

THOUGHTS
ON THE
PROTESTANT ASCENDANCY
IN
IRELAND,

WITH AN APPENDIX.

Our Constitution is not made for great, general, and prescriptive Exclusions; sooner or later it will destroy them, or they will destroy the Constitution.

BURKE'S LETTER TO SIR HERCULES LANGRISHE,

LONDON:

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J. ARCHER, DUBLIN.

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THE OUGHTS

ON THE

PROTESTANT ASCENDANCY

IN

IRELAND.

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON THE PROTESTANT ASCENDANCY IN IRELAND, AND THE
MANNER IN WHICH IT IS TO BE REMOVED.

LONDON:

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Houses of the Oireachtas

PROTESTANT ASCENDANCY,

&c. &c.

IN the present state of Europe, the tranquillity of Ireland is essential to the safety of Great Britain.

Amidst the dangers that menace the political existence of both countries, it may be of the utmost importance to examine whence are the sources of weakness, and where are the means of defence.

To check the progress of discontent, by the removal of all its causes, and to discontinue a system of policy, the effects of which have been so lamentable, would be worthy of a government founded on the principles of public liberty, and professing to find its best security in the affections of its people. Above all, it becomes both nations particularly to guard against the fatal

error of persevering in a system, because it has long been pursued; since the expediency of every line of policy ought to be estimated by the effects which it has produced.

But, in order to redress the grievances of the Irish nation, the people of Great Britain should first be made acquainted with their history and origin. No step can be taken, leading to permanent security, if the foundations of the system upon which the scheme of government has been formed, be not known. The root of the evils complained of, may lie deeper than the surface; and good intention, ill directed, may aggravate what it proposed to remedy. No one who values the prosperity of either nation, would wish to inflame the passions of sectarists, or revive ancient animosities, which the national interest require to be buried in oblivion; but an examination of the causes of the present discontents must necessarily precede the proposal, or adoption, of any measure purporting to relieve them.

From jealousy, and ancient rivalship, the English people have long magnified the defects of the Irish character, and have been accustomed to contemplate the misfortunes of that nation with more than the indifference of ordinary spectators. In England, the names of Irish, and Papists, shut

up

up the hearts of every one against them. Their sufferings have been heard without pity; and every measure has been pleasing and popular, just in proportion as it tended to ruin and harass a set of people, who were looked upon as enemies to God and man*." At present, however, while the fury of civil dissensions marshals a numerous class of the Irish people against a party that, justly or unjustly, they term their oppressors, it becomes the duty of those who have no connexion with either side, and who have no other interest but in the prosperity and peace of the empire, to examine into the causes, and justice of those discontents which, whether well or ill-founded, too notoriously subsist.

It is to be remembered, that the Irish are compelled, by the Union, to look up alone to England for relief; and every feeling of justice and policy call upon the United Parliament to examine how far the governments of both countries have been to blame in the various systems they have pursued, and how many of the causes of national discontent have proceeded from them. From this inquiry it may be learnt, that if Ireland be discontented and turbulent, the fault lies not wholly in herself; and if other nations have made

* Burke's Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe.

greater advances, in the same period, towards refinement and wealth, *they* have not been torn by civil dissensions, nor have one-third of their people been imposed as task-masters over the rest.

In all events, the discussion of Irish affairs must in its nature be productive of some good. It will at least convince the Irish people, that the sea which rolls between the two kingdoms, separates not our interests from theirs; that their remonstrances are not disregarded, nor their complaints despised; that we set some value on their affections, and are not indifferent to their prosperity.

From an inquiry into the provocations that Ireland has received from our hands, we may be inclined to pass over with good humour the infirmities of her national temper, and to remember only her constant readiness to assist us in the days of our misfortunes. We may learn to lessen the severity of our judgment against those whom our own laws have rendered barbarous and ignorant, and to doubt the wisdom of a policy, the object of which is to continue a system, the effects of which we deplore. It is, indeed, most sincerely to be lamented, that we have now to answer for the defective policy of our predecessors; yet they are not to be reproached with that additional charge which attaches to those who, in an enlight-
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ened age, continue narrow-minded and selfish; who bring back to our indignant recollection the dark and gloomy prejudices of the twelfth century; who are learned in the lumbering trash of metaphysical theology; in a word, those whom laws only restrain from the pleasures of persecution, who love government only in its severity, and who worship religion only in its abuses.

