

TWO LETTERS
UPON THE SUBJECT
OF THE
ADDRESS PROPOSED TO BE SIGNED
BY THE
ROMAN CATHOLICS
OF
IRELAND.

By THEOBALD M'KENNA,
AND
DENYS SCULLY, Esqrs.
BARRISTERS AT LAW.

*“ Every man goes home and tells his neighbour of the glories
“ of the day ; how he was consulted and what he advised ;
“ how he was invited into the great Room, where his Lord-
“ ship called him by his name ; how he was caressed by Sir
“ Francis, Sir Joseph or Sir George.”*

*“ The Petition is handed from house to house, and wherever it
“ comes the Inhabitants flock together that they may see that
“ which must be sent to the King. Names are easily collected.”*

JOHNSON'S FALSE ALARM.

Dublin :

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1803.

TO THE
GENTLEMEN
WHO HAVE
ADVERTISED AN ADDRESS
TO BE
SIGNED BY THE CATHOLICS.

*Great Denmark-street,
28th July, 1803.*

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING been accustomed to take a part in the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Body, and feeling a disinclination to concur in the Address now offered for Signatures, I am desirous to explain the motives of a reluctance, which occasions very great regret to me.

I apprehend the policy most approved in our body has been, to present ourselves before the public only in the most dignified and solemn manner, and on occasions of very great importance. Than the present, no occasion can be more interesting, none can demand more vigorous exertions ; but I apprehend the opportunity of a great and glorious service to our King and Country is frittered away and lost, by the manner in which this Address is executed. I have not read the signatures, nor am I acquainted with the secret history of the transaction ; I shall therefore be considered not to mean offence to any gentleman, when I say, that the form of the Address is cold, jejune, and uninteresting.

It certainly cannot be necessary to inform the Lord Lieutenant and Government of Ireland, that the gentry and merchants of our persuasion, do
not

not wish to be subjected to the dominion of the Pike-men, and that the latter are in no way desirous to give up their ware-houses to be plundered.—It cannot be necessary to tell the public, that we wish the preservation of that Authority which keeps us safe in our houses: but it may be of importance to set the example of loyalty and zeal, and by an impressive exhortation to arrest the progress of delusion amongst those of our communion, who are most exposed to it.—I feel the duty and propriety of this exertion, and I am confident, that the respectable names of several gentlemen of the city and vicinity, will have the greatest weight in rendering it effectual. I cannot believe that either these names or the sentiments they accompany, will be productive of the good I wish may be derived from them, whilst the latter are conveyed in language, which

which not only does not animate, but may possibly be sneered at.

Gentlemen may think, that words are unimportant; they certainly are so in many serious affairs of the world, but it is not indifferent what stile and words you use, when you desire to produce an effect upon the public mind, which words and eloquence only can accomplish. The Irish, a lively, feeling people, are eminently to be affected by animating composition; and will you, Gentlemen, consent to an imputation, that the leading Roman Catholics of Ireland, cannot procure the exertion of talents, equal to those which are at the service of the rabble that attacked your city? For shame, gentlemen; your body does not want talents, nor do you want the command of them; send to any of your places of education, let an exercise be proposed to your boys. What

ought

ought the Roman Catholics of Ireland say to the Representative of their Sovereign, when in the most awful crisis of their country's danger, they condole with him on its calamities? I warrant compositions will be offered to you, consonant to the feelings of the nation, and marked with the native characters of Irish genius.

The first part of your Address is taken from a proclamation of my Lord Mayor, advertised in the public papers, and signed Allen and Green, *Town Clerks*. The latter part has been repeated one hundred times, but never before was said so poorly.

On the disturbances of 1798, I assented to an Address somewhat better than the present, but which appeared to me to be the meagre spectre of what ought to be produced by the Catholics
of

of Ireland. At that time several members of Administration were unpopular, and I was pleased beyond measure with any step, although somewhat unsatisfactory, which appeared calculated to prevent discontent from passing into disaffection. But thank God, the state of things is altered. The Roman Catholics of Dublin are disposed with zeal to support the established authority; there is perhaps, in some persons an apathy from which they require to be roused, or to have the fluctuation of their mind decided. Will your Address contribute to produce these dispositions, will any man be proud of it? If not, it will fall still-born to the ground; there is a certificate in the Lord Lieutenant's trunk, of what no one doubted, that certain men of consideration are loyal; but the Government is not served, and the country is not invigorated. The spirit
of

of the Roman Catholics of Dublin is loyal, but it requires at this moment to be somewhat cheered and directed. The measures you have in contemplation, for the reasons I have assigned, will do neither the one nor the other. The opportunity is great and critical, and the intentions of gentlemen excellent; it is a pity that all should be frustrated by a small defect in judgment and selection.

