REFORM OR RUIN:

TAKE YOUR CHOICE!

IN WHICH

The Conduct of the King,

THE LORD LIEUTENANT, THE PARLIAMENT, THE MINISTRY, THE OPPOSITION, THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY, THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY

OF ALL DENOMINATIONS, THE LAWYERS,
THE MERCHANTS, THE LOWER

CLASSES, &c. &c.

IS CONSIDERED

AND

THAT REFORM POINTED OUT,

WHICH

ALONE CAN SAVE THE COUNTRY.

THE SECOND EDITION.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR JOHN MILLIKEN, NO. 32, GRAFTON-STREET.

COLFORM OR RUIN

ADVERTISEMENT.

A Pamphlet under a fimilar Title with this has been published in England, and has already run through several Editions. It is most admirably calculated to produce the greatest good in that Kingdom, but is, in many parts, totally inapplicable to this; the Editor, therefore, hopes that he will have rendered an essential service to the public, and at the same time extended the views of the truly Christian Author, if, instead of reprinting it from the London Edition, he has procured a person persectly adequate to the task to give it an Irish dress, and accommodate it to the circumstances of this Country.

February 16, 1798.

-inche dore al H samble 1 ni book franch oil coul

REFORM OR RUIN:

TAKE YOUR CHOICE!

I AM a true born Irishman, and an independent man. I am attached to my native land beyond any other spot on the earth. I am ready to facrifice my life for its interests, and to spend the little property I possess in securing its happiness. I therefore feel myself warranted to call upon all true Irishmen, to lend, at least, a patient attention to what I have to propose to them. I think for myself, and write as I think; I wish them to read and to judge for themselves.

It is agreed on all hands that our affairs are in a most desperate state; our dissiculties and distresses multiply from day to day. War has been long afflicting us from abroad; heart-burnings, and discontents, and insurrections, from within. Numbers of our countrymen have perished by sea and land. The sword has cut off its hundreds, and disease its thousands; millions, and millions of money are daily expending; trade and manufactures B languish:

languish; public credit was never more deeply shaken than we have lately seen it; Government fecurities never at a lower ebb; our national debt encreases, and we begin to feel, what our patriots have often talked to us of, the pressure of taxes. Our very tars, among whom it was our pride to count fo many Irishmen, suffered themselves to be deluded for a moment, and made our hearts ake. Some would even make us call in doubt the fidelity of our national troops, and labour to excite our fears, where we ought chiefly to place our reliance. Religious asperities, after a sleep of one hundred years, are once more awakened, and made instruments of ambition and defign to divide and inflame us against each other, and to renew the miseries which they have so often entailed upon this country. The wicked, the feditious and the deluded provoke, and the law punishes; and between the horrid excesses of the one, and the necessary rigour of the other, a great part of the kingdom is filled with fire and blood. The war, of which hitherto we have only felt the distant effects, appears now to be approaching to our doors, and to the feats of our family comforts and enjoyments. The French bully, and vapour, and threaten, and their emissaries and supporters, who no longer conceal themselves, repeat their threats, and exaggerate their power, and are a thousand times more virulent, and vindictive, and fanguinary than even our ancient and natural enemies-all is alarm, and terror, and difmay, and despondency.

It is indeed true, that we are not without something to put to the other side of the account. We have had many signal successes in the course of the war—we have taken many sine islands and colonies from our enemies—we have never seen their sleets without beating them—we have taken the round of them, and all in their turns have vanished before the superior skill and conduct of our Admirals, and the bravery of our seamen; and, what never could have been said on any other occasion, scarce a ship of war of ours has been taken, and not one foot of British land has been lost in any part of the world.

It must also be allowed, that our enemies are still in a worse state than we are. There is not under the fun, there never has been under the fun, a more wretched people than the French: their King, their Queen, many of the royal blood; the best of their nobility, of their Clergy, of their gentry, of their wealthy and respectable merchants, and even of their honest mechanics, and farmers, and labourers have shed their blood on the scaffold, or been shot, stabbed, drowned, or poisoned. Numbers of all these descriptions have fled to other countries, destitute and helpless, and of those who remain, a great part have been plundered of their property, and deprived of all the comforts and conveniencies of life. Religion, law, order and good government are at an end among them. Even they who fubmit to the present rulers, and swear allegiance to the present power, cannot hope, for a day, to be safe from the general oppression: if they escape either death death or banishment, they are still liable to be plundered and pillaged on every wanton pretext, and to be facrificed to the necessities of the army, of which their usurpers are afraid, and which must be fed and paid at all events, and let who will suffer and be reduced to misery.

In Spain the case is not much better. Being divided into two parties, one betrayed the other to the French, who compelled them to make war against us, though contrary to their known interests, and the consequence is, that they have been beat most dreadfully; that their dear friends and good allies are become their tyrants, and treat them with such haughtiness and insolence, that, if they dared, they would cut the throats of every Frenchman in their country.

The Dutch are still worse off; their trade is destroyed; their colonies are in our hands; the French have drained them of their money, their goods, and almost every thing they had; they have an army in the midst of them, and in all their strong towns, dragooning them into all their measures, banishing, imprisoning, and pillaging even those who were at first the most forward and active in giving up the country to them, and forcing them to sit out ships to sight against us, when (although they think themselves obliged to behave like men, let who will be their opponents) they are much more inclined to sight for us. But what are we the better for all this? In spite of the dreadful things that have happened to our enemies, in spite of all

the conquests we have made, and all the ships we have taken, what is our state at this hour? We are threatened with invafions; we are divided and weakened by parties and factions; we are finking into gloom and despair. And yet the French fleet that was intended to invade us was dispersed, by the breath of Providence, and the object of the expedition completely defeated. The feditious spirit in the North feems fast to subside; numbers of the deluded have availed themselves of the proclamation, and have returned to their allegiance, and to their usual occupations, and industrious pursuits. Our credit has not only not lost ground of late, but is looking up again; a most plentiful harvest and mild feafon have reduced the prices of all the necessaries of life, below what they have been long remembered. Travel from one end of the island to the other, and, except in those districts where the arts and mifrepresentations of incendiaries are, at the moment, goading the deluded peafants into outrage and violence, you will fee every mark of the greatest plenty, and prosperity the land has ever enjoyed. The linen markets in the North were never more flourishing, never more crouded with buyers, or distinguished by higher prices. Every where agriculture and tillage are improving, and every field producing more than ever it did before. Yet shut your eyes, and open your ears, and listen to our orators, and our newspaper writers, and our pamphleteers, and we shall hear of nothing but grievances, and oppression, and cruelty, and persecution, and ruin.

