


it exists in labor, in riches, and in leisure; while it is nourished by the assemblages of towns and the facility of communication. To enslave men it is necessary to disperse and to impoverish them, for misery is the safeguard of ignorance. Believe me, reduce the population, discard the men of industry from the soil, burn the manufactories, fill up the canals, plow up the highways. If you do not effect all this, you will have accomplished nothing; if the plow does not pass entirely over civilization, that which remains will be sufficient to baffle your efforts.

I cannot support the amendments of the committee, or indeed any amendments. The law is neither worthy nor susceptible of any. There is no arrangement to be made with the principle of tyranny by which it was dictated. I reject it purely and simply out of respect for humanity which it degrades, and for justice by which it is outraged.

## BARON PLUNKET

ILLIAM CONYNGHAM PLUNKET, an eminent Irish jurist, orator, and politician, and for eleven years lord chancellor of Ireland, was the son of a Presbyterian minister and was born at Enniskillen, Ireland, July 1, 1764. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and studied law at Lincoln's Inn, London. He was called to the Irish Bar in 1787, and in 1798 entered the Irish Parliament, where he opposed the union with Great Britain, and in 1803 was the prosecuting attorney in the trial of Robert Emmet for treason. From 1807 to 1822 he sat in the English House of Commons, where his voice was frequently heard in behalf of Catholic emancipation. Plunket was twice attorney-general of Ireland, and in 1827 he became chief-justice of the common pleas in Ireland and was raised to the peerage as Baron Plunket. He filled the post of lord chancellor of Ireland 1830-41, and died in his ninetieth year in County Wicklow, Ireland, Jan. 4, 1854. Plunket's fame rests mainly on his long-continued services in the interest of Catholic Emancipation, one of his ablest as well as most eloquent speeches being delivered in support of Burdett's Catholic Relief Bill in 1825. Plunket's oratory aimed to convince by close, logical reasoning rather than by appeals to the passions, while elevated thought, full and refined expression were especial characteristics of his speeches. His intellect was that of a jurist and great master of equity.

### ON THE COMPETENCY OF THE IRISH PARLIAMENT TO PASS THE MEASURE OF UNION

SIR, I, in the most express terms, deny the competency of Parliament to do this act. I warn you, do not dare to lay your hand on the constitution. I tell you that if, circumstanced as you are, you pass this act, it will be a nullity, and that no man in Ireland will be bound to obey it. I make the assertion deliberately—I repeat it, and I call on any man who hears me to take down my words: you have not been elected for this purpose—you are appointed to make laws and not legislatures—you are appointed to act under the constitution, not to alter it—you are appointed to exercise the functions of legislators, and not to transfer them—and if you do so your act is a dissolution of the government, you

tomb and raising his awful voice to warn us against the surrender of our freedom, and we see that the proud and virtuous feelings which warm the breast of that aged and venerable man are only calculated to excite the contempt of this young philosopher who has been transplanted from the nursery to the cabinet to outrage the feelings and understanding of the country.

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DENUNCIATION OF THE MEN AND THE MEANS BY  
WHICH THE UNION WAS PERPETRATED

LET me again ask you, how was the rebellion of 1798 put down? By the zeal and loyalty of the gentlemen of Ireland rallying round—what? a reed shaken by the wind, a wretched apology for a minister who neither knew how to give or where to seek protection! No—but round the laws and constitution and independence of the country. What were the affections and motives that called us into action? To protect our families, our properties, and our liberties. What were the antipathies by which we were excited? Our abhorrence of French principles and French ambition. What was it to us that France was a republic? I rather rejoiced when I saw the ancient despotism of France put down. What was it to us that she dethroned her monarch?

I admired the virtues and wept for the sufferings of the man, but as a nation it affected us not. The reason I took up arms, and am ready still to bear them against France, is because she intruded herself upon our domestic concerns—because, with the rights of man and the love of freedom on her tongue, I see that she has the lust of dominion in her heart—because wherever she has placed her foot she has

erected her throne, and that to be her friend or her ally is to be her tributary or her slave.

