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I R E L A N D.

Thomas Drummond Esq

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with the Authors Couplet



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# PLEA FOR IRELAND.

BY

A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY.

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Εἰς ὅιονος ἄριστος, ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης.

ERIN GO BRAGH!

*"A triple cord is not quickly broken."*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE greater part of the subject matter of the following pages appeared in detached extracts, about two years ago, in a provincial paper. They were also printed at the same time in a collective form for private circulation. At the suggestion of some friends, thought to be competent judges on these matters, they are now given to the public, particularly the English public, as likely, perhaps, to disabuse the minds of moderate men of all parties, with regard to the working of certain systems in Ireland.

# Houses of the Oireachtas



## INTRODUCTORY.

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THE salutary influence of public opinion in this country is universally felt and acknowledged. Its control reaches even to the enactments of the Legislature itself, and exercises an indefinable, but unquestionable constraint, over the conduct of every individual in the community.

It may be difficult to expound the nature and pretensions of this most powerful agency, in relation to itself,—but no such difficulty exists in tracing the progress of its operations. It is not the voice of the multitude,—it is not the reiterated allegations of the press,—nor even the elaborate dicta of the bench,—yet, much of all these is found in the elements which compose it. Perhaps it is best understood under another form of expression, when we call it, *the common sense* of the nation.

Conscious of the influence which it exercises on the moral and civil progression of the people of Great Britain, it is to *this common sense* of the nation we would address ourselves; and retreating from the din and turmoil of exaggerated statements and contending parties, we would express the conviction, that, after all the fierceness of the collision—and the misrepresentations of extreme partisanship, *the*



*common sense* of the nation will separate at last, the real from the imaginary, in whatever can affect the interests of the community, for good or ill.

As long then, as this fund of *common sense* is to be found among us, with its agency thus directed, and thus effectual, the rage of party violence may seem harmless, and despite the uttermost ebullitions of its fury, the best interests of the country may be deemed secure.—This would be a sound conclusion if we could separate the *men of repose* from the *men of agitation*,—and what can be more difficult? at the present time especially?—There is a condition of *active support*,—and there is a state of *negative addition*;—in the one, the man who yields himself to the opinions and actings of another, and takes part in the furtherance of both, is conscious of, and intends the adherence he has proffered, and the enlistment he has volunteered, in the service to which he would addict himself:—but in the other there is none of this; there is no movement whatever, the agency is altogether passive:—*the mere inert weight*, however, is made to tell on this side or on that, as the case may be; and because no voice of dissent is heard, the anxious partisan would persuade his followers, that support was implied, when mere spectatorship was all the support which was intended.

In the way of this negative addition we apprehend that much countenance would seem to be given at present, in England, to many propositions and statements regarding the people of Ire-



land ;—and when these propositions take the shape of some specific danger, which the mind has ever been accustomed to associate with religious and ecclesiastical disaster,—or when they ally themselves to some general truth, which has been ever fondly cherished, as the secure basis of the prosperity of the nation, and the religion of the Established Church ; it is not to be wondered at, that men stay at least to listen to the portentous announcements of coming downfall ;—that they begin at length to question whether they are justified in remaining *passive* spectators of events,—when day after day so many awful predictions warn them of the duty of arming themselves for the conflict,—and set forth the temerity of repose.

Now, we are not about to counsel them to content themselves any longer with being mere lookers-on,—still less are we about to tell them to question the sincerity of the “ *hereditary bondsmen*” watchword, on the one hand, or the cry of “ *Protestant associations*” on the other, in those who use them. The moral and social condition of Ireland, unhappily, gives a place and an importance to these contending battle-cries, which, in different circumstances, they could never possess. We only counsel the thinking people of Great Britain to go back,—to compare the present with the past,—to form their conclusions respecting the condition of Ireland and its teeming population, from the narrative of historical facts,—from the statistics of legislative enactments,—and from the portraiture of the moral impression likely



to be given to the country from the occurrence of such events, and the operation of such enactments.

Our object is not to show that there are no evils to deplore,—but that these evils are to be accounted for on very different grounds from those generally supposed.

We hold that Ireland, in all its relations of social imperfection, exhibits at the present day, neither more nor less, than the necessary results of adequate causes : we suggest that the same causes may be yet at work in another form,—and we maintain, that *the proscription of opinion* can scarcely prove less fatal to the prosperity of the sister kingdom, in these days, than the *proscription of law* hath painfully shown itself to have been in former times.

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## A PLEA FOR IRELAND.

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### I.

It is felt on all hands, and acknowledged by men of all parties, that the bygone state of Ireland has been a drawback to the prosperity of the British Empire:—amid the differences of party, this acknowledgement is not without its use.

Without any elaboration of argument, and on the very face of the admission, it bears witness to the indissoluble tie which binds these countries together,—and the testimony which it gives to this unitedness, is of a different class and of a higher order than that of the act of legislative union:—it appeals at once to the instincts of our agriculture, of our commerce, and of our every national resource,—and the response which it meets with from all these, is no other, than that the interests of England, Scotland, and Ireland, are in all things *one and indivisible*.

Let our legislators act upon this persuasion, and let them consent, for a little while at least, to abandon that spirit of partisanship which at all times, in all circumstances, and under almost all parties, may be fairly said to have been, and to be, the bane of Irish affairs, the great *incubus* upon the prosperity of Ireland.—Assuredly, it will be a happy era in the



annals of Great Britain, when those in power and those out of power, shall cease to make Ireland the arena of political gladiatorship;—when they shall select, at length, from the wide field of Britain's dominion and British legislation, some less vital spot whereon to hold the tournament of party chivalry. *Ireland lies too near the heart of the empire for such a purpose*:—let them change the scene of their operations, and, dealing with Ireland as she is, and not as she ought to be, but in reference to what she might be,—let them consult without party feeling or party views, how the condition of the people of Ireland can be bettered, and how the country can rise, and may be raised, in the scale of national resources:—patriotism demands this—party interest requires it; for whatever be the party dominant in the counsels of the nation, Ireland unsettled, must ever prove a treacherous quicksand to the stability of their political power. It is a capital fault, then, in the legislators of whatever party, to make Ireland and the affairs of Ireland the battle-ground of their political strivings.

These, however, are not the only reasons which make it peremptory that a settlement should immediately take place, of all the great questions respecting Ireland; the very circumstance of delay itself is one of mighty import,—past experience has demonstrated in more than one instance in Ireland—that what was practicable and desirable, and desired by all parties, may, by being neglected for a few years, become impossible at last, and the real merits of



the case be lost sight of, in the multitude of heart-burnings on the one hand, and in the multiplied claims reiterated on the other\*.—Besides, and generally, in every case of moral or physical contingency, we can understand that the very best measures may be wholly fruitless, merely from being too late.

As regards that great and good measure, Catholic Emancipation, may we not conclude that it lost much of its healing qualities by the concession being so long delayed? The advocates of the principle, while their opinion is unchanged on *it*, must acknowledge that the Catholic Relief Bill has not, as yet, produced the results they had anticipated. In looking back, indeed, upon the slow progress of that measure, and the different expedients resorted to by its adherents to induce the consent of their opponents, we apprehend that, both as regards the delay itself, and these expedients, a wholesome lesson is taught, with respect to any measure at present in contemplation for Ireland.

In 1821, the friends of Catholic Emancipation were sanguine in their hopes of success: the Bill of that year, however, was most faulty in its enactments; providing, as it did, for certain guarantees and securities to be given by the Roman Catholics, on the removal of their disabilities. The fault of such enactments is obvious enough; for it is plain, if the Catholics were about to be admitted to privileges which they valued and desired, it immediately became their interest to uphold the constitution which administered these benefits: the contrary sup-

\* See Note A, Appendix.



position implies that a partnership was to be formed, where, instead of dividing the profits of the firm, the partners were each and severally disposed to clutch at the whole for themselves.

Now, in applying this sort of experience to that particular measure,—the Municipal Bill for Ireland, one is anxious that our legislators should profit by the example of past times. Temporizing expedients will never do; half measures, like the enactments of the Catholic Bill of 1821, will defeat themselves, will disappoint their projectors;—the people of Ireland must be one with the people of England—they are one in interest and in feeling—they must be one in privileges. The condition of the corporations under the proposed enactments, must be fairly looked at in the face. It must be unhesitatingly allowed, that the Municipal Bill, as intended, would increase the Roman Catholic constituency to a great extent, in most of the corporations; that it would even place some or many of the corporations in the hands of the Catholics. All this must be unhesitatingly allowed. *Those who propose and those who support the measure must do so, not on the ground of attaching the Catholics to this or that administration; not even on the ground of attaching them to a Protestant Government as distinct from a Catholic population; but on the ground of acquainting them with their own interest in the constitution, and giving to them the share they are entitled to hold in the executive of a country, whose legislature has ceased to recognise any civil disability from religious distinctions, and whose government exists only for the good of ALL.*



It is said in opposition to the Bill, and alleged as a sufficient ground for opposition, that the class of Catholics proposed to be enfranchised, is made up of uneducated men; and that, therefore, not on account of their religion, but their want of education, they are unfit to possess the corporation franchise:—let this be admitted, and let it even be true: how is this condition of things to be remedied? Without education, yet qualified, by a sufficiency of property, to be intrusted with the administration of their own civic affairs, but excluded from this trusteeship from deficiency of education, is it to be supposed they will just remain *in statu quo*? Why, their very ignorance is more to be dreaded without, than within, the walls of the town-house. Are their instincts totally different from ours?—are their hearts totally inaccessible to those appeals and motives which influence universally the human race?—are the Catholics of Ireland a distinct species of the human family? Unless we are prepared to say so,—let us remember that to elevate a man in the scale of society, or improve his condition effectually in any of the moral and social relations of life, we must raise him in his own proper self-respect—this is the very law of our nature—on this the well-intentioned and the well-instructed uniformly act with regard to their fellows—this is, in fact, the great principle which animates to exertion, which sustains the continuance of pursuit, and when the object is gained, secures the possessor against the abuse of the possession.



Alas! how powerfully is the truth of this proposition demonstrated by its converse, as it is exhibited in the history of Ireland. Why are the middling class of the Catholics found inferior in cultivation to the same class among the Protestants? simply, because the circumstances in which they were placed by the legislature of the country, had a tendency, and exercised a never-ceasing influence to deprive them of that self-respect to which we have just alluded. It is true these degrading laws are expunged from the statute-book. But this is not enough—if the principle which is now asserted in their place, be fairly carried out—the Municipal Bill must pass without delay;—unless, indeed, we are to go back to the days and deeds of other times—unless the cry of extermination be to be raised,—and the war of extermination carried on.

But, once for all, let the spirit of distrust and suspicion be banished, and for ever, from Irish legislation. It has too long been permitted to give a tone to every measure connected with that country; and its baneful influence has been transferred from legislative enactments to the social intercourse of the people; this condition of things surely cannot be desirable to any party; let, then, the Legislature say and show as it regards the Municipal Bill and all things else—

*Tros Tyriusve mihi nullo discrimine agetur.*

II. There is, however, we are conscious, a difficulty, which meets us at the very threshold, on any



proposition of a measure of this kind; the people of England with the utmost honesty of intention, and the kindest feeling to Ireland, ask at once, Has not a change of policy taken place to a great extent for several years back? Have not measures declared to be necessary and claiming to be effectual, been already passed, and have the results answered the expectations held out? These questions are put too, in a manner to imply that, in the mind of the questionist, any further legislative interference in removing the evils of the social condition of Ireland, are useless, and that the hope of beneficial results is proved by experience, to be chimerical. Now, granting that the answers we return be exactly what are anticipated, and that we confess that the amount of benefit obtained is widely different from the amount of benefit promised, is the conclusion, a necessary and a sound one,—that nothing more need be attempted?—May we not find in the characteristics impressed upon these legislative enactments, by those who first moved them, as well as by those who were won over to support them, something to account for our disappointment? Has not every great measure been propounded as a *panacea* in itself;—and have not the early friends, and those of late accession to this line of policy equally adopted this mistaken philosophy;—*whereas, the tissue of Ireland's misdirection was too tangled a web to be unravelled all at once; the impress upon individual and national character was too engrained to be obliterated by a single effort; the attention of the people of England*



*has only to be called to this great general truth, in the philosophy of a nation's character, to appreciate the cogency of the argument founded upon it.* Centuries had expended their force to make Ireland what she was—the tenth of a century is surely not sufficient to undo the work of ages—does not afford “verge and scope enough” wherein to show what Ireland may become. Let the people of England remember the slow progress by which their country has attained her present eminence among the nations of Europe—and let them give time to Ireland.

Let them remember, too, the millions of treasure which have been expended, and the streams of blood which have flowed, that England might become the queen of the world;—and then let them think of Ireland,—the *secondary country*, contributing whatever was great in the genius of intellect or national resource, to the aggrandizement of England—and taught to feel honoured by England's acceptance of the contribution.—Assuredly a calm and dispassionate survey of the matter in the relations we have just adverted to, will persuade the enlightened people of Great Britain to pause, ere they conclude against their fellow subjects of Ireland, that the change of policy which has been adopted of late years has been a total failure,—ere they settle down in the fixed conviction, which this conclusion would imply, that the case of Ireland is hopeless—that the people of Ireland are an anomaly in creation, and placed beyond the pale of the *great pacification itself*, —“Peace on earth, good will to man.”



III. Despite the allegations which have been made respecting the increase of crime and the insecurity of property, there are a few simple facts well known and notorious, which ought at least to abate the apprehensions of the people of England regarding the state of Ireland;—the first in order is the removal of 10,000 troops;—the next, the improved value of land, as attested by late sales, when estates have brought so much as thirty-two years' purchase, —to say nothing of the increased capital employed in manufactures, and the daily enlarging of the export and import trade:—but, alas! the notions entertained about Ireland are generally preconceived; cool and patient observation in not the habit of mind cultivated in other parts of the empire in regard to Irish affairs; some general solution is always at hand, and is appealed to on all occasions. Thus, we are continually told, that the quietness of the people is only a lull in the tempest, and is portentous of a fiercer outbreacking,—that nothing can change the character of the population of Ireland,—that turbulence in them is an innate, inherent disposition, and is, in fact, the social idiosyncrasy of the nation.