Now what is the meaning of all this? How comes it to pass, after all our wonderful escapes, after all our glorious victories, in the midst of so much plenty and feeming prosperity, that we not only think ourselves upon the brink of ruin, but perhaps really are so? The answer is plain and short: We are not Reformed-a thorough Reform would fet all right, and restore us to peace and happiness. But what is that Reform that would do all this good? To answer this question is my object in writing. Some think a Reform in Parliament will alone be sufficient, and that Reform to confist only in Members being chosen in a different manner. Some are for what they call Catholic Emancipation; - fome for lessening the power and influence of Government; -fome for abolishing Tythes; -fome for making an immediate peace with France; -- some for establishing a Republic on the French plan. The last would, indeed, be a decifive measure, and do its own work completely; but as for the rest, they are all, to my mind, paltry, partial Reforms, which can do little good, and may do much mischief.

If every man in the kingdom had a vote for a Member of Parliament, what would be the confequence? Why each Member would be chosen by a Mob. And whom would the Mob choose? Why the man that made the loudest speech, and the largest promises.—And who would this be? Why he that, having neither property, nor character to lose, was ready to say any thing to get into the House, in hopes

WOVI

hopes of being paid for breaking every promife he had made.

As to Catholic Emancipation I really do not know what the term means, as it applies to the great body of that description of subjects. I know no distinction between a Roman Catholic of my rank in life, and myself, with respect to our civil franchises. He votes for a Member in Parliament as I do, and is therefore represented in Parliament as I am. He has the fame protection of property, and of person from the fame laws, in the enacting of which he has the fame share. He can pursue his industry with the same security, and secure the fruits of it for himself and his family by purchase or otherwise, in the same way. In what then is he to be emancipated? Something, indeed, remains yet to be granted, and which a perseverance in loyalty and quiet would, I am perfuaded, have obtained before this, by which three or four wealthy individuals might gratify their ambition or their vanity; but what the general body fuffers from this point being withheld, or what the granting of it could effect towards the Reform of that description of subjects, is beyond my comprehension to discover.

With respect to the power and influence of Government, I never knew a man, who when he was out of office, did not complain of them, and as soon as he got into office, did not exert them, and endeavour to encrease them: if he lessened them in one way, he took care to extend them in another. Much has lately been attempted in that way by our

state quacks and mountebanks. I do not pretend to say that abuses may not creep in, wherever there is power; but every body knows that sour million of people can not be governed without some power: and if the supreme magistrate has not lawful power enough to govern them by, either he will not be able to govern them at all, (and then there can be nothing but confusion and mischief) or else he must govern them by unlawful means; and I appeal to any man of common sense, whether it is not better that a King should govern according to fixed and settled laws, which are known to all the nation, than by undue insuence, bribery, corruption and the like.

But fay fome, "abolish tythes"—I fear this will not answer—I do not expect much towards a reform from wrong and robbery. They who "understand those things tell us, that the settlement of tythes in these realms hath been by the ancient and undoubted laws of the land. When all the lands of England were the demesse of the Kings, and they enseossed the Barons for the desence of the kingdom, reserving to themselves the royalties and other rights, one of these Kings; nearly a thousand years ago, conferred the tythes of all the kingdom upon the church by his royal charter t. The same practice was adopted here by our Kings, and great men, and has since been confirmed by law, and so the lands have uniformly descended to

our

^{*} Lord Coke. † Ethelwulf.

† This charter is to be seen in the Abbot Ingulf, and in Matthew of Westminster.

our day, and until they came into the hands of the present owners, who must have paid more for the purchase, and required larger rents from their tenants, if they had not been thus charged. Hence, whatever fight they may have to the other nine parts of the fee fimple, or leafe, they have certainly none whatever to the tythe or tenth, which is no more theirs, than the other nine parts are the Clergy's. I cannot, therefore, agree in the idea of robbing one man more than another of what the Law fecures to him. It is a rule that may extend to every other species of property. As to the wolder or occupier, I am of the same opinion with an honest, cool-headed, reasoning neighbour of mine, who on alking who were to have the tythes when they were taken from the Parson, and being told they would be the Landlord's, then, faid he, "I " had rather they should remain as they are; for I " can always deal better with the Parson than with " the Landlord, and even with the Proctor, bad as " he may be, than with the Agent."

As for a Republic on the French plan, Lord defend me and mine from it! I have watched it from its first rise to its present power, and I have seen nothing but murder, and massacre, and robbery, and injustice, and every thing that is execrable in the eyes of God or Man, mark its progress and its establishment. I have seen it setting out upon a system that, if it were to prevail universally, would make a Hell upon Earth. It is a system that holds out the actual possessors of authority, or power, or conse-

quence, or riches, as fair plunder to those who chance to have none of these advantages. But who will not fee that this must go on for ever? You, or those who may claim under you, can have no more title to what you will have robbed me of, than you allowed me to have; you will therefore be robbed, and plundered, and dispossessed in your turn, and fo from age to age men will be cutting each others throat, and pillaging and plundering each other in endless succession. But it will be said, " all this will be fet to right with time; -in the mean " while try the Revolution." But if we are to have our throats cut, that our grand-children may have a chance of enjoying their lives and their property, in the same security in which they have been so long enjoyed under the present system, I have no appetite to try the experiment. I have seen it already tried in France, and I am fully fatisfied. I have feen it for seven years producing confusion, oppression, cruelty, poverty, all forts of mischief and wickedness, as well to its-original supporters, as to its oppofers, and no good whatever.

But a peace with France; what can be faid to this? A very short answer. They will not make peace with you; they will exterminate you, and cut you off from among the nations of the earth. "No," say our great orators and essay writers, "they will fraternize with "you." Yes, as Cain fraternized with Abel—yes as the French themselves have fraternized with Flanders, to plunder and rob, and consistent, and drain you by forced loans and contributions, that you may supply the total loss of their own wealth and resources.

66 They

"They will admit you to their alliance;" yes, as they have admitted Holland, and Spain, and Venice, and the unfortunate Pope, to dispose of your armies, and your fleets, and your resources, to the establishing of their own universal dominion, and not to let you even * think but as they please.