Let me ask, is the present conduct of the British minister calculated to augment or to transfer that antipathy? No, sir, I will be bold to say that licentious and impious France, in all the unrestrained excesses which anarchy and atheism have given birth to, has not committed a more insidious act against her enemy than is now attempted by her professed champion of civilized Europe against a friend and an ally in the hour of her calamity and distress—at a moment when our country is filled with British troops—when the loyal men of Ireland are fatigued with their exertions to put down rebellion, efforts in which they had succeeded before these troops arrived—whilst our Habeas Corpus Act is suspended—whilst trials by court martial are carrying on in many parts of the kingdom—whilst the people are taught to think that they have no right to meet or to deliberate, and whilst the great body of them are so palsied by their fears and worn down by their exertion that even the vital question is scarcely able to rouse them from their lethargy—at the moment when we are distracted by domestic dissensions, dissensions artfully kept alive as the pretext for our present subjugation and the instrument of our future thralldom!

Sir, I thank the administration for this measure. They are, without intending it, putting an end to our dissensions; through this black cloud which they have collected over us, I see the light breaking in upon this unfortunate country. They have composed our dissensions—not by fomenting the embers of a lingering and subdued rebellion—not by hallooing the Protestant against the Catholic, and the Catholic against the Protestant—not by committing the North against the South—not by inconsistent appeals to local or to party

prejudices, no, but by the avowal of this atrocious conspiracy against the liberties of Ireland they have subdued every petty and subordinate distinction. They have united every rank and description of men by the pressure of this grand and momentous subject, and I tell them that they will see every honest and independent man in Ireland rally round her constitution and merge every other consideration in his opposition to this ungenerous and odious measure.

For my own part I will resist it to the last gasp of my existence and with the last drop of my blood, and when I feel the hour of my dissolution approaching I will, like the father of Hannibal, take my children to the altar and swear them to eternal hostility against the invaders of their country's freedom.

Sir, I shall not detain you by pursuing this question through the topics which it so abundantly offers. I should be proud to think my name might be handed down to posterity in the same roll with these disinterested patriots who have successfully resisted the enemies of their country—successfully I trust it will be—in all events I have my “exceeding great reward”—I shall bear in my heart the consciousness of having done my duty, and in the hour of death I shall not be haunted by the reflection of having basely sold or meanly abandoned the liberties of my native land. Can every man who gives his vote on the other side, this night lay his hand upon his heart and make the same declaration? I hope so—it will be well for his own peace—the indignation and abhorrence of his countrymen will not accompany him through life, and the curses of his children will not follow him to his grave.

## WILLIAM PINKNEY



WILLIAM PINKNEY, an American lawyer, diplomatist, and statesman, was born at Annapolis, Md., March 17, 1764, and died at Washington, D. C., Feb. 25, 1822. His father was English by birth and remained loyal to his country in the American Revolution. The son, on the other hand, early sided with the opposite party. At the close of the American war he began the study of law at Baltimore, Md., in 1783, and three years later was admitted to the Bar. He was appointed a delegate to the Maryland convention that ratified the Federal Constitution, and having established himself in his profession in Harford Co., Md., represented that county in the State legislature, 1788-95, and for three years further was a member of the Maryland executive council. His acquaintance with admiralty law proved of value during the twelve years, 1796-1808, when he was United States commissioner in England. After a period of service as attorney-general of Maryland he was once more sent to England to act as minister extraordinary with Monroe, and remained there as minister resident, 1807-11. In the last-named year he was recalled, at his own request, by President Madison, and entered the senate of his native State, becoming at the close of 1811 Attorney-General of the United States. He favored the second war with England, and while serving in the American army as a volunteer was wounded at the battle of Bladensburg. In 1816, Pinkney was appointed by President Monroe United States minister to Russia and special envoy to Naples, remaining abroad for two years. On his return to America, and while in the Senate of the United States from 1820-22 he took a prominent part in the discussion on the admission of Missouri into the Union. Pinkney was a lawyer of much ability, a skillful diplomatist, and a useful member of the United States Senate.

### SPEECH FOR THE RELIEF OF THE OPPRESSED SLAVES

[This speech was delivered in the Assembly of Maryland at their session in 1788, when the report of a committee of the House, favorable to a petition for the relief of the oppressed slaves, was under consideration.]

**M**R. SPEAKER,—Before I proceed to deliver my sentiments on the subject-matter of the report under consideration, I must entreat the members of this House to hear me with patience, and not to condemn what I may happen to advance in support of the opinion I have formed, until they shall have heard me out. I am conscious, sir, that upon this occasion I have long-established principles to combat and deep-rooted prejudices to defeat; that I have