And here, permit me, Gentlemen to add, that the crisis calls for men in your situation for infinitely more than Addresses. Addresses will neither form a rampart against Pikes, nor repel nor discourage an Invader. I should rather see an association formed to discountenance discontent and disaffection in our body; I should rather see the respectable names of this metropolis engaged in calling to arms those over whom their very
deserved

deserved influence extends ; there seems to have arisen out of the unfortunate situation of this Country, an unwise and mistaken liberality, which prevents the admission of Catholics into certain Yeomanry Corps of this City ; the effect of that injudicious discrimination, is to disgust and awe, and alienate an essential portion of the people ; to furnish an apology to the indolent, and to the paltroun, and a pretext to the disaffected. It might, if Government saw no reason to disapprove of the measure, be judicious to form a new Corps, in order that a very gallant and useful spirit should not be damped or misdirected. Here there is scope for the patronage and activity of several gentlemen amongst you ; the exertions of our Clergy will at the present moment prove of incalculable benefit, our valuable Prelate has already pointed the way, I cannot presume that his Clergy
require

require to be stimulated, but they may be kept in countenance and supported.

With respect to the Address, I prefer to trust to my character for loyalty, rather than hazard any other reputation I may aspire to, by setting my name to that composition.

I have the Honor to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your very obedient Servant,

THEOBALD M'KENNA.

LETTER

LETTER

TO

THEOBALD M'KENNA, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,

I PERFECTLY concur with the sentiments of your spirited letter, which I have just perused, and I have not a doubt that the Address of the Catholics, as it styles itself, is not calculated to serve the Government of this country, or to raise the estimation of the Addressers with the public, and I have therefore declined subscribing my name to it.

My

My attention to it was first attracted by a laconic, and not very respectful, notice in the Newspapers of Wednesday last, informing the Catholics, that an Address lay at Fitzpatrick's, to be signed by them. When I inquired for this address at Fitzpatrick's, there was exhibited to me a draft of a miserable composition, entitling itself, to my amaze, "the Address of the Roman Catholics of *Ireland*." If I was startled at the presumption of this title, I was soon benumbed and bewildered by the drowsy confusion of language—I blushed for the imprudence in framing—I was disgusted by the general tone of causeless fervility and panic which marked this Address, and exposed a loyal and high-spirited people to slander and ridicule.

What the history of its conception and birth is, I could not distinctly learn. I asked those,
whom

whom I met there, was it truly, as it pretended to be, the Address of the Catholics of Ireland? If so, upon what discussion, and by whom had it been framed? What meeting had been held, what notice given, who had presided? I asked in vain. I asked myself, why an Address at all? Why not rather give something more substantial; our money, our influence in procuring defenders for our Country, our exertions in opening the eyes of our Countrymen to the horrors of French Tyranny, Rapine and Outrage? Such services might be useful indeed.

But Gentlemen deceive themselves, if they imagine that the dignified and intelligent persons, who now compose the government of this country, are to be amused by the hacknied game of addressing; may they not suspect that
this

this Address is partly a screen to hide the criminal sluggishness and apathy of some of its subscribers?

Setting apart those forms of courtesy, with which a prelate and a peer of our persuasion will, of course, be received at the Castle, may not the real feeling of Government towards this Address be to this effect, and may it not be described in these terms:—" Gentlemen, " you have now had for some time past a " mild and just Administration, kind towards " you, prosperous to your Country; you now " bring, as your testimony to our conduct, a " doleful and unintelligible Address, *re-iterat-* " *ing*, as you say, the same stale assurances, " which, in a moment of panic in 1798, you " already proffered to a Government, the in- " dividuals of which you did not, nor could

not

“ not, esteem or love, and with whom we hope
 “ we do not deserve to be classed. Amongst
 “ your signatures, we do not see the learning,
 “ the civil or military talents, of your persua-
 “ sion—we do not see your spirited, opulent,
 “ and powerful country-gentlemen of Munster,
 “ Leinster, and Connaught, or the trading and
 “ monied interests of any other city or town,
 “ save Dublin alone. It therefore miscalls it-
 “ self the Address of the Roman Catholics of
 “ Ireland—and indeed, we know that that great
 “ body will now bring us far more substantial
 “ support than mere Addressees. But we see,
 “ amongst your signatures, some respectable
 “ clergy, a worthy nobleman, and some rich
 “ merchants and shopkeepers of Dublin only.
 “ Now, we say to you in one word—if you
 “ really do feel it necessary, as you say, to
 “ wipe off the imputation of disloyalty from
 “ your

“ your characters, give us some more convinc-
 “ ing pledges of your co-operation at this cri-
 “ tical juncture, than this creeping Address.
 “ You, who are rich, unlock your hoards,
 “ and bring forth your money for your coun-
 “ try’s service. You, who have rank, influ-
 “ ence or activity, from loyal affociations for
 “ public purposes, devise and execute useful
 “ measures for the common defence ; be zea-
 “ lous and enterprising in the discharge of the
 “ military duties you have undertaken, and
 “ prove that you are in earnest, when you
 “ make professions of *opposing the promoters*
 “ *of anarchy*. As for the rest, we accept
 “ your abandonment, as individuals, of your
 “ claims to the restoration of your political
 “ rights, and we hope, that this sacrifice is not
 “ the less sincere or binding, because it is made
 “ in a moment of fear and alarm. We thank

B

you

“ you for your loyal speeches, but the times
 “ require a vigorous loyalty of *action* alone.”