I trust I have now shewn that none of the above plans will answer our purpose. Let us then try to find out one that will. But that I may not be taken for a quack doctor, before I prescribe the cure, let me try to find some of the great causes of our present unhappy state; and in order so to do, let us take a short view of all ranks of people beginning with the highest.

Of the King, if I knew ever fo many bad things, I should be cautious how I mentioned them, because I have no inclination to be hanged or transported; but, in truth, I know no harm of him; his private life every body says is good, and I think his public conduct has been good also. Of this I am sure that this nation owes him more than to any other King that ever sat on the throne. The shortening the duration of our Parliament, the emancipation of our Legislature, the freedom and extension of our commerce, the independence of our judges, the communication of the blessings of the British constitution

^{* &}quot;To consolidate the power of the Republic," says Buonaparte, in his answer to one of the Parisian addresses, "you must
"henceforth suffer no idea to prevail in the World but those of
the Great Nation."

tion to every class of our fellow subjects, are among the many proofs of his royal dispositions to promote the interest and happiness of this land, which demand our warmest gratitude and attachment, in so much that We at least may fairly call him the best of our Kings.

Of his reprefentative in this kingdom I have never heard but one opinion; amiable and conciliating in his manners, regular and strictly proper in his conduct, a fond parent, an affectionate husband, with a humane heart and a found understanding, he has not only escaped the censure even of our most violent oppositionists, but frequently extorted their praise. To all who love the Constitution, and wish to see it preserved in Church and State, he has most fingularly recommended himself. undertook the Government of the country under circumstances which might well have made the boldest shrink from it; and by a steady, uniform, and refolute conduct, he has hitherto guided us through the storm, with a success of which many despaired.

Having no more defire to fee the infide of Newgate than to try the air of Botany Bay, I shall be cautious in what I have to say about the Parliament. Of the present Parliament, indeed, we can as yet say nothing, except that when we look to the taxes for the present year, we see a most marked leaning towards the ease of the lower orders, and that they are rich who principally bear the additional burdens of the state. With respect to the late Parliament, without allowing

nothing of it but good, its Journals can shew many falutary regulations for which the nation is indebted to it. It passed many excellent laws, and though there were many strong ones, yet who that will judge impartially for his country will say, that the times did not require them, and that it is not to them we owe all that we at this moment enjoy? This praise the last Parliament deserved, and this I hope the present will also merit. I will, however, beg leave to ask two or three short questions, and let those whom the cap sits wear it.

When the law forbids bribery, can it be right to

bribe?

When a man is employed in enacting regulations for the prefervation of morality and religion, is it confistent to shew to the world that he has himself neither morals nor religion?

When a man undertakes to act for others, can it

be right to neglect his trust?

When acting for others, ought we to consider their interest or our own?

As for the British Ministry, I allow that they conducted affairs very well till the war began; I allow too, that we have had great successes; but yet I am not convinced that things might not have been managed better and at less expence. I should, however, be more ready to blame Ministers in both countries, if I was not fully convinced that they have been prevented from doing their best by the opposition in both countries. And now my patience begins

begins to fail me-for what can be more provoking to any man who really loves his country, than to fee men pretending to love their country, and to wish to fave it, and yet, instead of doing all in their power to help things forward, doing all in their power to hinder every measure proposed; and at last, quitting their post at the very moment, when (as they themselves allow) the country is in the utmost danger possible? This question applies to the Opposition on both sides of the water. But in the conduct of our Opposition there are many things that must add to our indignation. To hear them declaim with as much vehemence, as if they were in earnest, against the influence of the British Minister, and the interference of a British Cabinet, and yet maintain, themselves, a constant intercourse with the heads of the opposition in England, the would-be ministers; receive their directions, adopt all their conduct, applaud them for facrificing the independence of our Parliament, by introducing into the English Parliament questions, that concern ourselves exclusively, and leave no doubt, how implicitly they would fubmit to their controul, were their great object to be secured, and those who are at present in power should be turned out to make way for them! They did so when in office with the English Secretary of their own party; they would do fo to morrow should their party come in. But besides this, I do not hesitate to say, that we are indebted to them for most of the miseries with which the disturbed parts of the country have been visited. Let any

man read their speeches in Parliament, their fpeeches at public meetings, and the harangues of those of them that are lawyers in the Courts of Justice, and put together the whole of their conduct, and fay, whether without those speeches and harangues, and that conduct the wretched combination of all that is low and contemptible in the kingdom, could have acquired the confistancy, the arrangement, the confidence that now render it fo formidable? I fay nothing of the hopes, with which their exaggerated representations of the general difcontent, their invectives against the Government, the imputation of cruelty and oppression, in which it is impossible for them to believe, their paneygyrics upon every thing that is French, and their depreciation of every thing that is British or connected with Great Britain, have inspired our enemies; encouraging them to reject all overtures of peace, and holding out this country as an eafy conquest, that only waits for their coming to take possession of it.

From this view of the Government and the Parliament let us turn to the conduct of the Nobility and Gentry in general, including the officers of the Navy and Army, and the higher classes of Law, Physic, and Commerce. Thank God! you will find among them some excellent people; and in general they are willing to affish the poor, and not to oppress them. But do not luxury, corruption, adultery, gaming, pride vanity, idleness, extravagance and dissipation prevail too generally? Are they

they all as diligently employed as they ought to be, either in the service of their King and Country, or in regulating their own families, or being useful to their neighbours, in those places where their property or their influence lie? What example do they set to the lower orders, of whose excesses, originating from a contempt of religion, they so loudly complain?

Of the bishops and clergy of all denominations, I should be very forry to say any thing that might lessen them in the eyes of the nation; for, if we are to be preserved, it must be by their means.