Now who, acquainted with the domestic history of Ireland, can fairly make use of this language? In the various insurrections, or demonstrations of insurrection, which have appeared within the last century, has it not been uniformly easy to trace them to intelligible and prominent causes?—there certainly were many circumstances in the nature of the law, still more in the spirit of its



administration, to engender a predisposition in the lower orders, when seeking to obtain the redress of grievances of which they complained, to have recourse to violence in defiance of the constituted authorities. But was there, in their social condition, anything to counteract this unhappy madness?—here was a people suffering from many local enactments, made by their own Parliament—that is, by the landlords of Ireland—but where was the spirit of confidence binding together the different classes of society in the harmonies of intercourse—where was the attempt, on the part of the gentry, to apply a moral and intellectual cultivation to the people dependent upon them?—there was much generous charity as far as money-giving was concerned, but it had no other aim than present relief to the objects of it; it sought not to raise them in their own self-respect; it smothered the spirit of independence.

There is a charity which ennobles,—there, also, is a charity which degrades; and it is to be feared, that the well-meant kindnesses of the upper to the lower classes in Ireland were, in general, of the latter character.

The landlord and tenant system was always bad; there were, indeed, many happy exceptions in the condition of the tenantry on some estates in relation to their landlords, but in these exceptions of persons, there was neither an excepting to, nor a correcting of, the system—a happy feeling was established, but the moral position was far from healthy—the tenantry acquired a blind and feudal confidence in their landlord, but they cared not for the cultiva-



tion of that personal independence which the law of England contemplates as the birthright of the meanest subject ;—and which, in an instructed people,—understood,—and claimed,—and acted upon,—is the best defence against anarchy,—an undoubted security for the maintenance of order,—the due administration of justice,—and the well-being of the whole community.

It is unnecessary now to say anything of the system of *middlemen*, which prevailed at one time to a great extent in Ireland, and uniformly to the deterioration of the social condition of the peasantry. The baneful effects of this method of dealing with land have been again and again brought before the public, and a most beneficial change has taken place, and is now in progress. But independently of this (as we trust, soon to be exploded) system, there was and is much in the ordinary and general mode of bargain between landlord and tenant, to produce unhappy results to the country. Contrast the state of Scotland with the state of Ireland in this respect, and consequences which have often surprised the people of England in the character and doings of the peasantry in Ireland, will no longer seem mysterious.

In Scotland, the landlord builds and upholds the farm-house, &c. &c., divides and encloses the farm at his own expense, and the tenant is a mere merchant of the surface, for the currency of the lease. In Ireland, on the contrary, the improvement of the farm is supposed to be with the tenant.



The landlord sets the farm on the condition of the tenant building, ditching, &c., the consequence is, the tenant's capital is sunk at once; he has no means left to lime, or manure, or drain, or increase his stock;—his crops are impoverished—his cattle distrained, and at last he is ejected for non-payment of rent. Still he thinks it hard that the house he built should pass to another. Hence bad blood, &c. Hence the claim of tenant-right is something more than the mere expression itself would convey to the ear, in England or Scotland. It is, in other words, a prescriptive right of some sort in the minds of the occupants of the soil, to what they hold, though liable to a certain rent;—this right they look upon as bought by the outlay which they or their fathers have made on the premises, on an understanding with the landlord, though without a formal agreement on the subject, that in some way or other, the tenant should be remunerated for his improvements; and the choice lies with himself, whether he will receive the valuation in money assigned to him, or will continue to hold the farm. These bargains are (comparatively speaking,) never fulfilled; a large rent is asked; and to encourage the tenant, a long time is promised—the landlord is sanguine—the tenant no less so—one-half year's arrear follows upon another—the tenant is wasted—the farm is wasted—the landlord is ultimately a great sufferer, but the tenant is ruined. He is to be driven forth—the landlord only claims his own—the tenant resists ejectment, or ejected, attempts to return to



take possession, claiming the house, &c., as the produce of his own means. Hence an endless strife—the landlord ejects in the name of the law, the tenant resists in the name of equity—and a whole district becomes disturbed.

Perhaps it would be difficult to remedy this miserable condition of affairs by an act of the Legislature; still the moral and political incorrectness of such bargains must be again and again pressed on the attention of Irish landlords, while the people of England will understand at a single glance what must inevitably follow from such a state of things.

IV. This condition of affairs operates with peculiar force in a country where there is so much of the imitative in the character of the people. The game of “follow the leader” is almost an instinct with Irishmen; this, in certain stages of society, may be a hopeful or a dangerous qualification, according to its use; an untaught, unthinking people, are always liable to be swayed by impulse—the circuit of their positive knowledge extends no further than their own observation—this observation is too often exercised under the dominion of passion; its results, therefore, cannot be relied on; but there is no remedy at hand to correct them; and in the very honesty of their hearts, persons in this condition may be led to do the bidding of the demagogue to their own ruin; while under a guidance of a different sort, they may be brought to achieve the most important benefits for themselves and their country.



Would that this characteristic of the people of Ireland had been used as it might have been by the gentry of Ireland;—how different would have been their condition at this day!—but *give us time*—let us buy back again, if possible, by double diligence at the present, the opportunities which have been neglected and lost in the past.

A new impulse, however, has been given to the country and to the people of Ireland from an extrinsic source. Brighter prospects are opening on all sides; the natural resources of Ireland are in progress to be ascertained—and it will, perhaps, be found, ere a few years have elapsed, that the application of steam to commerce and manufactures will have exercised a commanding,—moralizing influence upon the destinies of Ireland.

Commercial enterprise must, ere long, become the business and pursuit of the Irish nation; and when, instead of having, as in former times, to huckster their own commodities, or to sacrifice them to the forestallers, the people of Ireland find that the markets of England, of Europe, and the world, are open to their competition, and made as accessible as formerly their county town had been to them, they will assuredly see the possibility of doing for themselves—the great secret of a nation's strength, a secret, however, hitherto so little understood by them—and industriously concealed from them;—and surely if the aggression of a mechanical commerce, overleaping all the natural barriers in the way, has succeeded to introduce the wares of



Staffordshire into the very heart of Africa, we may expect that the intelligence which follows in the train, and reciprocates mutual advantages in every interchange of trade, will exercise a wholesome agency in the social regeneration of Ireland.

The question of the Irish railway scheme is to be again brought forward in the present session of Parliament. The advance of the necessary funds for such a purpose by a public grant, may seem at first sight in England as little else than a present of so much money given to Ireland, and in effect to be doing for the people of Ireland what they ought to do for themselves. But if the advance be taken in the way of a loan, another complexion will be given to the matter; and although the repayment be made by small instalments, and extended over a long period of years, England will lose nothing by the generosity of her confidence; and Ireland will gain not only directly by the impulse given to her commerce, but indirectly, by the necessity imposed upon her of refunding the advance; and besides all this *England will be richly benefitted herself, by the increased prosperity of Ireland.*

The spirit of commerce is essentially the spirit of peace; the profits of commerce can only be secured in the period of peace, and the comforts which these profits produce can only be secured in the country of peace;—let, then, commerce flourish in Ireland, and the peace of the country will be uninterrupted. The Legislature, which erred so monstrously, in former times, on the subject of



commercial regulations generally, in these countries, and so especially in this respect, with regard to Ireland, is not likely now to interfere with the natural progress and condition of commercial relations. Happily, a new order of things has arisen. Commerce everywhere is showing its capacity to gain its own level, whatever be the obstacles opposed to it; it is everywhere asserting and making good its claim to its own peculiar domination; these are not the days for monopolies—for protecting duties—for bounties—these artificial arrangements are giving place to the *realities* of trade;—it is well that it is so. If any one doubt the justness of this conclusion, let him retrace the commercial history of Ireland, and he will find that, from these artificial interventions, it has been the history of disaster.

It is well known to the historian of Ireland how, in former times, her commerce was sacrificed to the arbitrary and unwise enactments of the Parliament of England;—met, alas! more than half-way, by the abject subserviency of the Parliament of Ireland; but let no one be surprised at this spiritless submission on the part of the Parliament of Ireland: it is now scarcely recollected, and seldom or ever referred to, that from the time of George the First till the year 1782, the statute law of England claimed and called for this submission. By the Act of the 6th of George the First, it was declared, “that the kingdom of Ireland ought to be subordinate to, and dependent upon, the Imperial crown of Great Britain; and that the Parliament of England



hath power to make laws to bind the people of Ireland." The repeal of this monstrous anomaly, in the legislature of a representative government, was effectually secured by the efforts of Mr. Flood.

But even had there not been a specific statute to this effect, the every arrangement of Irish affairs, in matters of legislation, seems to have consulted for an abject dependence upon the dicta of the English Privy Council; the Commons House of Parliament of Ireland was elected for the king's life, and great was the victory achieved, when the patriots of Ireland procured an alteration in the law, by which the Parliament was made *octennial*.

The history of Ireland, in the times when these amendments of its constitution were won from the legislature of England, is fraught with instruction to the people of these countries in the present day. We have, from the year 1761, the steady and intrepid march of the patriot band in Ireland, to obtain a political and commercial emancipation for their country:—this obtained—we have an unhappy section of the patriots hurrying on to separation and revolution; but we have the *body* of these men prompt to array themselves in arms in support of a constitution, of the benefits of which they had only just begun to partake, and of which, for so long a period afterwards, they were doomed to receive merely a composition in lieu of their just demand. Let it never be forgotten that the survivors and the sons of the original Volunteers fought the battle of the Constitution in 1798.



If, then, since the Revolution,—so glorious for England, Ireland was held for so long a time in political and commercial bondage by the English Parliament—if there be a tendency in legislative enactments, where there is power to enforce them, to produce on the system of social intercourse itself, a conformity to the character of the enactments; and, if the transmission of this conformity is possible, and is likely, through a long course of years and many generations, even after the vicious legislature which caused it has been abolished, it is not surprising that the people of Ireland are found in their present condition.

V. But besides the political and commercial degradation of their country by the Parliament of England, so felt, and at last so successfully withstood, by the Protestants of Ireland, we must not leave out the operation of the penal laws, in endeavouring to account for the present condition of Ireland, or rather in attempting to show that an adequate cause has produced its natural effect, that the people of Ireland are precisely in the condition that was to be expected, from the circumstances in which they had been placed.

The operation of the penal laws was demoralizing in its effects to the whole community, Protestant as well as Catholic. In speaking of these laws, the attention of men is too exclusively directed to commiseration for the suffering Catholic; but without overlooking the demoralization which they



undoubtedly produced in the Catholic, their effect *in extending the same demoralization to the Protestant part of the community, cannot be doubted*, when attention is directed to the subject. Tyranny, successful and irresistible, may make man abject, but the moral condition of the tyrant and slave is the same; reverse their relative positions, and you will have a slave and a tyrant still—the spiritless slave becomes in power the atrocious tyrant, and the vindictive tyrant shorn of his prerogative, in turn becomes the dastard slave. Wide as the interval may seem between them, the extremes meet at last. It must, therefore, ever be kept in mind, that these penal statutes had the most unhappy influence upon the *moral* condition of the Protestant community.

These statutes (not to speak of disabilities purely political) were founded on principles directly at variance with the natural feelings of men, and the moral constitution appointed by Providence. To induce, by ensnaring or by compulsion, men to profess Protestantism, they offered barefacedly a premium to the child to desert his parent; they affixed the grossest stigma on the profession of the Catholic religion, and declared that Catholics were unworthy of possessing the fruits of their own industry, inso-much that a Catholic might be deprived of a horse, if above a certain trifling value.

Consistently with the spirit and intentions of these laws, arose the Charter-school system; these schools were, in their administration, worthy of their purpose; and their history is a sufficiently convincing



demonstration of the unhappy influence which the statutable ascendancy exercised over Protestants. Such a mass of abuses has seldom been brought to light ;—and though, in some cases, Mr. Steven's representations have been disproved, yet in the general, his book on these schools may be read, with much confidence in its information, by any one anxious to ascertain the legitimate fruit of such a system.

It is not, then, surprising that when, by law, a temptation was held out to the son, grown to manhood, to betray the father, and when, by the betrayal, the son might usurp his father's property ; and when, by law also children were surreptitiously withdrawn from their homes, and placed in distant parts of the country, where they could not be traced, to be educated as Protestants, it is not surprising that the population of Ireland are found in their present condition.

It is not surprising that the Roman Catholic priesthood exercise an unexampled sway over their own followers, to do their political bidding : their priests had been their friends, *when the Legislature, the Executive, the Church, the Protestant gentry of Ireland, had treated them as aliens* ; and if, in 1792, it was declared by men anxious to incorporate the Roman Catholics into the constitution of the country, that “ the influence of the priesthood over the minds of the laity, must be considerably reduced, before they could say with truth, that an extension to all their body, of the elective franchise, would increase the virtual basis of election : ” is it surprising



that that influence has increased, when nearly forty years were allowed to pass without any alteration in the system, and in circumstances, too, every year growing more and more favourable to its extension?

When, then, the party journals chronicle almost with exultation, the unhappy doings of the peasantry of Ireland; and when the lover of his church and of Protestantism lifts up his hand to heaven, and utters his protestation against conciliation and confidence to such a people,—assuredly his horror had better give place to the distressed recollection, that Protestant legislation has had a fearful responsibility every way, in the condition of the people of Ireland.

