-STREET.