The bishops of the established church are, in general, learned and good men, and much are we indebted to the King and his advisers for having fet fuch a man at the head of the church, as now fills that important station. Of some few of them, indeed, I cannot refrain from speaking in terms of the most unqualified disapprobation. Although vested with the most facred of all trusts, they abandon their posts, and, at a moment when their presence is most wanting, to their clergy and others to instruct, to direct, to encourage, to confole, they chuse to fly on different pretexts, and refide in another kingdom. These are the worst of absentees, spending the incomes of their fees on themfelves and their families, without the smallest advantage to the country which has fo liberally provided for them, that they might incessantly watch over the interests of virtue and religion, and giving fuch just cause of discontent and grief, to the Protestant, and of ridicule, abuse, and triumph to the Diffenter. If we look to those of that

that body, who have a more proper sense of their high function, and are employed where they ought to be, we shall find that they take more pains, have more work to do, and do it more effectually than is generally fupposed either by their luke-warm friends or avowed enemies. Yet, if St. Paul were among them, I think he would work harder than any of them, and adopt fome stronger measures to bring back to their duty fuch Clergymen as have deferted it. For (forry I am to fay it) though you will find fo many among the lower Clergy who do their duty and take care of their flocks, you will find too many also, who neglect both, and spend their time in public places, in dancing or card-playing, or dangling at the Caftle, or elsewhere, in hopes of preferment. If such believe in a day of reckoning, I can only fay, they have a fort of courage, which I have not.

As to the Bishops and Clergy of the Roman Catholic persuasion, I am told that amongst them there are many learned and exemplary men. But are they all of that independent mind that will serve them to speak candidly and roundly to those on whom they depend for their subsistence? Do none of them conform themselves to the manners of the class of people with whom they chiefly converse, and accompany them to the Ale-house or the Dram-shop? Are they forward or zealous in inculcating that loyalty and submission to legal Government, which they tell us they learn from their religious principles? And are they as attentive to the morals of their flock, and to

the

the religion of the spirit amongst them, as they are to outward rites and observances, and the distinctions that unhappily separate us?

To the differting Clergy I would apply all that I have faid of the Roman Catholics, substituting to the last question this plain one: Do they make religion and morals more the subject of their exhortations than politics? Have they nothing to answer for the innovating spirit that has filled the North with crimes?

Among the Lawyers, Merchants, Traders, Farmers, and others engaged in business, we find many honest, generous, and charitable men; but we also find among them many dishonest, profligate, and covetous characters. The very best of them are, I fear, as much engrossed by worldly business, and wordly cares and wordly amusements, as if they were to live here for ever. How little of their time or their attention do they take from those pursuits to devote to religion, or to their improvement in virtue and morals?

Lastly, look at the lower classes. How willingly would I draw a veil over some part of the picture which they present? Great allowances ought to be made for their little instruction and scanty advantages; and it must be confessed that, until of late, they were generally acquiring habits of industry, and making daily advances in morality and good order. Nay even at this moment, when the spirit of licentiousness and anarchy has so extensively pos-

fessed them, and driven such numbers of them into every species of outrage and violence, I think them to be, in their general description, peaceable, well disposed, amenable to law, with a turn for religion, and a defire of instruction. But when I admit all this, let us look to the public streets, let us look to the places of idle and 'profligate refort, let us look to the infide of their own dwellings, let us look to our prisons, and our courts of justice, what drunkenness, what blasphemy, what riot and disorder, what murders, and burnings, and rapine, what fubornation and perjury, affail our ears and our eyes? Even taking things in the most favourable light, are they all as honest, sober and industrious, as we could wish them to be? Do they spend all they earn in feeding and clothing themselves, and their wives and families? And do they earn all they can? Are the Sundays spent in Church or at Chapel, or at the Ale-house and Whiskey-shop? Abroad, in bad company, or at home with their families? Do they instruct their children themselves, or accept with hearty thanks those instructions which are provided for them by the bounty of their neighbours?

Having now turned our eyes on the various classes of which this nation is composed, can we be at a loss to know what that Reform is, which our case requires?—Surely, No. It is as plain, as plain can be, that the Reform we want, and the only Reform which can save us, (but which certainly will save us, if adopted in time) is

A THOROUGH REFORM OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES, AMONG ALL RANKS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM!

Let the King and Queen continue to set an example of Piety, Regularity, Sobriety, and conjugal sidelity, to their children, their servants, and all their subjects. Let them drive from their Councils, and their Court, all adulterers and adulteresses; all gamblers; all, in short, whose characters are notoriously bad, of either sex, and of every rank.

Let them avoid even innocent amusements, if liable to produce immorality among others, which, alas! is too often the case.

- " Oh hard condition, twin-born with Greatness!
- " What infinite heart's-ease must Kings neglect,
- " That private men enjoy!"

I can take my Sunday evening's walk, chat with my neighbours, and view the beauties of nature, and no harm done. But if my gracious Sovereign could fee but a fmall part of the confusion, idleness, drunkenness, disregard of the Sabbath, and other incalculable ill effects which are produced not only in Windsor, Eton, and the whole neighbourhood, but even in his capital itself, by his merely appearing on Windsor Terrace; how gladly would he give up for the good of his People, that heart-felt satisfaction, which he has so often felt, from—" Read-" ing his history in a nation's eyes!"

Let his Majesty's deputy in this kingdom observe the same rules. Let him recollect that, as he repre-

fents the power, he should also represent the virtues of his Sovereign; that he is equally obliged to be watchful over his conduct, fo as to give no countenance to the contempt of religion, the neglect of its ordinances, the violation of its Sabbaths, the defertion of its temples, for which all classes of people are, I am afraid, but too univerfally distinguishable. Let him recollect, that he also is a spectacle to the people, and that his conduct is a cause either of offence and degeneracy, or of edification and improvement to the nation over which he prefides. And if ever these should meet his eyes, let him be affured that these exhortations are not meant for reproof, as if he failed, but as incitements to redoubled attention to these important points, towards which, in the high ranks of female fociety, as fuch an example is, alas! but too neceffary, so is he effectually affisted by his virtuous and amiable confort.

Let every Member of Parliament, whether Peer or Commoner, reflect on the awful trust committed to his care, and attend diligently to the execution of it. Not merely when a political dispute arises, but constantly and uniformly. Let no act receive its stat, without a strict scrutiny into its merits. Let them revise, curtail, and methodise the whole code of statute law, whose bulk and consusion is such, that I fear we may almost say

--- " Mole ruit suâ!"

If but a small part of that time, and those talents, which are wasted in long-winded harangues, and bitter disputations, were thus applied; our laws would acquire clearness, precision, and vigour. The number, the length, and the expence of our suits, would no more be the reproach of our nation. Imagination itself can hardly embrace the variety and the magnitude of the national benefits, which would be thereby produced.