It is no answer to say, “The penal statutes are blotted out”—thank God they are! but does not the bearing of the political Protestants in Ireland testify, at this moment, regret at the disappearance of these statutes from the code of the empire? Truly, alas! it may be said of these men, “that they allow the deeds of their fathers;” yet is there so much honesty of intention among them; such a habitude of usage, in their own minds, to consider Protestant ascendancy as one with Protestant truth, that, until this fallacy discover itself to them, it is hopeless to expect that any successful inroad can be made upon their position. Intrenched in prejudices which have grown with their growth—endeared to them by their earliest associations—sanctioned by the doings of their fathers, and maintained in the name of religion—it is vain to assault them by argument; they must be left to the silent workings



of their own mind, to the impressions which the character of general events must one day produce on their own convictions.

Yet, it must be granted, many salutary changes have taken place; but the effects of these changes are not, and cannot yet, be fully seen. Ireland is emphatically in the transition state, presenting rather the *debris* of former institutions, than the defined characteristic of the nascent formation, slowly but certainly going forward.—Time is required to complete it. A people so long degraded cannot, at once, be expected to divest themselves of early habits and prepossessions. Let the law repress with energy every act of violence, but let the administrators of the law ponder well on the former condition of things, and “in judgment,” therefore, “remember mercy.”

VI. All the while, when the former state of things remained unchanged—when a political and commercial dictation was claimed and exercised by England, over the people of Ireland—when the people were divided among themselves, by the privileges on the one hand, and the inflictions on the other, of the penal statutes, what was the condition of our Established Church? what was the character and extent of the influence she was acquiring and exerting over the population of the country? how was she qualified to mitigate the domination of a minority of the community over the majority, exercised by the authority of law? what were her re-



sources, and how applied, to mollify the acerbities of religious distinctions, bitter in themselves, but saturated with the gall of bitterness when they lead to political advancement, or stigmatize with political disability? how, in short, was the Established Church qualified to sympathize with a suffering population—belonging to a community, in a state of moral disorganization? The answer to this question is not doubtful—she was not qualified at all—her own existence seemed identified with belonging to a faction, and the promulgation of the doctrine of political inferiority, because of religious distinctions, could scarcely be expected to recommend the apostle of it, to those who were suffering under its inflictions.

How strange that ascendancy of this sort should ever have been claimed by the accredited teachers of that religion, whose Divine Author has emphatically declared, “that his kingdom is not of this world,” and who has expressly enjoined it upon his disciples, that “whosoever of them will be the chiefest shall be the servant of all;” but no less strange is it, that this doctrine of ascendancy should still find its abettors—should be advocated and even gloried in, by men of the present day. Yet, such is the case—there are men, honestly anxious for the interests of true religion, and for the advancement of Ireland, who, nevertheless, anathematize the concessions of the Relief Bill,—who, after the experience of the working of the scheme of Protestant ascendancy for nearly a century and a-half, and the results which it at this moment presents to the people of Great



Britain, are incapable of perceiving, that it had done absolutely nothing to restrain the increase of the Roman Catholic religion, and scarcely anything effective, to retain the members of the Established Church within the pale of her communion.

The statistics of Ireland show, indubitably, that the proportion of Protestants has not kept pace with the increase of the population generally : that so far from it, there has been a marked falling off. The reply urged by orators of the class of politicians last mentioned, at public meetings of the “ no-popery-cry ” school, or in books and pamphlets, by writers of the same stamp, would account for this decrease, by the circumstance of emigration—they would say that the Protestants who should have made up the complement of their numbers, have been driven from Ireland of late, by the terrors of increasing and cherished Romanism, by the outrages committed by the Catholic peasantry ;—but if these gentlemen will go a little farther back, to the palmy days of their own beloved ascendancy, and when, certainly (in the language of that day, too frequently in use in our own), the Catholics “ were kept down ; ” they will find that, in the years 1771-2, there were no less than 17,350 tons of shipping employed in carrying emigrants from the “ Protestant ” north of Ireland to America.

Happy for the country and for herself, if the Church had not been mixed up with the sad state of things that prevailed in Ireland.—It must be remembered, however, that this commixture was, in a



great measure, the fault of the peculiar system adopted towards the country—but the system came at length to mould its own agents, and in the spirit of its own fashion.

In a moral point of view, to say nothing of its influence on the present and future legislation of Ireland, a history of the working of that system would be replete with importance. Such a history is as yet a desideratum in the annals of the Irish nation. It is remarkable, too, that, from whatever motives, the promoters of Church Reform have abstained, almost altogether, from those details of the effects of the former system on the social condition of Ireland, which would constitute the prominent features of such a history; the consequence has been, that too little is known, in England and Scotland, of the real condition of affairs in Ireland; and, hence, the measures of our reformers have not always carried on their front, the aspect of stern necessity which honestly belongs to them.

The vicinity of the two countries and the professed identity of the two churches, lead many, in England, to judge of the operations of the Church in Ireland from what they have seen and know of the operations of the Church in England. Now, this judgment is quite fallacious; the cases are wholly different—if we go back to the period when Protestantism was declared to be the established religion of Ireland, and trace the course of the country and the church to the present moment, we shall find that they are so. In the state and condition of the people to whom



Protestantism was introduced at the time of its establishment in Ireland—in the manner of its introduction—in the mode of exercising the rights granted to it by law—in its external administration of its powers towards the people of the country in general—in its internal management of its own affairs, secular, ecclesiastical, and spiritual—in *all these respects, the history of Protestantism in Ireland will show that there has been, unhappily, too little practical assimilation between the Churches of England and Ireland.*

VII. It was said by one, illustrious in the world of letters, and eminent in rank in the Irish Church, that the Establishment, there, was placed in a singular position with regard to those from whom she differed—that, on the one hand, “she had a religion without a Church, and, on the other hand, a Church without a religion;” words which were too well remembered; and, when uttered, gave rise to many a heart-burning—but which were used, it is to be apprehended, rather for the verbal than the philosophical point of the antithesis, and which, certainly, were never intended to give the offence they afterwards caused. The implication, however, in relation to his own Church, was obviously this, that in the Establishment of Ireland there was found both a religion and a Church. Now, if ever there was a country where a painful distinction might fairly be drawn between the terms *Spiritual* and *Ecclesiastical*, that country was Ireland;—there was, in the



character and tone of the proceedings of churchmen, in the spirit of the Establishment itself, and the circumstances in which it was placed, too much to represent the Church to the people at large, in the attitude of ecclesiastical lordship and domination—too little in the act of disinterestedness and spiritual ministration.

The labourers, in other days, who entered into her service with proper motives, and addicted themselves with devotedness to the duties of their sacred office, were comparatively few—they were, indeed, happy and splendid exceptions ; but it is well known that such men in former times were not generally encouraged by the hierarchy—while apart from these few devoted ones, the whole array of clerical agents in Ireland, moulded by the system, exhibited one unbroken line of a secularized priesthood from the days of the Revolution till the close of the last century. As agents for the estates of absentee landlords, as magistrates, &c., the clergy were undoubtedly of use in a certain way in the country ; but the very influence they acquired and exercised from such relations as these to the people in contact with them, made against them as churchmen, and tended to exhibit the Church as more intent upon temporal acquisitions and temporal dominion, than anxious to administer to the spiritual necessities of the people.

Besides all this, and in reference to a wholesome influence on the mass of the population, the Church of Ireland was seen to be a church of *temporalities*—to be endowed with very large possessions. With



regard to these, it must be acknowledged, however, that various and most exaggerated statements have gone abroad—but when it is pretty capable of proof, as urged by Lord Spencer in 1833, that the Bishops' lands alone in Ireland were then worth 600,000*l.* per annum, independent of the estates belonging to Deans and Chapters, independent too of the whole tithe in the hands of the inferior clergy—the general impression cannot be complained of, that the Irish Church was richly, too richly endowed. It is true, as also stated by Lord Spencer, that of the 600,000*l.* per annum, the estimated income of the see estates, only one-sixth, or thereabouts, may have found its way into the coffers of the bishops, the remainder having been alienated and become a profit-rent to the tenants of the Bishops' lands. This circumstance, then, leads to the inquiry, whether, in the management of her revenues, admitted to be large, the Church did what she was appointed and commissioned to do, reconcile the people to her discipline, and win them over to her communion by tenderness and an example of disinterestedness—"seeking them not theirs."

It is possible to conceive, that very large revenues might be very judiciously expended—and that the expenditure itself, from the manner of it, might do much to overcome prejudice, and attract respect from those who witnessed it, as well as from those directly receiving benefit from it. Take, then, this item alone—here is 500,000*l.* per annum confessedly alienated from the Church—the sum is large—if available at the present day, it would have settled the whole



Church question without a single heart-burning—was it given for nothing?—far from it. The sums paid for it at different times to the various incumbents of the bishops' sees, show exactly the amount of Episcopal appropriation from the Church of Ireland to the families of bishops.—Not that they got the full value for it,—they took just what they could get, making the best bargain each for his own incumbency, without regard to the interests of his successors—without regard to the interests of the Church.—But let no one suppose that the bishops did anything illegal, they were entitled by Act of Parliament to take certain fines, to grant certain leases (and for the purpose of increasing the fine), to abate the greater proportion of the actual valued rent.

But though such transactions have the utmost legal propriety, their effect must be most unhappy—to their legal sanction the obvious reply is found in the ancient apophthegm, "*Summum jus, summa injuria*;" but who can measure their desecrating influence on the character of the Church; for, when men, notoriously without any hereditary fortune, were seen, after an episcopate of twenty or thirty years, to leave behind them an aggregate of wealth that would do honour to the accumulative faculties of Leadenhall-Street, the people do naturally enough say, that Churchmanship is unquestionably the best trade. If, at the same time, the individuals thus aggrandizing themselves and their families were seen to labour comparatively little in the field of their spiritual vocation—if the sum paid came to be con-



trusted in men's minds with the work performed, what must we suppose has been the impression left on the people of Ireland by such doings in the heads of the Church? Let this conduct be defended, as best it may, on the principle of its legality—nothing can be advanced to mitigate the painful consequences such proceedings have inflicted on the Church; and the very circumstance of its legality does in itself aggravate the mischief. We are not speaking of the power of law, but of the wisdom of this particular law—and in its operations we may detect one of the many causes, why the Church of Ireland has not attained a moral influence on the people of Ireland.

We think, too, in relation to these matters, that the cry which was raised about appropriation (however questionable to the minds of some that expression and the intention of it may appear) should have been retrospective—not, indeed, to claim a refunding of these episcopal legalized drafts on the treasury of the establishment, but to have shown that an appropriation of Church funds is nothing new—that the object is only changed—that, instead of being for personal and private, the sums withdrawn were now intended to be appropriated—for public and national uses.

In relation to this subject—it would be a curious inquiry to go back to the Revolution, and to mark how many great families have been founded by Church adventurers. I apprehend that a glance into the records of the Court of Prerogative in Ireland,



would exhibit the personal estates of deceased bishops, within the last thirty years, sworn to, to a very large amount—perhaps, almost, one million sterling. The see of ——— may well be but £8,000 per annum, when Dr. ———, who came to Ireland with one of the Lord-Lieutenants, at no very distant period, an unbeneficed clergyman, left personal property (as sworn to in the Irish Prerogative Office) to the amount of £243,000. Such, too, unhappily for the Church and the country, has been in many cases the history of legalized episcopal appropriations in Ireland.

But the bishops had other means of winning golden opinions for themselves; namely, in the way of the distribution of their patronage. We have heard of nepotism at Rome, and we know the influence which it had on the fortunes of the Vatican. If the people see that, to be a son, or a brother, or a nephew, or a cousin, is a certificate of preferment, however excellent the individual may be, a suspicion is excited in their minds that the prelate is more anxious for his relatives than the Church;—if such becomes the habitual method of disposing of the patronage, this suspicion is confirmed, and whether justly or not, the opinion obtains a general currency, that whatever may be the pretensions of the diocesan to learning and piety, he is, at least, a man of secular ambition and of selfish aims;—and, if such an occurrence should take place, as a bishop, on attaining a seat on the Bench, withdrawing relations of mature age from other pursuits, to place them in



orders, and, if in a few years those relations are found passed from parish to parish, till they have attained the best in the gift of the see, nothing can persuade the looker-on, but that something is "rotten in the state of Denmark;" and, if all this be accompanied by the neglect of earnest and distinguished men of much labour and long service, the persuasion breaks forth in indignation. Now, it would be a curious inquiry to collect from the various dioceses of Ireland the number and history of men thus connected and thus promoted within the last hundred years. In this, too, where bishops have thus exercised their patronage, we must remember they have the justification of having done so according to law; but, as in the case of the management of their revenues, a most unhappy effect has been produced on the minds of the people, notwithstanding the strict legality of the proceedings.

VIII. There were, however, other parties besides the bishops, aiding in framing these and such like questionable acts of the Legislature—and it is desirable to consider the nature of the effects which followed from Parliamentary enactments, generally, as well as the condition of feeling, indicated as existing in the minds of those who enacted them. For this purpose, it is necessary to look back to the gentry of Ireland, and their conduct with regard to the Church.

In former periods, it is well known, the gentry of Ireland were claimed to be altogether Protestant;



they had, too, a Parliament of their own. A reference to the statutes of that Parliament will show how they stood affected towards the Church—and the influence which their legislation exercised on the destinies of Protestantism in Ireland. To begin, then, with the famous declaration of 1735 :—In that year, the tithe of agistment was abolished—and it was declared traitorous to propose its re-enactment. How did this operate in the Church and the country? we are not left to guess the consequences which ensued. The whole grass lands of Ireland became at once exempt from tithe. Now, it is notorious that these lands were in the hands of Protestant proprietors—the consequence was, that the small farmer outside the park-wall of his landlord, was called upon to contribute, perhaps, more to the support of the clergy than the landlord;—the reason is obvious—the park was in grass, and therefore exempt—the farm in tillage, therefore liable—the landlord uniformly a Protestant—the farmer, in many cases, a Catholic; his being so, certainly heightened the impolicy of the enactment; but it would be a great mistake to suppose that, when the farmer was Protestant, he was reconciled to it.

