

ber our wretchedness and show compassion! Remember the blood of thy Son shed for us, which speaks for us, and in which alone we confide! Far from taking away from us, according to thy justice, the little faith which remains, increase it, purify it, make it active, that it may dispel our darkness, that it may stifle all our evil passions, that it may renew our understanding, until at last, after having believed here below, we shall see eternally in thy bosom him in whom we have trusted. Amen.

[Specially translated by Mary E. Adams.]

LORD BELHAVEN



JOHN HAMILTON, second Lord Belhaven, a Scottish peer and orator, notable as the chief opposer in the Scottish Parliaments of 1681-1706 of the union of England and Scotland, was born July 5, 1656, and died at London, June 21, 1708. Many difficulties at the period stood in the way of the union of the two kingdoms, arising out of the trading jealousy of the English and the often unreasoning patriotism of the Scots. Though these countries had for over a hundred years been under one sovereign, there was little national blending and much jealousy of each other. This is indicated in the pessimistic speech of Belhaven, who denounced and bewailed the proposed union of the two kingdoms, both as a Scottish patriot and as a member of the Privy Council of his nation. He was an able parliamentary speaker, as well as deeply versed in the affairs of Scotland, and thoroughly familiar with its Constitution. But though he predicted ruin for Scotland, and was suspected of favoring an attempted French invasion, rather than endorse the Act of Union, the beneficent measure finally passed and the two kingdoms were united in 1707. For a time, Belhaven was imprisoned at Edinburgh, and was subsequently taken to London, where he died in the year after the Union was consummated.

SPEECH AGAINST THE LEGISLATIVE UNION OF ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

[This speech, delivered in the Parliament of Scotland, November 2, 1706, embodies the feelings of a proud and jealous people, when called upon to surrender their national independence and submit to the authority of the British Parliament.]

MY LORD CHANCELLOR,—When I consider the affair of a union betwixt the two nations, as expressed in the several articles thereof, and now the subject of our deliberation at this time, I find my mind crowded with a variety of melancholy thoughts; and I think it my duty to disburden myself of some of them by laying them before, and exposing them to, the serious consideration of this honorable House.

I think I see a free and independent kingdom delivering up that which all the world hath been fighting for since the

days of Nimrod; yea, that for which most of all the empires, kingdoms, states, principalities, and dukedoms of Europe are at this time engaged in the most bloody and cruel wars; to wit, a power to manage their own affairs by themselves without the assistance and counsel of any other.

I think I see a national church, founded upon a rock, secured by a claim of right, hedged and fenced about by the strictest and most pointed legal sanctions that sovereignty could contrive, voluntarily descending into a plain, upon an equal level with Jews, Papists, Socinians, Arminians, Anabaptists, and other sectaries.

I think I see the noble and honorable peerage of Scotland, whose valiant predecessors led armies against their enemies upon their own proper charges and expense, now divested of their followers and vassalages; and put upon such an equal foot with their vassals that I think I see a petty English exciseman receive more homage and respect than what was paid formerly to their *quondam* Mackalamores.

I think I see the present peers of Scotland, whose noble ancestors conquered provinces, overran countries, reduced and subjected towns and fortified places, exacted tribute through the greatest part of England, now walking in the Court of Requests, like so many English attorneys; laying aside their walking swords when in company with the English peers, lest their self-defence should be found murder.

I think I see the honorable estate of barons, the bold assertors of the nation's rights and liberties in the worst of times, now setting a watch upon their lips and a guard upon their tongues lest they may be found guilty of *scandalum magnatum*, a speaking evil of dignities.

I think I see the royal state of burghers walking their desolate streets, hanging down their heads under disappointments,

wormed out of all the branches of their old trade, uncertain what hand to turn to, necessitated to become prentices to their unkind neighbors; and yet, after all, finding their trade so fortified by companies and secured by prescriptions that they despair of any success therein.