Let those, to whom the administration of the executive government is committed, learn by dearbought and fatal experience, that their own arm cannot fave them; and that human laws and human power can avail nothing, without sound principles and pure morals; and let them, therefore, without delay, bend the whole force of their talents to the reformation of these.

As for those who, from motives of personal ambition, advancement, or gain; from private pique, or party prejudice, or any other sinister design; are ready to facrifice the public good, to their private views; it is vain to waste words on them,—their consciences must be seared with a hot iron.

To those, on whom Providence has bestowed rank, or honour, or wealth, or any other useful talent, and who have not quite forgot who is the Giver of all good gifts, I next address myself; earnestly entreating them to withdraw their minds, for one moment, from all other pursuits, and to consider their own situation, and that of their country and of the surrounding nations. Where are now the rank, the honours, and the wealth of France, of Flanders, of Holland, and of Italy? And where

must those of Britain shortly be; if their possessors will neither take warning from the fate of others, nor from the judgments of Heaven, just ready to fall on their own heads? It is yet in their power to fave their country, and their own fouls: but not a moment must be lost. Let them instantly quit the dice box, the turf, and the tavern; every wicked, and every trifling employment, and repair each to his proper station. Let them reform, first themfelves, their expences, their wives and children, their fervants and dependents; and then exert all their influence, as landlords, as magistrates, as friends, and as neighbours; encouraging and protecting the fober and industrious; discouraging and punishing, with candour, but with vigour, the lawless and profligate. Few of those, to whom I am now speaking, are aware how much mischief they occasion, merely by being in a wrong place; or how much good they must do, if they would only stay where their lot has fallen. It was the observation of a man of much good fense and experience,-" That, if every gentleman would refide on his estate, and every clergyman on his living, we should need no other Reformation." Let those, then, who fly to towns and cities, to public places, or foreign countries, in fearch of paltry amusements, or under a false pretext, or at best a mistaken notion, of repairing their shattered fortunes; no longer think themselves guiltless .- Numberless are the ways in which their Country is injured by their absence: If refident at their family feats, their example, their influence,

influence, their fortune,—every talent they possess, dispenses blessings on all around them. In any other place, they almost unavoidably do mischief, by adding to the number of those, whom the vices of cities inevitably corrupt.

But if purer motives cannot prevail, let pride plead the cause of patriotism. In a country like ours and Great Britain, a country gentleman is the first of all characters; and truly, when we view him feated in the mansion of his ancestors, surrounded by his family, his relations, his fervants, his workmen, his tenants and his neighbours, all in their due proportion, partaking of his hospitality, benevolence and protection, where shall we find a more enviable object? But merely shift the scene, and place him in the capital, often in an inconvenient and incommodious house, or paltry lodgings; where now are his honors, his influence, his respectability? All vanished and lost in the crowd. He becomes at once a mere cypher without use or value; spending his days in a club room, and his evenings in the tavern, or at the card table; and that income, which before promifed him and others fo much folid and fubstantial comfort, will barely fupply what are deemed the necessary ornaments and amusements of life. Meantime, his fervants are tainted with the vices of the town, and infected with the dangerous spirit of the day; and it is well if his wife and daughter are preferved uninjured; their health certainly is not. Then bathing, or the wells, are ordered, and he is fent with all his incumbrances to England or to the fea,

fea, to accumulate expences. His mansion-house is deserted in the summer as well as the winter, and changed for a narrow lodging; habits of indolence and dissipation are insensibly acquired, perhaps habits of a worse kind, if a worse can be; and he who was the support and ornament of a considerable district, the fond Parent, the indulgent Landlord, the hospitable Neighbour, the liberal Benefactor, the respected Magistrate, sinks into useless insignificance and Contempt!

Abandoned by their owners, our villages might still have some hope left, if they were not also abandoned by their PASTORS; by those, whose bounden duty it is to take care of them; and whose breach of duty has this aggravation, that not by defeent (as in the former case) but by their own solemn acceptance, this duty attaches. Far be it from me to speak disrespectfully of the Clergy: I reverence their facred office: I look up to them, as the most pious, the most learned, and the most useful class of all. As individuals, they must of course vary; and while some are ably and diligently performing their duty, others alas! notoriously neglect their's.

It has too long been the false and shallow policy of irreligious and worldly-minded Men, to deprive the Clergy of the exercise of those rights, which they receive not from man; and which man, therefore, cannot take from them. It seems almost forgotten, in these days of novelty, when every thing ancient and venerable is despised, that

Christians are a regular society, formed by CHRIST himself, under rulers and officers appointed by him, with authority to appoint others to fucceed them; and thus our present Bishops and Clergy derive their authority by regular fuccession from HIM to whom all power was given, and who, if he had feen fit, could have invested them with temporal authority also: but this he did not; on the contrary, HE and his Apostles every where, in the most explicit terms, enjoin all Christians to submit like others to their lawful Governors. In temporal matters, therefore, our Bishops and Clergy possess only fuch powers as are given them by the laws of this land: but, in all spiritual concerns, they derive their authority from Him by whom Kings reign, and are bound to exert it for the benefit of that body over whom they are appointed.

With all possible deference, I submit it to the consideration of our Governors, both in Church and State, whether any Society can long slourish, or even exist, without Regulation and Reform? and whether the Church of Ireland can form an exception to this rule? I earnestly entreat them to consider the present state of Religion and Morals in this Kingdom—To consider how impossible it is for human Laws to coerce a people, who have lost all sense of the Divine Law; who are no longer restrained by the dictates of conscience; and who, consequently, abstain from no crimes, but such as are prohibited by the law of the land, and from those, only when the danger of punishment is so apparent,

apparent, as to overcome the force of corrupt paffions and pampered appetites! Whatever may be the refult of fuch an inquiry, it furely must be admitted, that the enforcing the residence of our parochial Clergy is indispensably requisite; and that the times call for uncommon exertion in all; especially in those, who have the care of our principles and our morals. Never did the powers of darkness exert themselves more, or with more success. Do other powers exert themselves as much to counteract them? treason, sedition, and mutiny, have appeared; and new laws have been made to prevent their growth; and we all feel, and most of us acknowledge, that this was right and fit. But do not adultery, gaming, Sabbath-breaking, neglect of public worship, and above all, lukewarmness and indifference about Religion itself, prevail, to a degree unknown in any former age ?- to a degree, which feems to portend the eradicating Chistianity in this quarter of the World? And where are the laws against these? Shall I be told that there are fuch already in our Statute Books? The same was faid as to the laws against treason and sedition; but by whom was it faid? Was it by those, who wished to prevent such crimes? or those who by their writings and speeches, had encouraged them?