This enactment, then, led at once to a great diminution of clerical revenue; the clergy naturally, therefore, became more exact in demanding the tithes that yet remained. This increased the pressure of the Establishment on the lower and middling classes—it increased, and seemed to themselves to



justify, the alienation of the minds of these people from the Church.

Eventually, with all their diligence, the incomes of the clergy were much reduced—and thus the way was opened for the introduction of that most miserable of all expedients, the union of parishes. This was resorted to as a grand means of supplying to the clergy an income befitting the dignity of the Established Church.—The consequences were ruinous to Protestantism. Under the operation of this enactment, it may be said that the income of the clergyman increased in a ratio proportionate to the decrease of his flock. The rector of one parish became the rector of three or four parishes; in some of these parishes there were no churches, in others the church was served by an ill-paid curate—the congregation fell off—the finances of the incumbent were so far bettered by the withdrawal of the curate—and the report made to, and received by the Diocesan, was, that there was no congregation, and no need, therefore, for the ministration of religion;—such were the reasonings of those days—the present state of things is the result of such reasonings.

Here, then, was a conspiracy against common sense, in the manner of Church enactments—and who were the parties implicated in it? Why, the very men who boasted of their attachment to the Church, the bishops, the clergy, the Protestant nobility, and Protestant gentry of Ireland—where



was the spirit of religion—where the impulses of sound policy? Alas! alas! in looking back on these times, one is tempted to refer to that awful crisis in the history of Christianity itself, when, as the great Sacrifice hung neglected on the cross, “They parted his garments among them, and on his vesture did they cast lots.” Yet the representatives of the persons who made these laws for the Church of Ireland are the very men who cry out now—on the proposition of any measure to counteract the calamitous effects of the doings of their forefathers—“Spoliation and a lost Church.”

A good income having been at length procured for the clergy, by the introduction of the scheme for uniting parishes; and a licence for non-residence being, in almost every case, granted by the Diocesan in a most courteous manner, on the assurance of the incumbent that there were no Protestants in the parish—many of the livings came to be held by men of high connexions. This introduced into the order, of what was ostensibly called the working clergy, a race of persons who professed not to work. The influence of this upon the people generally, was highly unfavourable to the Church; and in the particular parishes where such persons were represented by their tithe proctor, it was directly against the Church.

But this was not the only evil entailed on the country by these arrangements. The clergymen of this description were generally the younger sons of the nobility, or of rich commoners—brought up in



the expensive habits of their fathers' houses, they carried their early notions of expenditure into the Church; their income proved inadequate to their extravagance; they knew and felt they could leave no provision for their families; and hence a class of dependants and expectants were thrown loose upon the country, and from their names and connexions, *their habit of subserviency became contagious, and a sound and independent thinking grew out of fashion in Ireland.*

IX. When these enactments of a Protestant legislature were thus emphatically proving destructive to religion and the Church, we seek in vain for any influence arising from the conduct of the upper classes of Protestants, towards the Catholics, to advance the doctrines of the Reformation in Ireland;—their political position would have rendered abortive most attempts of the sort; and, in proportion as the question of disabilities was agitated, must these attempts have proved more and more hopeless. As with the clergy, so with the laity; it was a bad introduction to their Catholic neighbours—the loud pretensions to ascendancy which they never, for a moment, allowed the Catholic to forget; while the every tone of their language seemed to infer, that no man could be a Catholic for conscience sake. The mode of reasoning they seem to have adopted was something of this sort: Our religion is political—it allies us to the crown and to the government; the Catholic religion must, therefore, necessarily, be



political also, and its politics must be of an opposite character to ours ; therefore, we may and ought to treat them as rebels, hypocrites, &c. Let no one suppose this to be an overdrawn picture of what has been in Ireland, and at no very distant period. Now, there is such a thing as a story believed by the inventor, merely because he has frequently told it—there is, too, such a thing as a prediction bringing about its own accomplishment : and it is to be lamented, but in being lamented, it must be acknowledged that the Catholics did much in Ireland, at one time, to deserve the charge of disaffection to the government and the crown.

Some maintain that an Established Church must always be a political Church—that is, a Church imbued with the spirit of partisanship, and addicting herself to intermeddling in political matters ; but many consequences are involved in such a position, and of such a nature, too, that it will hardly be conceded by the churchman whose views extend beyond the mere ascendancy of his own party. It will be admitted, indeed, but admitted with regret, that the Church of England has been placed in circumstances, which made it difficult for her, on the one hand, not to become a political partisan ; or, on the other, offered every temptation to her becoming so. Perhaps the high advances she might have made in spiritual religion, have been abated by her political alliances ; we may commend the results often produced, in times of great exigency, by these alliances ; and, at the same time, regret that the



spirit thus engendered, had not been extinguished when the crisis that called it into being was safely past.

In the days of Elizabeth, Protestantism was identified with her title to the crown; on her part then, the support of the Protestant religion was just so far confirming her own title; while, on the part of Protestants, supporting her title, was confirming their own supremacy. Again, the Act of Uniformity, bearing on the face of it such anxiety for the regulation of the Church, and the advancement of true religion, dispossessed, at once, of their power, that political party which may have been supposed less attached to the Restoration than the rest of the nation. Thus, too, the cry of the Church in danger (and it was something more than a mere popular pretext at that period,) exiled James the Second, and placed William the Third on the throne of these realms. We may be glad at these particular results; but, at the same time, we may fairly question, if the Church, as the missionary of the Christian religion, gained any better and holier influence over the people by her successful political championship? if she did not suffer in the temper of her spiritual weapons by their use in carnal warfare\*?

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\* With regard to the present state of the Irish Church, the Author begs to subjoin an extract from a speech delivered at a public dinner given to Lord Glenelg, at Inverness, in October, 1836, by a gentleman supposed to be well acquainted with the subject, as embodying forcibly his own view on the subject. The speech was in connection with the toast of "Civil and Religious



But many other causes were in operation to place the Church of Ireland in her present position. In the ecclesiastical management of their dioceses, the bishops adopted the tone of an unhappy high churchmanship. Let the inquirer turn back to the last thirty or forty years ; great will be the improvement apparent in the number and devotedness of clerical agents at present, compared with that period. But is this improvement to be attributed to the system ? Let it be examined closely, and it

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Liberty." The speaker adverted to the toast in this emphatic language :—" Sir, the principle of civil and religious liberty is founded immediately upon the great doctrine of man's responsibility—the wider you extend the circuit of liberty, the higher do you raise the standard of responsibility. Hence it is, Sir, that we maintain that to abridge the civil and religious liberty of a people or an individual, is just so far to trench upon the authority of God, and to abate the free agency of man—is, in fact, to weaken those securities in the frame-work of society on which the harmonies of intercourse are found to rest—on which the continuance of society itself depends. The advocates, therefore, for the doctrine of freedom, may fairly claim to be the abettors of the moral government of God—to be the friends of their country, of social order, and of the whole family of man."

He then alluded to the vicissitudes of the operation of this principle in these countries, and in conclusion, directed the attention of the auditory to the use which should be made of it, in relation to the state of public opinion, regarding the established Churches of Ireland and Scotland. His words are as follows :—" We are fallen, Sir, on better days, but much remains to be done, and we must not slack our hands in applying the moral and aggressive force of our principle to the minds of the champions of monopoly wherever they are to be found. We would, in the first instance, demonstrate to them that we are ourselves actuated by the principle we profess; and, therefore, however much we may



will be found an exception to, and in despite of the system.

At the period to which we have alluded, the great principle of ecclesiastical administration was suspicion—a crowded congregation, an attached people, were symptoms of heresy; the pastor of such a congregation was looked upon with apprehension. A private convention of almost all the bishops used to meet at a particular society-house in Dublin, and the agreement understood to have been made among

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be inclined to question the wisdom of their system, we do not impeach their honesty in adhering to it. We would be tender in assailing their prejudices—rather let me call them prepossessions, for the latter expression carries more of kindness in its aspect to those who differ with us than the former. In the spirit, then, of this feeling to them, I would remember that these prepossessions are assailable by argument and persuasion. And though the difficulties may seem insurmountable, and though our progress may be scarcely perceptible, still let us go on.

“They tell us, that the institutions of our country are in danger, and from the tone of their bearing, one may suppose that their day dreams are of anarchy and revolution, and their night visions strewn with the dilapidated fragments of our temples; while the political firmament of the Constitution is seen shaken to its centre. Alas! alas! Not for our country. Not for our institutions. May they be perpetual!—but, alas! for those who inflict such self-torment on themselves. I would offer to them the tribute of compassion, if it might not seem to treat with levity the apprehensions they avow, and I trust none of us will ever be a party to treat with levity whatever is affirmed to be honest, however erroneous. Yet I may be permitted to say to them, Take courage—remember this at least, ‘The fearful die ten thousand deaths, the brave man dies but once.’

“But I feel assured, Sir, that the day is not far distant, when these monopolists themselves will rejoice that a current of purer



them was, that, on no account whatever, let his talents, his literature, his success be what they might, should any man, suspected of being evangelical in his ministry, receive a fresh license to a cure—or if not ordained, be admitted to orders, should the same suspicion attach to his sentiments—and so strictly was this rule adhered to, that evangelical religion would have been banished from the Church of Ireland, if the bishops could in any case have refused induction to a benefice, because the

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air has been admitted to the charnel-house of their hopes, lest the noxious vapours it exhaled should have carried contagion to the vitals of the Constitution itself. But the institutions which particularly occupy their apprehensions, are the ecclesiastical establishments of these realms—and first, they tell us that Protestantism itself is jeopardized in Ireland, by the measures of the Government. Now, to come to facts. In what state did Government find the established Church of Ireland? Was it not notorious that, from whatever cause, the revenues of that Church could only be collected, as Mr. Edwards has said, by the bayonets of the soldiery? In such a state of things, could Government be true to their trust and not attempt some correction, and not suggest some amelioration? When they applied themselves, therefore, to the investigation, they were confronted at every stage of their inquiry by another fact—a fact as undeniable as in certain relations it might be adduced, as perplexing to Protestantism itself, and what was this fact? Why, that for the space of upwards of two centuries, with scarcely any interruption, and certainly without any for the last 140 years, the establishment of Ireland had been held in dominant possession of the whole domain of the country. Nay, more, that that establishment, had for the same period been the repository of all political power, the dispenser of all honours, and that, upheld in the estimation of an untaught peasantry by all the innumerable concomitants of patronage, her smile was deemed a reward, her frown proved desolation. With, then, everything to



individual who held the presentation was accused of being evangelical, or (in a vague application of the term) Calvinistic, in his preaching. The strong arm of the civil law protected the rector, and obtained and confirmed him in possession of his benefice; but the unhappy curate was without its protection—the hated heresy (so called) of the pro-

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attract dependants, where there was little principle to withstand conformity—and with everything capable of being used to acquire respect and affection where no conformity was attainable—with all this, Protestantism has lost ground in Ireland—yet, in the language of those who demand its continuance, could a more entire political and financial support be afforded to any religion? And now I ask the Protestants of England and of Scotland, has it succeeded? But I must not omit another fact—it is this—that in Ireland at present there is a host of devoted men to be found in the different ranks of the clergy. Never did England, in her best days of spiritual efficiency, exhibit a body of men more intent to do the service of the sanctuary than Ireland possesses at this moment—and have these men been able to arrest the course of discontent? Have they been able to persuade the exasperated peasantry of a different faith, or the reluctant assessed of their own, that the establishment of Ireland has been a blessing to the country, as heretofore constituted, as heretofore administered; if any men could have done this, assuredly they would. To what, then, is this calamitous position of affairs to be attributed? Not certainly to the men—the men of this generation at least—but to the system itself.

“Sir, in recounting the history of national disaster, the historian does not content himself with relating the catastrophe alone, he spends the whole philosophy of his research, to detect the period when the originating principle first began to develop itself, and to trace the various predisposing causes which, accumulating force in their progress, have at last, in fearful combination, poured forth in a torrent of destruction. Thus, Sir, the best of the Bourbons perished on the scaffold, but it was for no fault of his own; the



tected beneficed ones, was visited on the unprotected and unbeneficed; there was one law for the rector and another for the curate—the rector remained, the curate was obliged to remove—and many such are yet alive who were obliged to leave the home of their fathers, the country of their affections, and the people to whom they had devoted themselves, to

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seeds of anarchy and of kingly overthrow were sown in France long before the days of Louis XVI., while to him, the best of his race, it fell to reap the bitter harvest. It is in a similar manner I would account for the fact I have just stated, respecting the present generation of the clergy of Ireland, that they are the best of their race, yet that they are themselves even now the victims of the system. These men deserve all your sympathy; in England and elsewhere they have been the objects of a generous, a deserved, and a well-timed philanthropy. And oh! that those who have come forward to minister to their wants, would come also to the legitimate conclusion taught by their condition, and join with the Ministers of the Crown in procuring a modification of the establishment in Ireland, which may give protection to her ministers, and peace to her people.

“For my own part, looking at all that has been done, and tolerably conversant, as my noble friend is aware, with the state of matters in Ireland, I will fearlessly assert, and unflinchingly repeat, that in all their dealings with the Church in Ireland, his Majesty’s Ministers have been actuated by a spirit of indefeasible rectitude towards the establishment. Anxious and determined to preserve the Protestant Church, they would benefit and extend its proper influence—and they would do it all under the guidance of the great principle of civil and religious liberty. But the Church of Scotland, I am told, is also in danger from the advocates of this great principle. What! the Church of Scotland, which is founded upon it! Which is baseless without it! No one listened with more thrilling delight than I did, to the eloquent address in which Mr. Edwards so lately set forth to us the claims of the venerable establishment of this country. Sir, the cheers which responded



seek in the higher and wiser charities of the Church of England, a sphere for their labours.