I think I see our learned judges laying aside their pratiques and decisions, studying the common law of England, gravelled with certioraris, nisi priuses, writs of error, verdicts, injunctions, demurs, etc., and frightened with appeals and avocations, because of the new regulations and rectifications they may meet with.

I think I see the valiant and gallant soldiery either sent to learn the plantation trade abroad, or at home petitioning for a small subsistence, as a reward of their honorable exploits; while their old corps are broken, the common soldiers left to beg, and the youngest English corps kept standing.

I think I see the honest industrious tradesman loaded with new taxes and impositions, disappointed of the equivalents, drinking water in place of ale, eating his saltless pottage, petitioning for encouragement to his manufactures, and answered by counter petitions.

In short, I think I see the laborious plowman, with his corn spoiling upon his hands for want of sale, cursing the day of his birth, dreading the expense of his burial, and uncertain whether to marry or do worse.

I think I see the incurable difficulties of the landed men, fettered under the golden chain of "equivalents," their pretty daughters petitioning for want of husbands, and their sons for want of employment.

I think I see our mariners delivering up their ships to their Dutch partners, and what through presses and necessity, earning their bread as underlings in the royal English navy!

But above all, my lord, I think I see our ancient mother, Caledonia, like Cæsar, sitting in the midst of our Senate, ruefully looking round about her, covering herself with her royal garments, attending the fatal blow, and breathing out her last with an *et tu quoque mi fili!*

Are not these, my lord, very afflicting thoughts? And yet they are but the least part suggested to me by these dishonorable articles. Should not the consideration of these things vivify these dry bones of ours? Should not the memory of our noble predecessors' valor and constancy rouse up our drooping spirits? Are our noble predecessors' souls got so far into the English cabbage-stalk and cauliflowers that we should show the least inclination that way? Are our eyes so blinded, are our ears so deafened, are our hearts so hardened, are our tongues so faltered, are our hands so fettered, that in this our day — I say, my lord, in this *our* day — we should not mind the things that concern the very being and well-being of our ancient kingdom, before the day be hid from our eyes?

No, my lord, God forbid! Man's extremity is God's opportunity: he is a present help in time of need — a deliverer, and that right early! Some unforeseen providence will fall out, that may cast the balance; some Joseph or other will say, "Why do ye strive together, since ye are brethren?" None can destroy Scotland save Scotland's self. Hold your hands from the pen, and you are secure! There will be a Jehovah-Jireh; and some ram will be caught in the thicket when the bloody knife is at our mother's throat. Let us, then, my lord, and let our noble patriots behave themselves like men, and we know not how soon a blessing may come.

I design not at this time to enter into the merits of any one particular article. I intend this discourse as an intro-

duction to what I may afterward say upon the whole debate, as it falls in before this honorable House; and therefore, in the further prosecution of what I have to say, I shall insist upon a few particulars very necessary to be understood before we enter into the detail of so important a matter.

I shall therefore, in the first place, endeavor to encourage a free and full deliberation without animosities and heats. In the next place I shall endeavor to make an inquiry into the nature and source of the unnatural and dangerous divisions that are now on foot within this isle, with some motives showing that it is our interest to lay them aside at this time. And all this with all deference and under the correction of this honorable House.

My lord chancellor, the greatest honor that was done unto a Roman was to allow him the glory of a triumph; the greatest and most dishonorable punishment was that of parricide. He that was guilty of parricide was beaten with rods upon his naked body till the blood gushed out of all the veins of his body; then he was sewed up in a leathern sack called a culeus, with a cock, a viper, and an ape, and thrown headlong into the sea.

My lord, patricide is a greater crime than parricide, all the world over.

In a triumph, my lord, when the conqueror was riding in his triumphal chariot, crowned with laurels, adorned with trophies, and applauded with huzzas, there was a monitor appointed to stand behind him, to warn him not to be high-minded, nor puffed up with overweening thoughts of himself; and to his chariot were tied a whip and a bell, to remind him that, notwithstanding all his glory and grandeur, he was accountable to the people for his administration, and would be punished as other men if found guilty.