Ireland may justly be considered as the weakest part of the British empire: long excluded from the participation of English freedom, she has been regarded as a colony, of which the wealth was at the disposal of the mother-country, and of which the political existence was a grant from her bounty. The success of this scheme of policy was impossible; and both nations hating and fearing each other, the heavy yoke of the English government was borne only when it could not in safety be resisted. This evidently appears from the enactments of barbarous and cruel laws, and the perpetual recurrence of massacre and rebellion.

The conquest or submission of the Irish people, while it brought them under the power, did not secure the protection, of the conqueror; and they were exposed to suffer the consequences of a policy founded in the feelings of national contempt.

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An order of things was therefore established, which barring the nation from the enjoyment of their peculiar advantages, endeavoured to extort from poverty and depression, that obedience which prosperity might refuse to acknowledge.

Abundance of proofs are every where to be found, that the errors and misconduct of the prevailing party in the English and Irish Cabinet, have contributed to the formation of a state of society, that marks, in deep-drawn lines, a separation between Ireland and the other regular governments of civilized Europe. Some consolation for the past, and some hope for the future, are to be found in the decline of the power of that party, and in the reduced number of its adherents. The diminution of its baneful influence may be traced in the advancing industry and opulence of the country, and in the gradual decay of that religious zeal which formerly infected all classes of society, and with its noxious venom poisoned the wholesome sources of national prosperity.

It is unfortunately too true, that England fostered and encouraged this disunion of the Irish people. In defiance of the political principles which effected her own revolution, she esteemed herself secure at home, by promoting the interests of one part of her subjects at the expence of the liberties and

and happiness of the other. The faction to which I allude that prevailed in both countries, originated in the separation of the kingdom into two distinct casts—the one *Protestant*, the other *Catholic*. The first, the possessors of all power; the second being considered as mere tillers of the earth, and slaves of the soil. Whatever tended to augment this division, established by law, found the warmest support from those who were interested in its success. In this manner a bad system was adopted by the Irish government; and shallow men, looking only to the enjoyment of that tranquillity which results from the submission of a terrified people, left it to their posterity to settle the long account, which, one day or other, their country would have to bring against the authors and instruments of its misery.

I am no advocate for the separation of the two countries, for it is neither their connexion nor their union, but the measures of the governing nation, that are to be condemned. No misfortunes necessarily or naturally followed the alliance between England and Ireland, for Ireland is not poor and discontented because the affairs of both countries are directed by the same government, but because the one is every thing with that government, and the other nothing. The Englishman praises and upholds the British constitution, for

for he enjoys the protection which it affords him; but a government founded upon a system of preference and proscription, cannot reasonably look to the support of the persecuted and proscribed. Had Ireland met with that fair and liberal treatment, in civil and religious policy, which Scotland finally experienced, we should not now have been disputing the right of a majority of the Irish people to have a *share* in their own government; nor should we have been compelled to keep up an army, not only to repel the attacks of an invading enemy, but to guard against the treason of our own subjects, and to defend ourselves against internal rebellion.

There is perhaps no part of the history of our own country, whence so many useful and applicable lessons may be drawn, as from the annals of Scotland. In the period beginning with the accession of James the Sixth to the union of the two crowns, we appear to be examining the government of Ireland during the last century. Though the misfortunes and miseries of the one nation be estimated as greater than those experienced by the other, yet the statesman may learn the salutary lesson of employing the means of conciliation and concession, to regain the affections of an alienated people.

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He may find in the long experiment of cruelty, which lasted for nearly half a century, that discontent was, by oppression, converted into rebellion; and may learn to doubt the efficacy of the sword, as an instrument of government, or as a make-weight in the scale of peace.

The English legislator may discover the effects of the mild administration of the House of Brunswick in the cure of those wounds inflicted on the Scottish nation, by the perfidy and the crimes of its ancient monarchs. To rational calculation the same success may be expected to be obtained, where the nation may not be so decidedly hostile, nor the government so unpardonably guilty. It ought, however, to be remembered, that the miseries of Scotland originated from the English government, which refused to tolerate the religion of the nation. In abuse of language, as well as in contempt of justice, the majority of the people were termed Sectarians, and a national faith was attempted to be established in defiance of the national religion. Yet, governed upon other principles, and left to themselves upon matters where legislation or restriction may produce the greatest calamities, the same people, who were barbarous, ignorant, and rebellious, became civilized, intelligent, and peaceable; the strength, and not the weakness of the state; augmenting

the national wealth by their industry, and protecting the public safety by their valour.