It was in vain that the erudite and philosophic Horsley declared in language peculiarly his own, in addressing his clergy:—"Before you aim your shafts at Calvinism, take especial care, that you know what is Calvinism and what is not—that in that mass of

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to his wishes for her prosperity, are the best refutation to the unkind and silly aspersion that the upholders of the doctrine of civil and religious freedom are enemies to the principle of an establishment. Sir, the Church of Scotland has nothing to fear but from herself. Long may she be the Polar Star to the country of her fathers, directing her children by the light of truth, and guiding their footsteps in the paths of peace. But let her be true to herself—let her remember, and let the Church of England remember, that they hold their respective domains by the tenure of occupation. And here let me explain myself—I say the establishment holds its possessions by the tenure of occupation, *i. e.* on the terms of occupying what it holds—the same way as in the ordinary matter of a building-lease, a covenant is introduced, binding the tenant to complete his erection within a prescribed period. In the same way, too, (the presence of our noble guest as connected with the colonies, suggests the illustration,) a grant of land is made in several of our colonies to the enterprising emigrant, but always on condition that, within a certain time, and to a certain extent, it shall be cleared and occupied, and the grant becomes forfeited if the occupation be not made good. Now, then, I say, Sir, if it shall appear that either from inability or neglect, the Church of Scotland has failed to occupy any part of the territory originally assigned to her—if from that non-occupation—some adventurous colonist of a different ritual, finding the ground waste and uncultivated, yet inviting to be reclaimed—if some such squatter (to use the language of the American boundary, from which the similitude is taken) should even now be settled in the territory once chartered to the establishment, but never occupied by it, I trust the Church of Scotland, should it propose to resume the whole



doctrine which it is of late become the fashion to abuse under the name of Calvinism, you can distinguish with certainty between that part of it which is nothing better than Calvinism, and that which belongs to our common Christianity, and the general faith of the Reformed Churches—lest when you mean only to fall foul of Calvinism, you should unwarily attack something more sacred, and of higher origin.”

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extent of her original territory, will deal with these squatters (I use the term with the utmost respect, and simply for perspicuity), on the great principle of civil and religious liberty. I doubt not she will approach them in the spirit of that precept which enjoins us to do to others as we would wish to be done by ourselves—a precept which, embracing all the charities of life, embodies almost in a word that great principle of civil and religious liberty for which we contend. And once more before I sit down, let me wish prosperity to the Church of Scotland; and let no one think it strange that I, a minister of the Church of England, and a native of the sister Isle, should so earnestly pay homage to the Establishment of Scotland. Sir, if there be a diversity, there is also an identity between the Churches of England and of Scotland. The welfare of the one is closely linked with the welfare of the other; and of this I am sure, that whatever element can prove destructive to the interests of the one, will not less vitally affect the interests of the other. Therefore, in desiring the prosperity of the Church of Scotland, I do not for a moment forget my allegiance to that of England. The edifice of the Church (that universal Church of which Mr. Edwards has spoken so emphatically), I say the edifice of The Church in Scotland belongs to one order of architecture—in England to another—but the foundation of both is the same—they are alike founded upon the Rock. For the spiritual building, therefore, in either case, I entertain, Sir, no apprehension, and as for the ecclesiastical structure itself, whether in Scotland or in England, I can fear no evil—so long as its heaven-aspiring towers shall rear their heads in the cloudless atmosphere of a pure and unburthened toleration.”



But the incumbents were subjected very frequently in those days to a species of restriction regarding their pulpits, which argued a very short-sighted policy—it was not unusual for the bishop of a diocese to issue an injunction, prohibiting his clergy to admit any one to preach who did not hold a licence in the same diocese\*.

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\* So late as 1829, a prohibition of this kind was issued in a particular diocese by a most accomplished and amiable prelate; on that occasion the author took the opportunity of expressing his sentiments in what may be called strong, but must be allowed to be, most respectful language, to the following effect:—"In commenting, then, upon this episcopal enactment, I am anxious to give credit to the learned prelate, who is the author of it, for his zealous devotedness to what he considers the interests of religion, and differing from him (it may be, in ignorance), as to the best method of promoting these interests, I am still more anxious not to attribute to him motives, which he himself disclaims.—With this avowal of the spirit in which I would write, I may be permitted to moralize for a moment upon the difficulties of that sort of jurisdiction in which the superior and subordinate are only professionally unequal.

"I trust, then, I say nothing beyond the intention and spirit which may be expected to be found in, and to direct the episcopal counsels of our establishment—when I lay it down as a canon of sound ecclesiastical government, that bishops, of all others, should remember their equality at the moment of exercising their superiority.—Now, who can read the prohibition of the bishop of —— to his clergy, without regretting that he had not thus remembered, that the persons to whom he addressed himself, were in all things else, save in the honour he had of thus addressing them—most unquestionably his equals—that they had been inducted and licensed to their several charges, by himself or his predecessors—and (not to touch upon the tenderness of a Christian spirit, ever ready to accuse itself,) what must be the feelings of a gentleman, simply as such, at being told—that, though he professes to have



In the days of which we speak, the bishops endeavoured, too, in some dioceses, to prevent the private meetings of the clergy among themselves for mutual improvement—and the men whose labours were the most devoted, were the men against whom the charge was brought of being enemies to the Church. Times are altered, the increase of such

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devoted himself to the service of God, he is ready to open the door of his pulpit to persons of an equivocal reputation, and expose the people of his charge, to the assaults of false doctrine. Can we conceive a more grievous inroad, upon every high and generous and gentle feeling—grievous, indeed, to the clergy—disastrous to the Church;—and, if the enactment become general, need we seek further for an example of the spirit of distrust, as the avowed, the established principles of ecclesiastical government in Ireland?—This, too, in a community of spiritual persons, where the bond of union is professed to be found and sought, in a charity which ‘thinketh no evil, and believeth all things.’

“But how will the clergy act under this infliction? They surely will not forget that they are entitled to exercise those rights which belong to every British subject. They will remember, with a holy patriotism to their Church and their country, that the subordination of the establishment is quite compatible with individual rights and personal independence. \* \* \* \* \*

“But these restrictions of the bishop of —, have a very important bearing upon his brethren on the bench. They have a direct tendency to bring their administration of their several dioceses into disrepute. They naturally suggest to the people the notion of schism and dissension among the rulers of the Church; and, if the conduct of the bishop of —, be imitated by the other bishops, where will be the desirable, the boasted, and in former times, the compelled uniformity of the Church? We shall then, indeed, have a Church of Dublin, a Church of Armagh, &c., but the Church of Ireland will be nowhere to be found. The little kingships of this discordant country in other days, will be acted over again in the dominions of the Church; and, when the spoiler



men is daily becoming greater—facts have spoken for themselves, and it is now plain to all acquainted with the condition of the ecclesiastical affairs of Ireland, *that to these men, and to their affectionate ministrations, the Church is indebted for whatever moral influence she may yet possess over the minds of the community at large.*

Passing on, then, from the inquiry as to what has been the operation of the Church system in Ireland upon the members within her own pale, it is desirable to consider how she has fulfilled the duties assigned to her, to those belonging to a different community.—It is the pretension of an Establishment, that it would furnish spiritual ministration to all within its territorial limits\*—these ministrations, it is true, may be rejected, but the only valid plea for extensive revenues, to be drawn from every

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comes, where, in the divided host, shall we look for the master-spirit of coalition to resist his aggressions?

“Is there, then, good policy in a measure of this kind at this moment? Is the day of toleration and confidence without, to become the day of distrust and intolerance within the Church? Is this the spirit that is to roll back the tide of secret and public aggression? and can it do his bidding, when the bishop of —— shall say to the encroaching element, ‘thus far, and no further?’”

\* The opinions of the author on this subject were submitted to a member of the Irish Government in 1819. He subjoins an extract from a letter written on that occasion:—“For my own part, while I abhor the spirit of proselytism, it appears to me that the best interests of the people of this country will be best furthered by their being brought nigh, or into the pale of the establishment, and that, therefore, any indifference on the part of the rulers to so



quarter of the country, is, that the services of the establishment so paid are co-extensive with the territory from which they are derived. What, then, has the Church done for the three millions of persons, who, at this day, are only fully accessible in the ancient Irish language?—literally nothing. Missionaries of various other denominations have, indeed, entered upon this field of labour, but the Church has looked on, and “passed by on the other side.” By the last returns, it would seem that the

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important an object, while, from the nature of things, it is highly impolitic, is in fact so far an indifference to the best interests of the country.

“You will not suppose, Sir, because I say this, that I entertain any chimerical notions respecting the facility or immediate success of such an undertaking—that I am weak enough to expect a national conversion; the amount of my argument I mean to be simply this, that, without alarming the prejudices of those who differ, the Legislature should furnish the establishment—are bound in honesty to do so—with all the resources they can afford to carry forward the great purposes for which that establishment was constituted. Now, it is a plain case, from reference to the numerical strength of the clergy, that the Church is not actually in a state to retain her members, much less to extend her influence; and that, even supposing every soldier of the establishment at his post, still it is impossible for such a minority to counteract the progress that indifference to the communion is everywhere making. I confess I do not feel so much alarm at the actual progress which this alienation has already made, as at the apathy of the public mind upon the subject. In the history of revolution, we know that the first overt act was not the thing so much to be dreaded as the preparation of the public mind, which had been made ready to approve it; and the establishment will be gone, in fact, long before her churches have been desecrated and her revenues misapplied, whenever the conduct of the Legislature or her own functionaries



population belonging to the establishment in Ireland amounts to scarcely more than one-sixth of the number of persons inaccessible from the difference of language;—while millions upon millions have been expended upon this fraction—*upon a population six times greater, the Church has not spent one single farthing.* The case is aggravated, too, by the circumstance that individuals of her own communion have come forward in the cause; they have done so as individuals, the Church has made no movement—they have done thankfully what they could, but they have done it not in accordance with the system, but in despite of it. This state of the case is scarcely credible.

Inquiring still further into the conduct of the Church of Ireland, in former times, towards those of a different communion, how little has been attempted in the way of a comprehension. With regard to Protestant Dissenters; not only has

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has pioneered the way, to make the matter of separation, or original distance from her communion, of no consequence in general estimation.

“In all this I take the establishment as constituted by law. I argue from the mere circumstance of such an establishment being in existence in Ireland—if the law by which it is established be good, it should be maintained; if at variance with the welfare of the people and the interests of the empire, it should be altered. But, speaking of things as we find them, I contend that the establishment in Ireland has not yet done—has never yet attempted to do—for this country, what her position and her resources have placed in her power—and that the selfishness or carelessness of her functionaries has been rather cherished than reprov'd by the acts of the Legislature.”



nothing been done for it, but much has been done against it. Reverting to the period already alluded to, many now alive will recollect that exclusiveness was the order of the day. It was the great expedient which was to prove the palladium of the Church. To have intercourse with Dissenters was an obstacle to obtaining orders—and to preferment, in orders.

One would have thought that with so great a population, yet Roman Catholic, the hierarchy would have merged all distinctions in the great one of *Protestant*—that they would have encouraged, in the united efforts of all sects, the affectionate aggression of what all Protestants call truth, upon all who differ; *but this was not the policy of those days; for a diffused Protestantism, they maintained a concentrated churchmanship;—and what has it accomplished for the Church and for the country? We retain a few fortresses and some garrison towns, in token of an abstract supremacy, but the spiritual dominion, and spiritual commerce of the country, is in the hands of men of another ritual.*

Little matters, too, in the outward aspect of things, are not without their importance, and there is something in the very appearance of the arrangements of the Established Church in Ireland to arrest the eye of the inquiring traveller. He sees, as he passes through the country, large and commodious and well-built houses, surrounded by well laid out grounds, and all the concomitants of a moderate luxury; he concludes he is approaching



the mansion of the squire—to his surprise he finds it is the glebe-house of the parson ; hitherto he has seen no church, but he anticipates a large and stately edifice, required for an obviously abounding population, and, in the next village, on asking for the place of worship belonging to the Establishment, he is directed to a building, neat enough in the order of its architecture, and evidently appropriated for divine service, but not as large as one of the rector's barns. We do not say that this is universally the case, it is sufficient, however, to state that it occurs frequently enough to attract the notice of the traveller ; and, in every instance where it does so, the conclusion he forms, though it may not necessarily be a just one, is uniformly against the working and effect of the system.

But enough has been said to show that the state of things, at present, in Ireland—the condition of the people and the Church—is but a natural result of bygone circumstances. The dispassionate inquirer cannot fail to perceive that *the calamitous distinction of having brought about consequences to Ireland and the empire, which all must deplore, is to be attributed to the natural operation of the ascendancy principle in its different bearings* ;—and we may set it down as a general proposition regarding any country or people,—that whatever may be the magnitude of the evil in their social condition, we have assigned a cause sufficiently adequate to account for it, when we can refer to the historical details of a system of civil polity pursued for upwards of a century towards



them, in which the peculiar feature was, to arrogate to the minority of the people, on the one hand, the irresponsible use of the revenues of the Church, and intrust to them exclusively the entire administration of the affairs of the kingdom; *while it denied on the other, to the majority, the very right to inquire how the taxes levied from themselves were applied, branded them with civil disability, and in the every intercourse of life treated their religious convictions with contempt.*

In making these statements, and pointing out these inferences, when Roman Catholic disabilities have been legally removed, we are influenced by the persuasion, that the very same unhappy consequences must ensue in these days, to the people of Ireland, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, if the proscription of law be merely exchanged for the proscription of opinion—and this apprehension is anything but speculative. The effects produced in many communities by the introduction of religious controversy on the Romanist question, are obvious to the common observer,—and the dis severance of the ordinary bonds of intercourse among men, a declension in personal religion on the side of the Protestant, and an increased exclusiveness and distrust on that of the Romanist, are among the ordinary results of these proceedings.