The greatest honor among us, my lord, is to represent the sovereign's sacred person [as High Commissioner] in Parliament; and in one particular it appears to be greater than that of a triumph, because the whole legislative power seems to be entrusted with him. If he give the royal assent to an act of the estates, it becomes a law obligatory upon the subject, though contrary to or without any instructions from the sovereign. If he refuse the royal assent to a vote in Parliament, it cannot be a law, though he has the sovereign's particular and positive instructions for it.

His Grace the Duke of Queensberry, who now represents her Majesty in this session of Parliament, hath had the honor of that great trust as often, if not more, than any Scotchman ever had. He hath been the favorite of two successive sovereigns; and I cannot but commend his constancy and perseverance, that, notwithstanding his former difficulties and unsuccessful attempts, and maugre some other specialties not yet determined, his Grace has yet had the resolution to undertake the most unpopular measure last. If his Grace succeed in this affair of a union, and that it prove for the happiness and welfare of the nation, then he justly merits to have a statue of gold erected for himself; but if it shall tend to the entire destruction and abolition of our nation, and that we, the nation's trustees, shall go into it, then I must say that a whip and a bell, a cock, a viper, and an ape, are but too small punishments for any such bold, unnatural undertaking and complaisance.

I. That I may pave the way, my lord, to a full, calm, and free reasoning upon this affair, which is of the last consequence unto this nation, I shall mind this honorable House that we are the successors of those noble ancestors who founded our monarchy, framed our laws, amended, altered, and corrected

them from time to time, as the affairs and circumstances of the nation did require, without the assistance or advice of any foreign power or potentate; and who, during the time of two thousand years, have handed them down to us, a free, independent nation, with the hazard of their lives and fortunes. Shall not we, then, argue for that which our progenitors have purchased for us at so dear a rate and with so much immortal honor and glory? God forbid. Shall the hazard of a father unbind the ligaments of a dumb son's tongue, and shall we hold our peace when our *patria*, our country, is in danger? I say this, my lord, that I may encourage every individual member of this House to speak his mind freely. There are many wise and prudent men among us who think it not worth their while to open their mouths; there are others, who can speak very well and to good purpose, who shelter themselves under the shameful cloak of silence from a fear of the frowns of great men and parties. I have observed, my lord, by my experience, the greatest number of speakers in the most trivial affairs; and it will always prove so, while we come not to the right understanding of the oath *de fidei*, whereby we are bound not only to give our vote, but our faithful advice in Parliament, as we should answer to God. And in our ancient laws the representatives of the honorable barons and the royal boroughs are termed "spokesmen." It lies upon your lordships, therefore, particularly to take notice of such whose modesty makes them bashful to speak. Therefore I shall leave it upon you, and conclude this point with a very memorable saying of an honest private gentleman to a great queen, upon occasion of a state project, contrived by an able statesman and the favorite to a great king, against a peaceful, obedient people, because of the diversity of their laws and constitutions: "If at this time thou hold thy peace,

salvation shall come to the people from another place; but thou and thy house shall perish." I leave the application to each particular member of this House.

II. My lord, I come now to consider our divisions. We are under the happy reign, blessed be God, of the best of queens, who has no evil design against the meanest of her subjects; who loves all her people, and is equally beloved by them again; and yet, that under the happy influence of our most excellent Queen, there should be such divisions and factions, more dangerous and threatening to her dominions than if we were under an arbitrary government, is most strange and unaccountable. Under an arbitrary prince all are willing to serve, because all are under a necessity to obey whether they will or not. He chooses, therefore, whom he will, without respect to either parties or factions; and if he think fit to take the advice of his councils or Parliaments, every man speaks his mind freely, and the prince receives the faithful advice of his people without the mixture of self-designs. If he prove a good prince, the government is easy; if bad, either death or a revolution brings a deliverance: whereas here, my lord, there appears no end of our misery, if not prevented in time. Factions are now become independent, and have got footing in councils, in Parliaments, in treaties, in armies, in incorporations, in families, among kindred; yea, man and wife are not free from their political jars.