The rebellions of 1715 and 1745, two memorable exceptions to this statement, add no force to the argument which inculcates the duty of general protection and conciliation on the part of government, as these exceptions are to be traced *to the persecutions of a party, and to the consequences of despair*. The whole history of that period furnishes an instructive lesson. The remark of Voltaire may be a matter of deep meditation to all governments, "*That the success of an enterprise, when a nation detests its rulers, is not always to be estimated by the force employed to ensure it**."

From the earliest ages of the English settlement in Ireland, to the reign of King James the First, when a few years of tranquillity were obtained, no permanent peace, or hardly any thing wearing the appearance of a legitimate government, was even

* This extraordinary writer illustrates his remark by the revolt of Massaniello at Naples; the destruction of the Austrian power at Genoa; and, in his own time, the invasion of Scotland by Charles Edward, which menaced the capital of England, and threw both kingdoms into alarm: it was commenced in a small sloop, carrying 18 guns; 7 officers, Scots and Irish; 1800 swords, 1200 musquets, and 48,000 livres—little more than 2000l. sterl.—*Histoire de Louis XIV.*

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known. A weak, and in consequence a cruel administration, oppressed the country, by all the various artifices of a refined and ingenious tyranny : soldiers desirous of plunder, and favourites anxious for confiscations, found no difficulty in persuading the government of a mother country, alienated by the repeated revolt of its Irish subjects, that they were the determined enemies, not only to the English power, but to the existence of civil society. As hostile barbarians, the original inhabitants were hunted down like wild beasts—were murdered under the colour of legal enactments, or openly destroyed by the sword of the army.

The Houses of York, Lancaster, Tudor, and Stuart, proscribed the unhappy natives as savages, whose barbarism they alternately punished and encouraged. The Reformation was a new æra to Ireland : its ancient inhabitants retained the religion of their Catholic ancestors, which, endeared to them as it was by opinion, and by habit, became still more so in a season of national hostility. The reformers were the English settlers ; and the new faith was a new mark of distinction between the oppressors and the oppressed.

The Revolution and Settlement following the reign of King William, demand our particular attention. The modern history of Ireland may be

dated from that period. We must attend to the temper of the times, in order to comprehend the code of laws which was enacted by the parliament of that country. The tendency of that code was, to divide the people into two classes, and to place the whole weight and power of the state in the hands of the smaller, while it seemed to consider the greater unworthy, not only of its honours, but even of its protection.

There is a great distinction to be made between occasional laws of accidental tyranny, or momentary resentment, and those regulations which grow naturally out of the order of things, and are not deviations from the accustomed rule, but the legitimate offspring of a regular and continued system. The expulsion of the House of Stuart was the triumph of a party, which considered the reigning family as hostile to the civil and religious liberties of the two countries. The Catholics, from the political tendency of their religious principles, as well as from the party which they espoused, were regarded as enemies to the new establishment, and were deprived of all political power. In Ireland, they then constituted a majority of five to one against the Protestants. It is not necessary to inquire, whether some better plan might not have been discovered, for reclaiming the disaffected, and for the encouragement of the reformed religion.

religion. The historical facts remain equally true, and will equally tend to explain the present state of the people.—Yet, the peculiar situation of Ireland at the Revolution, and during the reign of Queen Anne, explains, in some degree, the apprehensions entertained by the Protestant party. There can be little pleaded, however, in favour of the parliaments of both countries, which deviated from the plainest rules of justice and policy. But in an age of religious enthusiasm, of theological hatred, as well as of political differences, some extenuation of their faults may be found in the alarm generally felt, that the establishment, or even the existence, of the Catholic religion in Ireland, would weaken the security of the Protestant power, and endanger the civil liberties of the realm. Nor is it altogether impossible, that the Protestants might have dreaded the restoration of Catholic power, as leading to the recovery of that portion of Catholic property which had been shared among them. That this might have been effected when the Protestant titles were new, is not very unlikely; and the apprehension of the event might have operated, in a powerful degree, to check any measure of relief which the liberal principles of enlightened statesmen might have led them to grant.