In the Name, therefore, of that God who made us; of that Saviour, who died to redeem us; and of that Blessed Spirit, who is ever ready to affift our weak but *sincere* endeavours; I call on every Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, who has devoted

himself to the service of God in the Church of Ireland, to lay aside every avocation, and instantly to exert his utmost powers, in the preservation of our holy Religion. So shall he save many souls from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

The fame exhortation I would address to the Clergy of all denominations. I would exhort the Diffenting Clergyman to reflect whether it is from the avowed fubverters of all Religion, from Freethinkers and Atheists, that he is to expect that form of Church Government to which he is fo zealously attached? or if he promotes his own cause, or the cause of his Religion, by countenancing his hearers in their partiality to French principles, and their expectations of a force to subvert the present order of things. I would exhort the Roman Catholic Clergyman to reflect what chance he can have, not only to obtain the place held by the established Clergy, but even to be left in his present situation, or in a way to discharge the duty he owes to his Flock, should those of his profession, who have united themfelves with the malcontents of the North, fucceed in their schemes of changing the present Government for a French Republic. The example of the feat of his Religion, and of its venerable head, will afford him an infallible rule by which to judge. It calls upon him by all that is dear to him in his Religion, and by the immortal interests of those, over whom he has been appointed the spiritual Director, to redouble his pastoral exertions; to make a common cause

cause with all the Ministers of the Gospel, and instead of prejudicing his hearers against their Protestant brethren, or raising a spiritual wall of separation between them, now that the legal wall has been broken down, to inculcate a spirit of mutual love and benevolence, and to have no antipathies but against the advocates of immorality and licentiousness, and no enemies but the enemies of Christ.

If any lawyers, merchants or others, who are engaged in worldly business can spare time and thought for one serious reslection, let that reslection be, "how their account will stand at the Day of Judgment?" how they will then answer for having joined "night to day and Sunday to the week," in adding shilling to shilling, and guinea to guinea, instead of pursuing their lawful calling, and devoting to the service of God, that small portion of their time and thoughts which he claims; and which claim, if they have a just sense either of their temporal or eternal interests, they will never more resist.

I now wish to address myself to all the inhabitants of this island, but chiefly to those of the lower class, as it is called:—to those, who have neither rank or riches, but must earn their daily bread by their daily labour. You, my fellow-countrymen, whether you know it or not, have souls to be saved; and must live for ever in another world; and be there rewarded or punished, as you have behaved well or ill in this life. Even here, if you behave

behave ill, you will fuffer for it; and if you behave well, God and good men will affift you. If you are idle, do you not want bread? If you are drunken, do not your wives and children fuffer? If you are dishonest, do not you loose your characters? If you are honest, and contented, and diligent, do you not find you are happy? By being happy, I dont mean that you have every thing you want, or that you have no fickness or forrow!-that is such happiness, as does not fall to the lot of any body in this world. Whatever you may think, the King upon his throne has more cares and vexations than you have. Many and many a night, when you are found afleep, he and his Ministers are hard at work, for you, and me, and all of us: And the case is the fame with the great and learned. Some of them, indeed, like some of you, neglect their business, and waste their time in idleness and vice; but others work as hard or harder than you, and their work is of a worse sort. Your's preserves your health; while their's destroys their health, and shortens their lives. God has fo ordered it, that, in this life, no man shall be completely happy; but most men, let their situation be what it will, may be tolerably happy, if it be not their own fault: and every man may be completely happy for ever in another world; and the fame means which will make him happy in another world, will commonly make him comfortable in this.

Let us, then, inquire what those means are: They may be expressed in two short words—

BE GOOD!

God, who made all things, has fo made them, that it is impossible for a bad man to be happy. He has given us laws, and promifed to reward us if we obey them, and to punish us if we do not. He commands us to love and fear him; to pray to him; to believe in Jesus Christ his Son; to honour and obey the King, and all who are in authority under him; to fubmit to our masters, and all lawful governors. To respect God's ministers, his Sabbath, and his church. To pay all their dues, whether tithes, taxes, customs, or other things. To obey the laws of the country in which we live. To do to others as we would have them do to us. To love our neighbours, and affift them as often as it is in our power. To be honest, sober, modest, and decent. To work diligently, in order to get our living. To bear patiently fuch misfortunes as befal us. To be thankful for fuch good things as we enjoy; for our health, and strength, and daily bread, and many other bleffings which we are too apt not to confider as we ought. They are all the gifts of God, and ought to be received as fuch.

Now I would ask any fair man, if there is any thing hard or unreasonable in all this? Or whether he is not convinced that, if we would obey these laws, we should be much happier than we are? For, forry I am to say it, we do not obey them as we ought. Instead of praying to him every night and morning, some, I fear, never pray at all; instead of obeying the King, and his Magistrates and Offi-

cers, how many have been guilty lately of infulting him and them! How many have joined in riotous mobs, and feditious clubs and meetings! How many have fuffered themselves to be deluded into unlawful and impious oaths, preposterously pledging themselves to God, upon the Holy Gospel of his Son, to commit robbery, murder, every crime that is most heinous in his fight, or that can expose us most certainly to his wrath, and to eternal damnation, and thinking themselves bound by fuch oaths? How many have been the dupes of a fet of wretches, who are going about, as St. Peter reprefents the Devil, feeking whom they may deyour; deceiving the fimple and the ignorant by false representations, feeding them with hopes which they can never make good, making them renounce all their prefent comforts and enjoyments, and all their industrious pursuits, and expose their wives and their children to be left without house or home, or fupport, for a wild-goofe-chace after fomething, which fome persons, whom they do not so much as know, defire fome perfons to tell them they are to get from the French, when they are to come over on floating islands, and blow the British fleet, that now rides in triumph through the whole world, out of the feas? In short, how many have thrown off all religion, all fear of God, frequenting neither Church, Mass, nor Meeting; or if they go to the Chapel or the Meeting House, going there only to enter into wicked and favage combinations, and to fettle plans for robbing, and plundering, and murdering,

dering, as foon as the night comes on; or for training themselves to arms, that they may be the more expert to spill the blood of their clergy, their landlords, their neighbours, and former acquaintances and friends?