You see, my Dear Sir, into what a snare these Address-mongers would, by a blunder, inveigle the Roman Catholics of this country. Those gentlemen are very good sort of men in Society; but, with all due respect for them, they have neither talents, nor steadiness, nor popularity and importance enough, to direct the political concerns of upwards of three millions of us, in a position that requires such a judicious blending of discretion and decision as the present.

These observations fully satisfy my mind, that I ought not to sign this Address: and that it is not merely unnecessary, but might be mischievous, to the beneficial exertions of many loyal and popular Catholics, to affix their names to it.

With

With respect to Catholic Addressees in general, the government have long, I believe, been sick of them, the public at large either cavil or jeer at them, the flanders of disloyal factions, whether Orange or Rebel, are invited and renewed by them, the lower classes of our persuasion are only confirmed by them in their growing distrust and alienation from their gentry—thus we should, by adopting this Address, be ridiculed or slighted the more, and deservedly, by the government whom we profess to support, whilst we should be discarded and disclaimed as servile and silly, by the people whom we pretend to hold at our disposal.

I venture to affirm, that our Catholic Country Gentlemen at large, are too dignified and discerning to trifle away their importance with Government and with the people by such vapid prattle. Those of the county of Tippera-

ry, with whom I am connected by kindred or intimacy, have observed a temperate and respectful silence since Lord Fitzwilliam's recall; and what is the consequence? they retain, what may now be found useful, some influence amongst the people of their county; they possess their confidence, they can serve the government, and they are now doing so, not by idle Addresses, but by expending their money, and actively exerting themselves in procuring defenders of the established authorities. And are these the men, who are to declare, or to feel it to be necessary at this time to make Professions of their Loyalty? No; Professions at present best become those who will go no farther, and such, I believe, is the true light in which government will view this Address.

Is it wise, or politic, or spirited in Catholics of any reflection to cry out, as this Address does, that they now forego all claim to the restoration

tion of their civil rights; and that too, when perhaps, government are actually deliberating upon the removal of all civil distinctions on the score of religion in this country? I think that we may, very possibly, by such an Address, misrepresenting the sentiments of the Irish Catholics at large, intercept the wisdom of government, and prevent them from extinguishing one efficient cause of disaffection in this country. We may thus keep alive our own political degradation, preserve matter for French intrigues and artifice to work upon, and prolong the weakness and miseries of our country. Can any policy be more vile, shallow, or mischievous.?

Again, is it decent in us, without any previous communication or discussion with our Brethren, to assume the title of the *Catholics of Ireland*? I fear that this attempt may be considered by the Catholics, as proceeding from
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the vanity of a few individuals, (to speak most gently of it) who hope to impose themselves upon government as the guides of the Catholic body. But they are no such thing.

Lastly, is it creditable to our zeal or our talents to have produced only this lame and impotent Address, at a moment when every Irish heart ought to beat high with the most fervid emotions of attachment to Irish soil, and of indignation against the boasting and perfidious foe, who threatens to bring fire, sword, and slavery amongst us? For my part, I can see only one favourable consequence of this Address, namely, that the style and frame of it can leave no doubt, if any doubt existed, that the subscribers to it are at least wholly innocent of the flowery and eloquent language of the late Rebel Proclamations.

Therefore, I reject this Address, because it can do no good, and may produce mischief. I prefer taking my ground, in common with
the

the other gentlemen of my country, in acting unremittingly in defence of our laws, liberties and property. I do not think it necessary for any man of consideration, or of unsuspected loyalty, to step out of his ordinary sphere for the purpose of asserting what nobody can, or ought for a moment to doubt. But I do think it imperiously necessary, in these times of awful and imminent danger, for all men of every class and description whatsoever, to co-operate *actively* with the established government, to rouse and display all their courage and energies, in preserving internal quiet and good order in the first place, and next, in repelling French invasion. It is the serious interest, as it is the solemn duty, of every Irishman, be he rich or poor, of an old or a new religion, to preserve this the loveliest country under Heaven, from the desolation, pillage and barbarities of foreign ruffians, whatever may be their pretences on their promises. Every sacrifice of
lives

lives and fortunes, and every other hazard, ought to be held cheap in comparison with the horrors of subjugation to a nation of faithless tyrants, who are the scourge of Europe.

Let us all cast aside our party feuds and sectarian jealousies; let us rally round all that is worth defending, let us crush to atoms the first gang of plunderers that shall dare to land in this Island, and not relax in a single point of exertion and vigilance, until we shall see the present arduous struggle for the security and liberties of ourselves and our posterity brought to a safe and honourable issue.

These, my Dear Sir, are my sentiments.

I am, with great regard,

Very Sincerely Yours,

DENYS SCULLY.

Baggot-street, July 30, 1803.