At all events, it never can be pretended that a
laudable

laudable zeal for the true faith could, even in those days, have caused the enactment of such cruel laws; and it may be suspected, that the fear of the resumption of property, made more Protestant zealots, than the conviction of the greater purity of the Protestant religion*. King William, and the first Kings of the House of Brunswick, were obliged, by the oppression of its opposers, to flatter a party, of which the influence checked the tolerating spirit of the leading statesmen of the day; and of which the interference has sullied, with the stain of religious persecution, times which excited hopes of a more humane and liberal policy, and which authorized and encouraged the most extensive speculations of the human mind. It was in

* No country in the world can, perhaps, exhibit the same extent of confiscation, in so short a period. Lord Clare, in his speech on the Union, produced a paper, which contained the following extraordinary statement:—The superficial contents of Ireland were calculated at eleven million forty-two thousand six hundred and forty-two acres.

	<i>Acres.</i>
In the reign of James the First, the whole province of Ulster was forfeited, containing	} 2,836,837
Set out by the Court of Claims at the Restoration	} 7,800,000
Forfeitures of 1688	1,060,792
Total Acres	<u>11,697,629</u>

It is therefore evident, that part of the lands must have been forfeited twice.

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this spirit of hatred to the Church of Rome, that the laws against Popery were made. The pains and penalties were augmented in the reign of Queen Anne. During the two first reigns of the House of Brunswick, the same system was pursued. It is curious to remark, that the accession of the Hanover Family, which the Englishman records with pride, as an event from which he dates the establishment of his national liberty, should exhibit to the Catholics of both countries a melancholy proof, that religious jealousy has been capable of extinguishing every sentiment of justice and policy, even in the breasts of those who, from the political principles of freedom, should have stood their warmest friends. By whatever name the Revolution may be called in England, it has only served in Ireland to establish the power of the smaller number of the community, at the expence of the lives, liberties, and properties of the greater*. It is unnecessary to reckon up the long list of civil and religious persecutions, established by legal enactments in Ireland. Many of them were passed during a period of perfect tranquillity, when the High Protestant Church, as a *party*, were inculcating any doctrines but those which seated the present family on the throne †.

To

* Burke.

† The rebellions of 1715 and 1745, will serve as a proof of the assertion: it is perhaps singular, that the Protestant Dissenters

To do these laws justice, they were the most perfect system of proscription which statesmen, playing the parts of inquisitors, have hitherto invented for the degradation of mankind. The cruelties of the Duke of Alva were temporary; but the deliberate degradation of at least three millions of people, characterizes a long period of Irish legislation*.

These laws were in part made by the very men, from whose hands, and by whose exertions, we in England enjoy, with few exceptions, all the advantages of civil and religious liberty. They were the enactments of legislators, who deprived of all the advantages of society, a people whose errors they affected to pity, and whose prosperity they professed to value.

“By the laws of discovery,” as they were called, the whole body of Roman Catholics were completely disarmed; they were incapacitated from

senters were obliged to solicit the legislature for a bill of indemnity, to exempt them from the penalties which their forward loyalty had incurred.

* From the Revolution to the death of George the Second, *nineteen* public acts were passed, expressly against the Catholics; *two* private, prohibiting their residence in certain towns, and *two* militia acts: in both of which they were stigmatized as a public body.

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purchasing land, the entails of their estates were broken, and they gaveled among their children. If one child abjured that religion, he inherited, though he were the youngest—if the son abjured the Catholic religion, the father, though a purchaser, became a tenant for life, while the son was tenant in fee *. Priests who celebrated mass were to be transported, and, if they returned, were to suffer death.” Under these acts, children were encouraged to betray their parents, and to rebel against them. Brothers were opposed to brothers, and even the ordinary duties of family affection were prohibited as public crimes. This system of things lasted till about the end of the reign of George the Second, when the Catholics were encouraged to petition the government for relaxation of the laws. In 1757, under the viceroyalty of the Duke of Bedford, they presented a memorial, praying for some relief; it was not, however, until the year 1774, that the legislature gave them permission to testify their allegiance upon oath, for before that time they had been considered not as subjects, but as enemies †. In 1778,

* Though enacted by the act of Queen Anne, it is curious to remark, as an evidence of the triumph of manners over laws, that this *right* is said never to have been asserted in Ireland.