It remains, therefore, my lord, that I inquire into the nature of these things; and since the names give us not the right idea of the thing, I am afraid I shall have difficulty to make myself well understood.

The names generally used to denote the factions are Whig and Tory; as obscure as that of Guelfs and Ghibellines; yea, my lord, they have different significations as they are applied

to factions in each kingdom. A Whig in England is a heterogeneous creature: in Scotland he is all of a piece. A Tory in England is all of a piece, and a statesman: in Scotland he is quite otherwise; an anti-courtier and anti-statesman.

A Whig in England appears to be somewhat like Nebuchadnezzar's image, of different metals, different classes, different principles, and different designs; yet, take them altogether, they are like a piece of some mixed drugget of different threads; some finer, some coarser, which, after all, make a comely appearance and an agreeable suit. Tory is like a piece of loyal home-made English cloth, the true staple of the nation, all of a thread; yet if we look narrowly into it we shall perceive a diversity of colors, which, according to the various situations and positions, make various appearances. Sometimes Tory is like the moon in its full, as appeared in the affair of the Bill of Occasional Conformity. Upon other occasions it appears to be under a cloud and as if it were eclipsed by a greater body, as it did in the design of calling over the illustrious Princess Sophia. However, by this we may see their designs are to outshoot Whig in his own bow.

Whig, in Scotland, is a true-blue Presbyterian, who, without considering time or power, will venture his all for the Kirk, but something less for the State. The greatest difficulty is how to describe a Scots Tory. Of old, when I knew them first, Tory was an honest-hearted, comradish fellow, who, provided he was maintained and protected in his benefices, titles, and dignities by the State, was the less anxious who had the government of the Church. But now, what he is since *jure divino* came in fashion, and that Christianity, and by consequence salvation, comes to depend upon episcopal ordination, I profess I know not what to make of him; only this I

must say for him, that he endeavors to do by opposition that which his brother in England endeavors by a more prudent and less scrupulous method.

Now, my lord, from these divisions there has got up a kind of aristocracy, something like the famous triumvirate at Rome. They are a kind of undertakers and pragmatic statesmen, who, finding their power and strength great, and answerable to their designs, will make bargains with our gracious sovereign; they will serve her faithfully, but upon their own terms; they must have their own instruments, their own measures. This man must be turned out, and that man put in, and then they will make her the most glorious queen in Europe.

Where will this end, my lord? Is not her Majesty in danger by such a method? Is not the monarchy in danger? Is not the nation's peace and tranquillity in danger? Will a change of parties make the nation more happy? No, my lord. The seed is sown that is like to afford us a perpetual increase. It is not an annual herb, it takes deep root; it seeds and breeds; and, if not timely prevented by her Majesty's royal endeavors, will split the whole island in two.

III. My lord, I think, considering our present circumstances at this time, the Almighty God has reserved this great work for us. We may bruise this hydra of division and crush this cockatrice's egg. Our neighbors in England are not yet fitted for any such thing; they are not under the afflicting hand of Providence, as we are. Their circumstances are great and glorious; their treaties are prudently managed, both at home and abroad; their generals brave and valorous; their armies successful and victorious; their trophies and laurels memorable and surprising; their enemies subdued and routed, their strongholds besieged and taken. Sieges relieved, marshals killed and taken prisoners, provinces and kingdoms are

the results of their victories. Their royal navy is the terror of Europe; their trade and commerce extended through the universe, encircling the whole habitable world, and rendering their own capital city the emporium for the whole inhabitants of the earth. And which is yet more than all these things, the subjects freely bestowing their treasure upon their sovereign; and above all, these vast riches, the sinews of war, and without which all the glorious success had proved abortive, these treasures are managed with such faithfulness and nicety, that they answer seasonably all their demands, though at never so great a distance. Upon these considerations, my lord, how hard and difficult a thing will it prove to persuade our neighbors to a self-denying bill.