Even amongst those who are not thus changed into favages, and cut-throats, and house-breakers, how many are there who shew every kind of difrespect to God's Ministers and Ordinances? who scarcely ever go to the house of prayer? who spend God's Day in doing more business than on any other day in the week, or in jaunting about, or ingetting drunk, though it is expressly ordered, that neither we, nor our fervants, nor our cattle, shall work on that day, and that we shall keep it holy? Instead of paying to all their dues, how many try to cheat the established clergy of their tithes, and their priests of the little pittance they claim for their fupport, and the King of his taxes, and buy fmuggled goods wherever they can meet with them? By these and many such things, they offend against the laws of God, and the laws of the land. Who is there that always does as he would be done by? that never speaks ill of his neighbour? that never tries to deceive, or defraud, or over-reach another? how common are drunkenness, lewdness, gambling, and above all, profane curfing and fwearing, and the most shocking oaths, which give no pleasure to any man, and are so abominable before God? How many never thank God for any thing? Are never contented, but grumble and complain, even when nothing

what makes all the more unpardonable is, that we can none of us pretend that we are uninstructed, or deprived of the means of knowing our duty. We have established among us the most pure and perfect form of christianity, and that which approaches the nearest to the primitive times of the Apostles, that any Christian people ever enjoyed. No description amongst us are without sufficient Christian instruction to convey to us a knowledge of the virtues of the Gospel. The Bible is in the hands of most people; it is explained to all; and if we would read it, or attend to the explanation, we could not fail to know our duty; but the truth is, most of us know our duty, but will not do it.

Is it any wonder then, that God should punish us for all this? He has given us fuch good things as few other nations ever had. We have the free exercise of our Religion, through all denominations; our persons and our property are also free. As long as we transgress not the laws, we can go where we will, and do what we will; and fo long as we do not injure others, nobody can injure us without being punishable for it. We live in a land of plenty, and the poorest person in it, that is sober and frugal, can eat a more wholesome and nourishing food, and can live in a more warm and comfortable habitation, than those of a much higher rank in most other countries. Great pains have been taken to make the people think otherwise. But I will appeal to every candid man, who has vifited

fited the other countries of Europe, if he has ever feen one, where the labourer, if he be industrious, and does not fpend his money on spirituous liquors, or in some other loose way, lives more comfortably. There is not a cottier in the kingdom who has not his cow's grafs, and his potatoe garden, at a rent perfectly proportioned to the wages he receives. He can have his flax ground, for the industry of his wife, at a rate equally proportionate to the value of the manufacture when he fells it, and with that and his hog, which is feen in every cottage, he can clothe his family better and more warmly than any other man of his class, even in England. The wages of the common labourer are also more equal to his support than in that country, notwithstanding all that is faid to make him think otherwise. If he buys as many of the necessaries of life for his fixpence * as the English labourer can buy for his shilling, then may not his wages be faid to be as high as the wages in England? But who does not know that this is the case? Is not the price of bread, of meat, of firing, of clothing, of every thing that the poor man requires for his fustenance and comfort known to be twice as dear in England as it is here? The same may be said of the lower manufacturers, as of the labourers; and if their condition be better, than that of the same class of people in England, how must it be when compared with the black rye bread, the chefnuts, the garlick, the

onions,

^{*} In most of the counties, and in all the cities and great towns, the hire of labour is now as high as in England. Then what is the inference?

onions, the wooden shoes of the French, who, they are told, are to come and better their condition?

It is not that I do not wish that they could live still more comfortably than they do. I should be happy to fee the day when every man in the kingdom could have his fowl or his joint of meat in his pot of a Sunday, as the good Harry the Fourth of France used to wish for his people, but which those who murdered his descendant have taken care should never be their lot. What I want is this; that they should not listen to every idle, designing fellow, who would perfuade them that they are more poor and miserable than persons of their class in other countries, and make them quit their industry to engage in desperate schemes that can only end in bringing themselves and their wives and children to shame and beggary. I wish them to have much more wages than they now get, and they would deferve them, if they would only be a little more industrious, if they would make a conscience of earning them as they ought, if they worked as hard by the day, as they do by the great or the job, and if they carried all their money to their wives, instead of fpending so much of it in the ale-house and dramshop.

The Conclusion of the whole is this: God has blessed this country beyond most others: We have the best Religion, the best form of Government, and the most plentiful land of any people upon Earth: But we have made such a bad use of these blessings that we are in great danger of losing them. We neglect God, his Service, and his

Day. We call ourselves Christians, but we hardly know what the word means. Few consider, that every man, who says he is a Christian, says as sollows:—" I am the Soldier and Servant of Jesus Christ. I have renounced all sin and wickedness, and all the vanities of this world. I have owned that I am a sinner, and that I can only be saved by the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ; and in order to receive the benefits of these, I must repent of my sins; I must believe in Jesus Christ; and I must do what he has commanded. His commands are contained in the Gospel; I must, therefore, read that, in order to learn my duty; and, when I have learned it, I must do it faithfully and diligently."

Oh! my Countrymen! if we would do this, we should be safe, and happy, and prosperous! God would make a hedge about us, and about all we have; and would defend us from all our enemies! We should no longer be divided and weakened by parties and oppositions; for we should all fear God. and honour the King, and love one another; and who would dare to invade us? Why are we, then, so blind to our interest, to reject peace and profperity, when we might fo easily obtain them? If you love your country, if you love your wives or your children, if you love yourselves-reform your conduct before it be too late! The judgments of God are in the world: they have fallen upon France, upon Flanders, upon Holland! they are ready to fall upon us. If we will not take warning from all that has passed, and is now passing, almo!t

most at our doors, we have no excuse, and therefore no room to hope that we shall escape. But even if we could, what would it avail? The Day of Judgment must come; when every one who has not repented and reformed, will be condemned to suffer the torments of Hell for ever! What those torments are, we know not; and God grant we never may! but if there be any Truth in the Word of God itself, they are far greater, and more dreadful, than any thing Man ever felt, or can conceive.

Look down, O God of all Mercy, on this Land! Open our eyes, that we may fee thy Judgments hanging over our heads and ready to fall on us! Give us a just fense of our guilt, and grace to amend our lives; and let our timely Repentance make us fit objects of thy Mercy, and prevent the destruction of our Nation.