The abettors of such schemes must, nevertheless, have accorded to them, the every praise which can belong to honest intention, and the conscientious discharge of a duty, which they have taught them-



selves to believe, necessary to "the maintenance of true religion and virtue." But it is not with their honesty nor their conscience we have to do; it is with the soundness of their opinions, and the wisdom of their proceedings. They allege, that they are following great examples,—that it was thus the Reformation was brought about at first, and, therefore, it is thus, it is to be completed at last. We bow as much as most men to the dictates and authority of experience, but in our inductions from the history of the past, to be applied to the present, we are cautiously jealous of the identity of the circumstances, and the accuracy of the inference. Influenced by this habitual mode of reasoning from what has been, to what is—we can trace no resemblance between the circumstances in which Luther and his colleagues stood forth in their days, as public controversialists, assailing the faith of Rome—and the circumstances in which the Protestant Associations of our days, advertise and enact their championship in the same assault. It is well known (and the usage is fixed in most men's recollection, from the history of the Admirable Crichton,) that it was the habit of other days, to hold public disputations on almost every subject. The joust and tournament of actual knighthood were not more crowded with anxious and admiring spectators, than were the lists of this mental chivalry with wondering auditors. The very habit and frequency of the exhibition abated the tendency of unkind feeling on the part of the disputants themselves, while the



scarcity of books in the early period of the invention of printing, and before its discovery, rendered meetings of the sort both desirable and necessary for the dissemination of knowledge. No such necessity can be shown in these days, and no such desirableness can be pleaded for such conflicts, if we are to judge by the fruit they have already produced. Questions regarding a man's religion must more or less always affect the passions—and the assaults of truth upon error require all the calmness of the secret chamber, and all the cool deliberation of the written document, affording the opportunity of an often repeated reference to ensure success. The arena of public debate does, by its very publicity, embarrass and impede the access of conviction to the mind of an antagonist. In addition to all this, Protestantism and Romanism, however they may be intended to be received as such, by the present controversialists on the side of the Reformation, are not, in these kingdoms, merely questions of religious truth—forfeited honours, lost estates, penallaws, and general proscription—these are the recollections which associate themselves in the mind of the Roman Catholic, when he is taunted to a collision by his Protestant opponent, *and that man must be a slow scholar in the mental and moral history of human nature, who would pioneer the way for truth, by whatever can aggravate, instead of by all that can soothe.*

Instead of proceedings of this sort, it surely would become those Protestants in England and Ireland, who are honestly interested in the advancement of



true religion, and who profess to uphold the Established Church in the sister country for that purpose alone, to go back to the rudiments of the matter ; to consider well with themselves what have been the opportunities of the Church—how they have been used—in how far they have succeeded—in how far they have failed—what the cause which insured success—what the conduct and influence that blighted it ?

In this investigation of the past history of the Church, the candid expositor of cause and effect will find, almost at every step, that the political aspect of the establishment and her alliance with party, are circumstances which have ever stood in the way of her advance in the affections of the people of Ireland.—If she will abandon these alliances—if she will become, in the proper sense of the expression, “ no respecter of persons ”—if she will demonstrate in speech and act, that her purposes are far beyond and wholly different from any pursuit of selfish aggrandizement or selfish policy—if she will make this evident to her own members, and to the people of the country at large—better days will yet arrive—she will require no abstract arguments to prove her rights ; her own doings and deservings will speak for her—the support of this or that party will be indifferent to her, and the attacks of faction of any and every sort innoxious ; *she will then be found a minister of good things to every section of the population of Ireland—her purpose will be seen to be truth alone—but truth enshrined in charity.*



Measures such as these, are the only legitimate weapons of a Protestant Church—far different, indeed, from those wielded in former days ; but these, the only weapons used—and another generation of our Catholic brethren, will scarcely be persuaded that there ever had been a time, when Ireland was garrisoned by troops to collect the dues of a Protestant establishment—or the blood of her population was shed,—to attest the majesty of that Church over a people, who asked not for her ministrations, and knew her ministers more by their temporal exactions, than any offer of spiritual service.

We are, however, far from having attained a sound state of thinking on these matters ; and the general tone of feeling evinced, and the arguments put forth for some years back, on the various Church Bills for Ireland, are painfully in proof, that there is yet room for advance and improvement in the public mind on these subjects. Perhaps, it may not be without its use, to record some of these arguments at present—one general character pervaded them all.

An alteration suggested, was destruction intended—a different distribution of revenue contemplated, meant nothing short of actual spoliation. All this was quite intelligible as it regarded self, but wholly unintelligible as far as the interests of true religion were concerned ; the calm spectator was struck by the merely secular character of the contest—religion seemed left wholly out of the case—the use and intention of the Church was never once referred to. It was made altogether a contention about the



property, without regard to the duties, of the Church.

When we come to particular details, these arguments, to say the least, were anomalous and inconsistent. Thus, when the Tithe question was agitated, it was urged by the opponents of the measure, that the Catholics paid, comparatively, a small proportion of the aggregate sum of tithe in Ireland—the wealth of Ireland and the landed proprietorships of Ireland being in the hands of the Protestants,—that the Catholics, therefore, had no reason to complain of the small amount of tithe exactions which fell upon the members of the Romish communion.—Now, supposing all this had been admitted—what point was gained for their argument—how did it agree with the statement that the clergy were still unpaid—and how did this latter fact agree with the declaration, no less zealously announced by the same party, that the Protestant part of the community were devotedly attached to the supporting the corporation of the Church as it then stood?

Again, it was asserted that the Protestantism of England and Ireland would rise up, consentaneously, in support of the revenue of the Church of Ireland—that the Protestants formed the majority of the empire, &c.; this being so, why was there so much alarm?—with the conviction that this assertion was true; surely there were no grounds for despair. Yet, the clutching fast or endeavouring to do so, the every ancient exaction (as set down by law, but never made good in fact)—the adopting, too, the very language



used by the Roman Catholics at the time of the Reformation—would seem to have said that, after all, the Irish Establishment depended in the estimation of the party, not on the support of the Protestants in England and Ireland, still less on the power of the truth of which she had been made the sacred depository, but wholly and entirely on the mere actual possession, however maintained, of revenues she had never been able to collect.

Again, when schemes for the extinction of tithes, in any sense, or an abatement of tithe composition, were spoken of, the plea against the one and the other was, that, in either case, it was to give up so much actual property of the Church to the landlords of Ireland. But how did this, urged as an objection, comport with the assertion that the landlords of Ireland, in the majority of instances, were Protestants, and devoted to the maintaining the Church in the literal occupancy of that, which, in former times, she was privileged to claim? For if the Protestant landlords were so attached to the Church and its system of previous operation; and if they were to be benefited to the extent of a large deduction in their tithe composition payments, were we not entitled to anticipate that they would be found ready to supply, and happy in responding to the application for, whatever funds might seem requisite, when the denounced legal appropriation came to be acted upon;—and if the Church showed no disposition to trust to the landlords of Ireland, Protestant though they were, this distrust could only be construed into an acknow-



ledgment, that the actual support upon which the Church relied in times of supposed difficulty and pressure, was by no means so palpable and commanding as had been sometimes alleged by the abettors of the then order of things ; and this would go to show, that, while there was much of Protestant religion to be found among the members of the Establishment, there was in reality, very little disposition for martyrdom on the question, whether the number of Bishops were ten or twenty—or the deduction from the income of future incumbents at the rate of fifteen or thirty per cent.

These questions are extrinsic to the *religion* of the Protestant, but they have been most unhappily mixed up with it—we are not, however, to be surprised at this—the circumstances under which real religion comes into efficient operation upon the heart, can scarcely ever become indifferent to the convert—they will be for a long time associated in his mind with religion itself—they will seem to him almost an integral part of it—one which cannot be dissevered from it, without destroying it. Now, while experience demonstrates on every side, that this is the natural condition of feeling in every one, who has passed from the religion of “form” to the religion of “power”—the state of things in Ireland is of a character to increase every tendency of the sort. *The adherents of the Establishment there, who are sincerely pious, are so engaged in the conflict of parties arrayed for political conquest, that they cannot take time to discriminate between what*



*is of the essence of religion and what is merely of its accidents*; hence, to impeach in any way, the Established Church, even by the implication of the possibility of a higher efficiency, and a better distribution of her revenues, is mistaken by them, for an attempt to overthrow religion itself. This will account for the several strange demonstrations which we have seen against the present Government; representing to the people, or endeavouring to represent, those who administer it, as indifferent to all religion themselves, and allied with infidels for the accomplishment of ulterior objects.

Hence, too, the malignant clamour of mere political partisans, (sent forth with the cry of “the Church in danger,”) is responded to, by men of genuine piety and sincere devotedness;—hence, also, in other parts of the empire, the religious public have, to a certain extent, become interested in the warfare; and while they disclaim all pretensions to be able to enter into the nicety of detail, they justify their adherence, by the honest conviction of their own minds, that men of noted and well-known piety in Ireland *have made, themselves,* or, support, *when made by others,* the representations to which they yield their confidence. They cannot suppose that individuals, on the spot, whose interest it is, to acquaint themselves with the facts of the case—and who are acknowledged to be influenced by religious motives, could, for a moment, lend themselves to the opposition of any measure, by any possibility, connected with the efficiency of the



Church.—But the really pious among the Protestants of Ireland will soon come to make the distinction,—they will ere long come to see, at least this, that the doctrine of ascendancy as held in former days, is wholly unnecessary to the principle of an establishment, and that a certain payment to the clergy, of a particular amount, is not of the essence of “the faith once delivered to the saints”—and in a well informed and disciplined zeal to extend the empire of truth, they will perceive, that just so far as they contend for such things, and identify, or seem to identify, religion with them, they are impeding its advance.

Again, the argument was strangely inconclusive, which set forth the active Protestantism of two-thirds of the empire, and yet mourned over the prospects of the Protestant Church, should one single fraction of her revenues be taken for the purpose of education—as if, with the increase of Protestant necessity, there would be no increase of Protestant supply. The truth is, in the language of one well acquainted with the fact, “the Church has done scarcely anything in Ireland since the days of Elizabeth to extend the pale of the Reformed faith.” Content with the possession of the honours of the state, and the ecclesiastical revenues of the country, she has sought no coalition with popular opinion by applying herself to purposes of service to the people—when, then she would, in a season of supposed danger to her revenues, fall back upon popular support, she finds herself alone—and *the opinion*



*of the multitude who have not benefited by her dominion, is against her—while in different circumstances it would have been for her.*

But whenever the Church shall have affiliated herself to the hearts of the people of Ireland, and at any future period is able to show that fresh endowments are requisite to carry her forward in the labours of truth and charity—when the requisition for such endowments shall come forth, backed by the suffrages of a population anxious for them ; can the Church doubt for a moment that an increased revenue, adequate to the necessities of the case, will be assigned to her ; and that a grant which very properly would be denied to the corporation of the clergy, merely as such, will most readily be yielded to the united wishes of the clergy and the people ?

As to the question of the impolicy of an Established Church being dependent on Parliament, and the many dangerous contingencies which might arise—where an establishment was not possessed of a certain fixed and inalienable estate—there is no place for considerations of this sort—the question is already settled by the Church being found possessed of certain estates, granted by all parties to be fairly vested in her.

*The proper business of the Church will be to enlarge the influence of her spiritual ministrations, and to do this in the spirit of charity, not in the zeal of proselytism—and thus engaged and thus devoted to the proper purpose of her calling, she will have no ground for apprehension as to the support*



*of the people of the empire—she will have exchanged the difficulty of an overloaded revenue, under which she staggered and tottered to her fall, for the difficulty of overgrown congregations, upholding her in the buoyancy of spiritual enterprise, and carrying her forward in triumph to the goal of her desires.*

Passing on, then, from the arguments used by the different opponents of these Bills affecting Ireland, both in and out of Parliament, it will be found not without its importance, to refer after all, to *the practical results* that have been attained in legislation.

First, let us take “the National System of Education for Ireland,”—the project of Lord Stanley, completely his own, in all its parts. Does any one doubt his cherished affection, his enduring attachment to the Established Church?—In his conception, at least, the system was not likely to militate against the Establishment, still less to foster the growth of Romanism.—Yet how great has been the outcry against it;—is there, in fact, any species of opprobrium that has not been exhausted upon its supporters and abettors? It is not necessary for our argument at present, to inquire whether in operation it has fulfilled, or disappointed, the expectations of Lord Stanley,—our persuasion is, that he is disappointed in the results—and we must readily concede that the working of it has hitherto failed to come up to the full measure of success that was contemplated and intended; but then we must remember that from the conscientious (we do not say, therefore,



well-grounded,) scruples of the clergy of the Church, which have led them, so generally, to stand aloof from it, the system has never been fairly and fully tried as a strictly *national one*, at all. Yet with all this, what have been the effects on the legislation of the country, in regard to this particular system? Did Sir Robert Peel, on coming into office, join in the condemnation so ruthlessly persevered in by the religious political Protestantism of many of his adherents? did he come to Parliament, and tell the country, that the working of the system was so mischievous to religion, and the principle so nefarious in itself, that he must repudiate it at once, and for ever? So far from this being the case, we find him, without thinking an apology necessary, and without offering any explanation for his conduct in adopting it, proposing at once a further grant for its maintenance,—and thus the agreement of politicians of the most adverse schools has been complete on this subject.