'Tis quite otherwise with us, my lord, as we are an obscure poor people, though formerly of better account, removed to a distant corner of the world, without name, and without alliances; our posts mean and precarious; so that I profess I don't think any one post in the kingdom worth the briguing [seeking] after, save that of being commissioner to a long session of a factious Scots Parliament, with an antedated commission, and that yet renders the rest of the ministers more miserable. What hinders us then, my lord, to lay aside our divisions, to unite cordially and heartily together in our present circumstances, when our all is at stake. Hannibal, my lord, is at our gates—Hannibal is come within our gates—Hannibal is come the length of this table—he is at the foot of the throne. He will demolish the throne if we take not notice. He will seize upon these regalia. He will take them as our *spolia opima*, and whip us out of this house, never to return again.

For the love of God, then, my lord, for the safety and welfare of our ancient kingdom, whose sad circumstances I hope we shall yet convert into prosperity and happiness! We want

no means if we unite. God blessed the peace-makers. We want neither men, nor sufficiency of all manner of things necessary to make a nation happy. All depends upon management. *Concordia res parvæ crescunt*—small means increase by concord. I fear not these Articles, though they were ten times worse than they are, if we once cordially forgive one another, and that according to our proverb, Bygones be bygones, and fair play for time to come. For my part, in the sight of God, and in the presence of this honorable House, I heartily forgive every man, and beg that they may do the same to me. And I do most humbly propose that his Grace my lord commissioner may appoint an *Agape*, may order a love-feast for this honorable House, that we may lay aside all self-designs, and, after our fasts and humiliations, may have a day of rejoicing and thankfulness; may eat our meat with gladness, and our bread with a merry heart. Then shall we sit each man under his own fig-tree, and the voice of the turtle shall be heard in our land, a bird famous for constancy and fidelity.

My lord, I shall pause here, and proceed no further in my discourse, till I see if his Grace my Lord Commissioner [Queensberry] will receive any humble proposals for removing misunderstandings among us and putting an end to our fatal divisions. Upon my honor, I have no other design, and I am content to beg the favor upon my bended knees.

[No answer.]

My Lord Chancellor, I am sorry that I must pursue the thread of my sad and melancholy story. What remains is more afflictive than what I have already said. Allow me, then, to make this meditation—that if our posterity, after we are all dead and gone, shall find themselves under an ill-made bargain, and shall have recourse to our records for the names of the managers who made that treaty by which they

have suffered so much, they will certainly exclaim, “Our nation must have been reduced to the last extremity at the time of this treaty! All our great chieftains, all our noble peers, who once defended the rights and liberties of the nation, must have been killed, and lying dead on the bed of honor, before the nation could ever condescend to such mean and contemptible terms! Where were the great men of the noble families—the Stewarts, Hamiltons, Grahams, Campbells, Johnstons, Murrays, Homes, Kers? Where were the two great officers of the Crown, the Constable and the Marischal of Scotland? Certainly all were extinguished, and now we are slaves forever!”

But the English records—how will they make their posterity reverence the names of those illustrious men who made that treaty, and forever brought under those fierce, warlike, and troublesome neighbors who had struggled so long for independency, shed the best blood of their nation, and reduced a considerable part of their country to become waste and desolate.

I see the English Constitution remaining firm—the same two Houses of Parliament; the same taxes, customs, and excise; the same trade in companies; the same municipal laws; while all ours are either subjected to new regulations or annihilated forever! And for what? Only that we may have the honor to pay their old debts; and may have some few persons present [in Parliament] as witnesses to the validity of the deed, when they are pleased to contract more!

Good God! What? Is this an entire surrender?

My lord, I find my heart so full of grief and indignation, that I must beg pardon not to finish the last part of my discourse; but pause that I may drop a tear as the prelude to so sad a story!