Bless thy servant our King, with long life and peace. Give true Wisdom to all those who have any share in the Government of our Country; that they may see and know, that neither our own arm, nor our own devices can save us; and may learn to look up to thee, O God of Hosts, for thine almighty Aid.

Give a double portion of thy Spirit, to the Bishops and Pastors of thy Church; that they may devote themselves entirely to thy Service; boldly boldly rebuke vice; and by their diligence and zeal, by the foundness of their Doctrine and Holiness of their lives, may turn the hearts of this nation, from the lusts of the flesh, the vanities of life, and the desire of earthly gain, to the knowledge and love of thee and of the Gospel of thy Son.

Grant that those, to whom thou hast committed Wealth, or Power, or Learning, or any useful Talents, may ever remember from whom they received them, and employ them for the good of all; that so they may give in their account with joy at the last Day.

And, finally, we befeech thee, to make us humble and peaceable, fober and diligent, just and merciful; pious towards thee our God; loyal to our King, obedient to our Governors, respectful to our superiors, and kind and affectionate to all men: That, being protected by thy Almighty Power, we may pass our time here in peace and comfort; and be made partakers hereaster, of eternal happiness; through the merits and intercession of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—And let every true Irishman say,

AMEN.

POSTSCRIPT.

Should any one, who has a share in the Legislature or Government of this Land, peruse these Pages, let him reslect seriously how he can answer to God and his Country, for sitting tamely by, without attempting to repress those gross Crimes, which, if suffered to continue, must bring us to Destruction. If he wants Resolution, he is unsit for his Station. Let him no longer fear the Scoss of a few impious Wretches; but uniting with other serious and active Men, and avoiding all Heat and Enthusiasm on the one hand, and all Lukewarmness and Timidity on the other, let them consider what are the reigning Vices, and at least attempt to check them.

Adultery rages; and, whilst our Law gives large damages to the injured man, no atonement whatever is made to our injured God! nay, both he, and his law, are insulted; for the adulterer and adulteress are let go free, and are even allowed to enter into unholy wedlock. By the Jewish law (which was the law of God), they were both to die. Under the pure Christian dispensation, shall they not only escape, but be put on a level with the virtuous?

Surely the woman, at least, ought to be marked with some personal infamy, and in no case be permitted to marry again.

Gaming, though not perhaps so direct an insult to God, is no less pernicious in its effects. It seems to defy the existing laws, and therefore calls for new ones.

"Because of swearing, the land mourneth."—
"Swear not at all."—" Above all things, my brethren, swear not."—Such are the strong expressions of our facred code. How then can we hope to be excused or pardoned, when we multiply oaths by every new law, till they are become almost words of course, and have lost all that reverence which was formerly annexed to them, and without which, they can only increase our condemnation!

A Custom-house oath is already proverbial, and a tax oath is in great danger of becoming so. Were no oath administered, but in a public court, by the Judge himself, and with the utmost possible solemnity, it would impress both the witness and the audience with a just sense of its awful nature. In all other cases, the signing a declaration of the truth of the evidence given, and the justness of the punishment to be incurred if it prove salse, would be more decent, and at least as effectual as the oath now administered.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it HOLY."

"In it thou shalt not do any work; thou nor thy fon, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle."—Whosoever doth

G

any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death;"—such is God's law; but what is our practice? Look at our streets and roads, and see them crowded, not merely with the carriages of the great, but with stages full of travellers, and waggons loaded with goods. Surely when we are distressed for new taxes, a heavy Sunday toll might be laid throughout the island, to check at least, if we will not prohibit, the gross profanation of the Lord's day, that fertile source of immorality. And if no public houses, except inns on great roads, were suffered to be open on Sundays, it would prevent some murders, many robberies, and infinite mischies.

IF any person should be inclined to think the prefent state of things in this country not such as to warrant the anxiety and alarm expressed in the preceding pages: let him read attentively the following extracts from the writings of two of the abless men of the age; and, having so done, let him consider the events which have since happened, and the alteration which has since taken place in our national principles and morals; and then say—what their sentiments would now be?

"Seldom any state is ruined, but there are evident signals and presages of it. In general, without the spirit of prophecy, it is no difficult matter to perceive

perceive when cities and kingdoms are tending towards their final period and diffolution. There are as certain tokens and fymptoms of a confumption and decay in the body politic, as in the body natural. I would not prefage ill to my country; but, when we confider the many heinous and prefumptuous fins of this nation; the licentiousness, and violation of all order and discipline; the daring infolence of robbers and fmugglers, in open defiance of all law and justice; the factions and divisions; the venality and corruption; the avarice and profufion of all ranks and degrees among us; the total want of public spirit, and ardent passion for private ends and interests; the luxury and gaming and diffoluteness in high life, and the laziness and drunkenness and debauchery in low life; and above all, that barefaced ridicule of all virtue and decency; and that scandalous neglect, and I wish I could not fay contempt of all public worship and religion:-When we consider these things, these signs of the times, the stoutest and most sanguine of us all must tremble at the natural and probable confequences of them. God give us Grace, that we may know, at least, in this our day, the things which belong unto our peace, before they are hid from our eyes. Never may fuch blindness happen to us as befell the Jews; but may we feek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near; and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon us, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."-Bishop Newton, on the Prophecies, Vol. II. p. 239.

" If you behold a nation distinguished by irreligion and contempt of things facred; by licentiousness, faction, luxury, dissipation, and esseminacy; be affured that, without a reformation, and a return to first principles, the conquest of that nation by fome other is becoming more and more feafible every day; the fame vices, which provoke divine vengeance, preparing the way for its execution. Such were the characteristics of the ancient people of God, in the times preceding their feveral captivities. Such was the case when the old Assyrian empire perished with Sardanapalus; when Babylon. was furprized by Cyrus; when Darius was overthrown by Alexander; when Greece fell under the dominion of the Romans; when these last were overwhelmed by the Northern nations, and when Constantinople was taken by the Turks. Every man, who has the prosperity of his country at heart, should very seriously consider, how far these tokens are to be found upon ourselves; and what can be done to prevent the farther spreading of the infection; and to eradicate the feeds of the diforder."-Bishop Horne's Sixteen Sermons, page 162.

THE END.