Now what has been the effect indirectly produced in Ireland upon the mind and conduct of the opponents of the system? Notoriously this—that those who placed themselves in opposition to the Government plan, were obliged, from the aggression, *it* was making on their own territory, to offer to the people an education more consonant than the national one, to their own views of sound instruction—and the consequence has been, that schools of various kinds have started up, where no schools were found before, and where, perhaps, but for the activity of the Nati-



onal System, no schools would yet be thought of. On a survey of this fact, if it were the only result produced by this anathematised system, we may be permitted to apply the language of the Apostle relative to the preaching of the Gospel, and express a feeling which we trust is becoming more and more general: "*What then, notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth,*" education is forwarded, "*and I therein do rejoice and will rejoice.*"

But still further, with all the faults which may have been committed, and all the mistakes which have been fallen into, in the working of the system, we find by the events of the last few days, that the Synod of Ulster is likely to join in its support, some modifications being conceded which will materially improve its operations. A powerful opponent thus likely to become an ally, is no inconsiderable attestation to the *necessity of giving Ireland time*. But this movement of the Synod of Ulster bears witness to another important circumstance connected with the education of the people of Ireland. The Synod had established schools of their own,—these schools were to be supported by voluntary contributions,—we may therefore conclude, that by their negotiation with the National Board, they are persuaded that without the assistance of Government, a system of education dependent upon voluntary subscriptions to carry it forward, cannot overtake the wants of the country.

Precisely in the same way has a similar result occurred in practical legislation, with regard to the



Irish Tithe Bill. It is impossible to forget the elaborate denunciations which, night after night, in so many successive sessions of Parliament, were hurled against the various enactments proposed by a liberal Government, for the abatement of the evils of the Tithe system in Ireland. One might have thought that the most remote approximation to the adoption of any one of them must have brought ruin on the Church, and unsettled the security of property throughout the kingdom. Yet, the very moment of Sir Robert Peel's accession to power, a Tithe Bill was proposed, practically the same in the results which would have followed to the country and the clergy, had it been adopted, as those which had been so cried down by his own party, as subversive of the established order of things.—The same line of policy was observed respecting the grant to Maynooth, and the same observations apply to it.

Apart, however, from the conduct of political leaders, and political partisans, a very grave question of principle claims our attention, in connexion with the grant to Maynooth. We have nothing to do with motives,—our business is with the ratiocination which would support, or would repudiate this or that measure. Now, the arguments against the Maynooth grants are more readily stated than those in favour of it. *Are you about to countenance and further the propagation of a dangerous and fatal error?* would seem a simple question, and put in this form, it fixes the resolves of many a one, to withdraw his support from the grant : but in this very question, apparently



so simple, *that which requires to be proved, is, at once*, (but imperceptibly, perhaps, to the mind of him who proposes, and to his who receives it,) *assumed to be true*; the whole bearing of the interrogatory, too, is calculateed to raise an apprehension in a man against himself, *that he is likely to do wrong in giving; while it suggests that he will certainly be safer in withholding*. Besides, on the face of it, it admits of no implication whatever, but the single and paramount one, of the duty of repressing and restraining the propagation of error. A duty which it at once assumes, will not only be evidently neglected, but positively contradicted, by any and every, the most remote appearance of giving our sanction to such a grant to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. Our every other relation to them is excluded from our contemplation by this interrogatory. No estimate is suggested of what we can, and what we cannot do, but we are astounded, bewildered, without any time for consideration, by the overwhelming responsibility which is said to attach to us, by the slightest interference in favour of such a measure.

Now, the man who feels and declares that a certain necessity is laid upon him, to coerce by any and every means in his power, whatever he deems to be erroneous, and, besides, considers that the only and single duty which belongs to him towards those in error, is, in the spirit of the same coercion, and with all the concomitants of earnest denunciation, to set forth to them what he believes to be truth—that



man cannot be expected to give a vote for this grant.

But, on the other hand, the man who has disciplined his thoughts on *the generic doctrine of human responsibility*—who believes practically that *every one shall give an account of himself to God*—who has set what he conceives the teaching of “a more excellent way” before the minds of his Roman Catholic brethren, in anxious but not intrusive solicitude for their benefit—who feels that the government of his country is, or ought to be, representative of the minds of the people contributing to its support, or rather constituting its existence—that man may be fairly supposed to feel, however much he may dissent from the tenets of Romanism, that in supporting such a grant, he is merely returning to the contributors, a portion of their own money, to be placed at their own disposal, not *on his, but on their own responsibility*.

If there be an injunction in Scripture more general than another, and whose influence claims more than any other, to pervade the whole domain of human motive and action, it is the command, “to do to others as we would they should do unto us.”—Let us apply this rule in this case; let us put ourselves in the place of the Roman Catholic,—and (with all *our claimed infallibility* for Protestant truth, and our undoubted sincerity in our adherence to it, and promotion of it)—what would be our feelings, and what our surprise, if a Roman Catholic government (could we be placed in such circumstances), not



viewing things as we see them, should refuse, and as conscientiously too as any Protestant can do, any aid in support of Protestant institutions,—and upon the very same grounds of moral intention as those on which the Maynooth grant is denied to the Catholic. As far, indeed, as moral considerations have place in the question regarding a man's own feelings and decisions, (but totally apart from the conventions of society, and the obligations of law,) *the Catholic may plead his conscience in refusing to pay any item of taxation, that by any possibility can be applied to Protestant purposes, as the Protestant pleads his, in refusing to allow a part of their own contributions to be left at the disposal of the Catholic.*

Carrying out to its legitimate extent this, as we conceive, mistaken application of the doctrine of responsibility—we have the Church of England arrayed against the Church of Scotland—and conscience, in a state of morbid sensitiveness, could, in many cases, be soon trained to protest against any grant from a government whose Church claims an apostolical institution, to the use of a people whose Ecclesiastical discipline is comparatively speaking of Genevese creation;—and so on, we can conceive sect against sect, in endless clamour, and fruitless expedients, each vigorous in its peculiar anathemas against the other, until

We find no end, in wandering mazes lost—  
and that which commenced in the pretensions of a peculiar zeal for truth, must arrive at last at a state impossible for the continuance of society.



*The constitution of nature and providence forbids us to expect a unison, but suggests to us to cultivate a harmony.* Let us be thankful for the seminaries of sound learning which we inherit,—for the support of the civil magistrates,—for the patrimonial estates of the Church secured to us; and let us use all these in the affectionate dissemination of “a pure and undefiled religion”—but let us not quarrel with those who differ from us—let us allow them, not only in *law*, but in *fact*, and *thought*, and *feeling*, to choose for themselves\*.

The basis of Protestantism is the right of private judgment—the Protestant true to his principles, must grant this claim to the Roman Catholic, as readily as he assumes the exercise of it himself. We must remember, however, that while truth is one in moral as well as in the exact sciences, that there is this difference in the manner of it, that its oneness in the latter case is capable of demonstration to all, while in the former, the demonstration continually varies and is totally dependent upon the moral condition of those to whom it is offered. There is such a thing as being willing to co-operate with a man in matters in which there is an agreement, and there is such a thing, as *refusing co-operation in anything unless there be an agreement in all*.—The ordinary intercourse of society, the purposes of life, and the business of the world, are practically carried on by the first of these expedients—they must stand still, if attempted by the

\* See Note B, Appendix.



last;—to suppose a different result, would be to propound a fallacy which would immediately be discovered in action—and which needs only to be fairly and honestly tried in conduct, to refute itself.

In regard to ordinary matters, therefore, the proposition of such a fallacy is comparatively harmless;—not so, however, in relation to that process of thought and agency, which, beyond the reach and control of human legislation, would derive its authority from a higher source—and claim to be directed by the counsels of God.—Who can indeed measure the extent of the mischief which can be perpetrated by the application of a fallacy announced (and honestly too,) in the form of a conscientious conviction, and uttered, as is generally the case, in such instances, in the language of the Scripture record! We are altogether thrown off our guard by the aspect it presents to us; the mind is occupied by *the general truth already confessed*, and the attention is thus withdrawn from that, which, after all, is the very point at issue; *does the general truth apply in this particular or does it not?* The attraction, too, of the form of statement receives, in many instances, a peculiar emphasis from the character of the individual who makes it—while the general habits of mental science, even in the upper classes, indispose and disqualify them to grapple with that, which sets forth in language which they love, *which nevertheless is only a sophism after all*—and thus the train of followers increases and is increased, till among those who are anxious for



the prevalence of a spiritual religion,—and who suppose themselves capable of thinking, and engaged in the very act of thought,—the conclusion becomes infallible; while in their progress to it no distinct action of mind has been employed, except in the contemplation of the general truth already and previously established.

In Scripture, we read of the tumult at Ephesus as a mere incident in the great Apostle's history; but we overlook the instruction that would seem intended by the graphic portraiture of a certain mental condition which it exhibits to us.—The cry of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," uttered without intermission or progression, "for the space of two hours," operated to the same effect, and precisely in the same way, upon the believers in the tutelary divinity of Ephesus; as the reiterated cry, of some general statement, in application to a particular course of duty, does at the present day, upon the excited minds of men, who would accuse themselves of denying the general truth, if they hesitated for a moment to adopt the particular application of it.

We would not in any case or under any circumstances violate any man's conscience—so far from it, and on the contrary, we unhesitatingly affirm, in the present instance, that so long as opinions such as we have alluded to, however much we may deplore their effects, shall be the dictates of conscience, they ought to be obeyed.—*Responsibility, however, does not end with obedience to conscience—there is a huge responsibility attaching and belonging to the proper*



*enlightenment of conscience*; our counsel, therefore, to men holding the opinions we have endeavoured to controvert, is to reconsider their arguments, and to give themselves at least the benefit of a doubt, as to the irrefragable nature of the position they have taken up. If their opinions and conduct merely affected themselves, we should be content with simply laying before them, the grounds on which we differ from them; but when we see the influence which these proceedings are exercising over a large portion of the community in alienating many minds from the Established Church, we feel bound to bear testimony against their doings, in the name of every wise and patriot churchman in Great Britain.

Believing ourselves that the permanence of the Church is essential to the prosperity of the country, we feel that liberality towards those who differ from us, independent of the principle itself, is our best bulwark against any untoward aggression that might assault our ecclesiastical establishment.—We cannot, therefore, in any way, or for a single moment, commit ourselves, to any indifference of expression towards the conduct of those who pursue a different course.

Our religious Establishments, be it remembered, were founded with all their correlative adjuncts, at a time when the whole people were of one religion. We have retained, in a great degree, the dignities and the wealth of the original institution, while we have not retained all the people. The abstract



argument for appropriation to one denomination, to the exclusion of others, might be made to tell in some sense, more forcibly for the claim of the ancient hierarchy than for our own; but there is no disposition to raise a question of this sort at present. Should the time, however, ever arrive when this question shall be raised, the next step will be to claim for all what was given to all, and not to the use of a few, and we shall assuredly have to trace the disastrous results that must follow, to those strange efforts of well-intentioned men, who, assuming to themselves a peculiar guardianship over the Protestantism of the empire, *would persuade us that our only security is intolerance, and our only strength the assertion in act, of a more than Vatican infallibility.*

If we have dwelt thus long upon those questions of moral expediency and principle, which connect themselves with the giving or refusing a grant to Roman Catholics for Maynooth; it is from the persuasion that a right adjudication of such questions is of the last importance to Ireland,—and that the clamour raised against them, while it is incorrect on sound principle, is highly prejudicial to the best interests of religion and the empire.

Our Plea for Ireland draws to a close—it is only ambitious to derive its force from moral considerations;—we have pointed out inferences from facts, and traced effects to causes, which are scarcely or ever placed in juxtaposition together, *but the soundness of our conclusions is justified by simple*



*inductions from the moral constitution of man.* If we have exhibited in language, as it may seem to some, unnecessarily strong, the working of a certain system on the Church and upon the people of Ireland in former times, our purpose has been directed against the system itself, not against those *who were victims to it*, either in doing its biddings against others, or availing themselves of the opportunities it afforded them, to aggrandize themselves. We have questioned no man's motives ;—we have stated that a conscientious adherence to an opinion, is no proof of its truth ;—and we have stated as strongly that such an adherence, demands our respect for *the man*, though it should not influence the judgment we may form of *the principle* he avows. We would ever remember, both as it regards others as well as ourselves, that *truth is independent*.

If we have proposed no specific measures which should affect to be able at once to lead to a better order of things, we have made the omission advisedly.—We have seen Ireland, ere now, the victim of a splendid or a pitiful quackery—and the interests of that country oftentimes suspended on many a chimerical theory which was to effect a national regeneration. We protest against every notion and proceeding of the sort.—Our anxiety is, that Ireland should have time—that the gentry and people of Ireland should habituate themselves to an honest, not a factious appeal to their own resources—and that the moral and civil automatonship which has so



long moved the whole nation in two great opposing masses against each other, should give way to individuality of thought and enterprise, and be, therefore, no longer possible.

There is a great temptation to the rulers of the day to apply local and temporary remedies—thus the partial conflagration is extinguished, but the elements of moral combustion are left unheeded, and are forgotten till the next explosion.—This has been the conduct pursued for centuries in Ireland—the results have sufficiently demonstrated the mistaken views of such a policy, and the principle of Government must now be founded in the intention to invigorate the whole constitution.

While others are impatient because *no miraculous change has taken place upon her population*—the grievances under which they had long suffered being removed,—we have had no expectation of the sort ; and we have endeavoured to show that every such expectation has no ground whatever, in the general experience of mankind, in the ordinary workings of human nature, or in the sound speculations of *common sense*.—"Can a nation be born in a day\*?" is a question we put, in answer to all the complaints and regrets, with which we may be assailed, on

\* In the language of prophecy, the circumstance of a nation being born at once, is stated as totally beyond the reach of ordinary means, and wholly without the range of human experience ;—and therefore, and for this very reason, it is adduced as a mark of the special interposition of God, when in the symbolical expressions of Scripture, "He shall make bare his arm" "to extend and enlarge the borders of Zion."



the supposed hopelessness of the condition of Ireland, because a better tone of legislation has not already fully accomplished its intentions.

We have endeavoured to show that the population of Ireland had been made what they were in the worst of times, by the operation of natural causes—that, in fact, Ireland, in all its relations of social imperfection, exhibits at the present day, neither *more nor less* than the necessary results of adequate causes. The *legal enactments* which produced such unhappy effects, not only on the lower, but also on the higher classes of the people, *had no foundation in a sound morality*. It is a maxim which should never be forgotten by any legislation in any country—that *whatever is morally wrong, can neither be wise in policy nor good as law*. The political grievances of Ireland were not however, the worst effects of bad laws upon a generous people; *these laws debased the minds, and destroyed the moral stamina of the nation, and a long time is requisite ere the social constitution of a people, placed in such circumstances, can remodel itself*.

A different policy, however, is now adopted—let it be pursued—let an unrestricted commerce, and a sound and liberal system of education do their work—*let England give Ireland time, and the fruits of the present system will not disappoint her expectations*;—above all, let a growing moral citizenship among the gentry of Ireland attest their well-instructed devotedness to the country of their birth—and let the people of England act upon the assured



*persuasion, that the proscription of opinion can scarcely prove less fatal to the prosperity of the sister kingdom, and the empire at large, in these days, than the proscription of law has painfully shown itself to have been in former times.*

JANUARY 27, 1840.

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## APPENDIX.

NOTE A. (*See p. 11.*)

In proof of the observation made in the text, the author sub-joins a plan of Tithe Commutation, suggested by him in 1822, to Mr. Goulburn, then Secretary of State for Ireland. There is every reason to think, that had it been proposed, it would have been carried, at once to the satisfaction of the Church and the country. How many years of political strife would it have saved, to say nothing of other results!—Yet, who can doubt Mr. Goulburn's anxieties for the increase of true religion and the due maintenance of the Established Church?

*Outline of a Plan for the Commutation of Tithes in Ireland, submitted to the different Administrations, from 1822 till 1832.*

The difficulty in a commutation is to find an equivalent for Church property, in *value* and *tenure*.

It is conceived,

—That this difficulty would be removed, when there could be assigned to the clergy real estates of an improved rental equal to their present income from tithe.

—That a fund might be raised sufficient for the purchase of such estates, by an acreable tax on land, to be graduated according to its value.

—That this tax (applied to every description of land in Ireland) would, at a low average-rate, produce a sum very greatly exceeding the present tithe collections. The pasture lands being exempted from tithe by a resolution of the Irish Parliament of 1735, confirmed by an act in 1800. Several large districts also enjoying this exemption by prescription.

—That this tax would not be considered a religious grievance by the Roman Catholics; nor could it be deemed a breach of pub-



lic faith by the Protestant proprietors of pasture lands, on whose account the resolution of 1735 was adopted.

—That (besides the power to impose taxes upon any part of the community for the benefit of the whole,) the complaint that may proceed from the holders of pasture lands, &c., as considering this tax an encroachment upon vested rights for which they receive no acknowledgment, will be unfounded—the superinduced peaceableness of the country giving an increased security (*i. e.* value) to property.

—That, if the common calculation be correct, Ireland contains twenty millions English acres—therefore, a rateable average of one shilling per acre, would produce 1,000,000*l.* per annum.

—That a modification of the Act of Car. II., “for granting ministers’ money” in towns, might be available to increase or assist the produce of this tax—that, after a certain period, the sums due to the Board of First Fruits, together with the future First Fruits themselves as paid in, might be used for the same purpose.

—That the assessment might be so arranged as to fall, lightly at first, upon the property now exempt from tithe.—The operation of the whole would be gradual—it might be accelerated by increasing the rate, or delayed by lessening it.

It is conceived,

—If the principle of this tax, &c., be admitted, it may be expedient to appoint a commission, to make such preliminary inquiries as shall satisfy the Legislature of the practicability of a commutation founded upon it—and the best mode of carrying such a measure into effect.

—That it will be necessary to ascertain accurately the annual value of all the tithes in Ireland; and that, by an average, taken for *several* years back, of the *actual* receipts of the clergy and lay impropiators.

—That this may be done either by the commissioners themselves, or by such means as they shall recommend.

—That all tithe collections should cease six months before the land-tax comes into operation, with a certain extended limitation for arrears.

—That the proceeds of the land-tax be applied, in the first instance, to pay to the lay impropiators, and to the clergy, the annual sums they may have proved themselves entitled to receive, according to the average ascertained, as mentioned above, from tithe,



deducting from the amount so paid to them, a certain per-centage for the expense of collecting.

—That the surplus be used every year to purchase up, so as at length to extinguish the claims of the lay impropiators.

—That the principle upon which ground is obtained for public works, obliging the proprietor to accept the compensation assigned by a jury in lieu of his property in the ground, might be acted upon to compel the lay impropiators to dispose of their interest in tithe on the same terms.

—That where the lay tithes so to be purchased are part of an entailed estate, the compensation money might be assigned to the trustees of the entail, and the interest of it paid to the life-renter, &c.

—That after the extinction of all claims of this nature, the annual surplus, accruing as stated before, and then greatly increased, be applied to the purchase of real estates *for the clergy*, without reference to their parochial situation, and yielding an annual rent equal to the present income of the Church from tithe. Every year the rents of the estates so purchased to be added to the fund for purchasing, till the whole arrangement be completed.

—That to leave no uncertainty as to title, a special provision with respect to the Statute of Limitation be introduced into the act under which these purchases shall be made.

—That all these arrangements, &c., &c., might be carried on by a permanent commission to sit in Dublin—consisting *ex officio* of the law-officers of the Crown in Ireland, &c., &c.

—That this commission might be empowered to borrow money on the land-tax to avail themselves of favourable opportunities to purchase, and also to apply such portions of the surplus as they shall think proper to accumulate on the plan of the sinking-fund, &c.

—That the estates so purchased shall be *bonâ fide* made over by these commissioners (in Diocesan divisions) to certain trustees appointed by the beneficed clergy of each diocese from their own body.

—That, in these trustees (as a corporation) shall be vested the entire management of these estates, with a power to grant such leases as shall be deemed expedient, and always without fines\*.

\* The objection that this would make them a corporation of farmers does not apply; they will act as proprietors through land and law agents.



—That, after real estates shall have been thus acquired of an improvable rental equal to the present income of the clergy by tithe, the system of purchase might be continued for such a period as may enable the commissioners to purchase other and additional estates, of an annual value sufficient for all the ecclesiastical purposes of Ireland in time to come:—Such as building and repairing Churches, &c., so as to extinguish Church assessment of every description.

It is conceived that the mode which will naturally be adopted in the administration of these clerical estates—the terms of the leases, &c., (to secure regular payments,) must have a beneficial effect on the whole country in way of example—that it will attach a large population (as the tenants of the Church,) to the clergy, from the advantages they will derive from this improved system of landlord and tenant, &c.

It is obvious that the principle of the land-tax will not operate as the tithe system has done (against the improved cultivation of land,) in a country scarcely emancipated from a single prejudice—that it will tend in a great degree to *consolidate* and certify to the farmer the annual demands he is liable to.

A commutation founded upon it does not in any way affect the rights of patrons—and after the whole shall have been completed, a sum will be left at the disposal of Government equal to a great proportion of the whole revenue of Ireland, as it stands at present.

In the foregoing plan, it is assumed that a commutation is desirable—that it is impracticable to pay the clergy without an equivalent from the landholders for tithe—and if practicable, impolitic—that from the character of the Irish people, and their constitutional habits of thinking, the land-tax proposed is the best equivalent.—An Irishman is so much the creature of sentiment (in the present case of prejudice, perhaps, natural), that he will gladly submit to pay the same amount to the King he would refuse to the established Church. However trifling this observation may appear, I would suggest that every legislative measure that does not found its operation upon the experience of the existing prejudice of the people, must be just so far inefficient.—In England or Scotland, indeed, the people would call it a mere subterfuge of Government to say they were to be exempt from tithe, when they paid the same



exaction in another form. But men must be legislated for as they are, not as they ought to be—and it is in vain to tell the Irishman that there is a fallacy in his reasoning—that an impost of 2*s.* 6*d.*, give it what name you may, is still an impost of 2*s.* 6*d.*

In the tithe plan, however, the tax, though in the sum total much greater, is calculated to fall lighter on individuals than the present tithe assessment, for the reason assigned in the *third* clause.

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NOTE B. (*See p. 79.*)

The principle which the author advocates is expressed at some length in a Sermon, preached before the University of Cambridge, on Christmas-day last, by the Rev. John Brown, M.A., of Queen's College, Cambridge. In speaking of the feelings which ought to animate us on the anniversary of our Lord's incarnation, the preacher goes on to say:—"Redemption was the purpose—peace was the character of his mission; when He appeared, wars had ceased throughout the world, the doings and strivings of men had been constrained, by the operation of natural causes, to yield homage to Him who came 'to proclaim peace and good will on earth.' Surely, then, on the day on which we celebrate the birth of the 'Prince of Peace,' it is natural to turn to peaceful thoughts and thoughts of peace, regarding our fellows.

"The times on which we are fallen, present on all sides an aspect of collision. We are beset in every quarter by ready-formed conclusions, respecting all things, past, present, and to come; and we are daily ourselves called upon to do battle in the arena of opinion, on every subject connected with the moral progression of society.—It is needful, therefore, for us, while it also may be difficult, to preserve a bearing of moderation and generous concession toward the consciences of those who differ from us; and it requires all our wakefulness in regard to other men's convictions, lest, in a zealous maintenance of our own, we may seem to approach questions of peace in the spirit of conflict. Yet, independent of the genius of the religion of Christ, we are convinced that indiscreet eagerness, and a warm partisanship, are not only, never necessary for the support of truth, but uniformly impede its advance,—'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.'—And amid



the fluctuating results which the by-gone history of the world presents, from the imperfect and unsteady application of principle to the conduct of men ; it certainly may be entertained, among the *desiderata* of moral experiment, as a question not yet decided in the negative ; whether a union, cultivated on points in which men agree, be not more favourable to the increase of the Redeemer's spiritual kingdom, than a constant reference intensely directed to those on which they differ ?

“ The doctrine of Scripture is explicitly to this effect, that it is simply the in-dwelling of the Spirit which constitutes the heart of man the temple of the Holy Ghost. Now if we believe, in any sense, that there is the possibility of the ministration of the Spirit being vouchsafed to those whose religious formularies are different from our own,—if we believe that the ‘communion of saints,’ of which we speak, while it neither overlooks, nor is indifferent to the propriety of ordinances,—doth mainly refer to a *spiritual* fellowship among its members,—then may we concede, and be happy in making the concession,—that a bond of union does positively subsist between the whole body of the spiritually-minded worshippers, under whatever, the most differing, rituals of the Christian world,—subsist, too, more closely between them, with all their differences, than between the *spiritual* and *formal* adherents of the same ritual, with all their professed and supposed agreement.—And thus, amid the many-featured diversities which perplex and distract our vision, as we turn to contemplate the whole field of Christian enterprise throughout the world, there may be traced the family lineaments of a spiritual progenitorship among them all, wherever it exists ; insomuch, that between the extremes of the truly Catholic and Apostolic Church to which we belong, and the hapless churchlessness of Quakerism itself, there may be found a common ground of mutual co-operation—and many a spot redeemed, by the sanctification of the Spirit, from the iniquities of earth, can bear witness to the interchange of spiritual sympathies, independent of ecclesiastical communion.

“ While, then, we see the Christian world divided into various denominations ; it is well, for our own spiritual temperament, it is well for truth, to remember, and to bear continually in mind, that the professed object of them all is the same ; and that even with the endless differences that seem to form an impassable barrier of separation, there are matters which all confess to belong to a com-



mon Christianity—matters which are of the very essence of the faith, without which a man cannot be Christian.

“On these the agreement is complete;—like the different tribes of ancient Israel, they all go up to the same Jerusalem,—they have and know but one ark of the covenant,—they have but one Holy of Holies,—but one great High Priest.—*Their separation only begins when they leave the temple*—for a while they linger within the walls of the Holy City; they are seen at last in scattered groups and various directions, wending their way to the homes of their temporal habitations, under the banners of their respective distinctions.

“Surely it is well to contemplate the Christian world under this aspect; it is then felt, and will be acknowledged, that the several peculiarities which are called into action, are in the minds of those who contend for them, but means to an end, means best suited according to the consciences of those who use them, to purify the heart by a holy worship of Him, ‘who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.’

“Now the cultivating this feeling towards others, has a strong bearing and influence on our own condition in ourselves. We live in the days of religious liberty; and the more this liberty is understood, the more shall our hearts be warmed and gladdened, by the sunshine of religious charity. The liberty of which we speak was not always thus possessed by us; there was a time when those who had power, would have compelled the consciences of all men to worship according to the ritual they imposed;—the principle of conduct in this was alleged to be the love of souls;—and this conduct seemed at least a natural, if not a necessary consequence, of the avowed persuasion, that there was no salvation without the pale of that Church, which they pronounced at once Catholic and infallible; and so infected was the whole mass of society with the notion of these or similar pretensions, or rather so indigenious was the growth of such pretensions, and the manner of asserting them, to the human heart; that when the widest separation took place from the ancient Church in other things, this principle was still retained; and the history of these countries, from the early days of the Reformation, till nearly the beginning of the eighteenth century, exhibits, in the greater part of its narrative, a monopoly of religious exercises in full and painful operation; a monopoly, too, claimed and upheld by power, not merely to the anathematizing



with spiritual censures those who did not conform to it, but visiting with severest punishment all who presumed to differ.

“These days are passed away, and a new set of obligations impose themselves upon us, from this very circumstance : no man is now compelled by law, to be a member of any particular church,—but in proportion as the legal obligation has ceased, does the force of moral obligation become imperative. Having then been brought up in the Church to which we belong,—and professing attachment to her constitution and ritual ; and having thus set to our seal in attestation that we at least are fully persuaded that ‘ God is with her of a truth,’ we can only hope for the due edification of our souls by a strict conformity to her usages and appointments,—by a thankful adoption, for our spiritual benefit, of those means of grace which she has provided to further her members in the way of everlasting life. Conformity to our own particular ritual and institutions, has nothing incompatible with freedom of conscience to others, it is only the claiming to exercise the right of private judgment for ourselves.”

FINIS.



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