† Vide the Duke of Dorset's speech to the Irish parliament, calling upon the Protestants for a firm union among

1778, when the disasters of the civil war had a little tempered the zeal, and lowered the pride of the English government, a bill passed the Irish House of Commons, to remove a few of the disabilities under which the Catholics laboured. The preamble recites, "that on account of their good and loyal behaviour, they should be allowed to take leases of land, at any rent, for nine hundred and ninety-nine years—to inherit by legacy, and to transfer and devise any property with the same freedom as the rest of the King's subjects." The cruel law with respect to the abjuration of children was repealed, but it was still enacted, that the benefits of the act should not extend to *converts relapsing*, to *Protestants becoming Papists*, or to *those who should educate Protestant children in the Catholic faith*. This act has been extolled as the free gift of the King's government; but it is one thing to guide national opinion, and another to follow it.

In 1782* the right of purchasing lands in fee was given; some disabilities in the way of education were removed; the obligation to declare where mass was performed, was repealed. The acts discontinued the unequal attachment on property. The residence of Roman Catholics in themselves, who have one common interest, and the same common enemy.

* 21, 22 Geo. III. ch. 14.

certain towns was no longer prohibited ; they were permitted to nominate guardians to their children, and to enjoy the free exercise of their religion*.

In 1792, Sir Hercules Langrishe brought in a bill for the further relief of the Catholics ; it principally enacted the permission to practise the profession of the law. Education was made more easy than under the act of 1782, and the cruel statute prohibiting intermarriages, was repealed.

In 1793, the act of 33 Geo. III. ch. 21, was passed. It is the last act from which the Catholics derive any benefit. By it they are placed on the same footing with the Protestants, with regard to property. It permits them to vote for members of parliament, or any provincial magistrate ; and to keep arms in their possession, if they possess a freehold of ten pounds a year, or 300l. personalty. It allows them to enjoy the full benefit of any college, and to attend their own place of worship without penalty. Yet still they remain excluded from the houses of parliament, and from all important offices ; from that of lord lieutenant to that

* Mr. Gardiner proposed these two acts, which passed : he also offered another, to enable Protestants and Catholics to intermarry : it was thrown out by a majority of eight.

of under-sheriff*. All laws against Papists relapsing, or Protestants becoming Papists, continue to exist; and the exercise of their religion may still be objected to those Catholics who may wish to serve in the army and navy. The common Catholic soldier or sailor is, therefore, obliged, either to renounce his religion, or to refrain from the exercise of what it commands. Of all the different sects that profess Christianity, there are none in which the rules and discipline of the mode of faith are so positive as in that of the Catholic, or where the practice of its ordinances enter so much into the affairs of common life. It is, therefore, no trifling injury to the

* Notwithstanding the repeal of laws prohibiting the nomination of Catholics to the situations of justices of the peace, few have as yet been appointed. No Catholics have been received into the corporations of Protestant towns; and even at the commencement of this war, the greatest obstacles were opposed to their entering into volunteer corps.

The corporation of Dublin still continues the most intolerant; and the politics of the Castle, though they have worked wonders in political change, have not yet been able to root out the evils of religious persecution. The anniversary of the battle of the Boyne is still solemnized: processions and ceremonies preserve the remembrance of a period whence the Catholics date their misery; and, in this annual celebration of Protestant triumph, they are compelled to submit to cruelties and insults.

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professors of the Catholic faith, that they are deprived of attending their worship: and the alternative is shocking, which is here offered to three millions of people—forcing them either to refuse their assistance to their country, or neglect the duties which their religion strictly enjoins. Yet it may be doubted, if even the service of those Catholics who may accept these conditions, is at present legal, as the act of 1 Geo. 1. ch. 13, enacts, “that any person who shall receive salary, pay, fee, or wages, must, in three months after entering into such capacity, take and subscribe the oaths of supremacy and abjuration, under penalties amounting to civil death, and the fine of 500l.” Section 30 of that act, expressly makes it apply to common soldiers and sailors, as well as to officers. This law does not appear to be repealed. What can be said to a government who could pass such an act? or what must be thought of the state of public feeling, when even a doubt upon the subject does not cause an inquiry into the fact? It surely is not honourable to the legislature of a free country, to leave their annual indemnity acts to remedy the evils of positive enactments; and it is to be remembered, that at periods of the year, the time of such indemnity may be expired, and above 200,000 of our soldiers and sailors left to the operation of such an impolitic statute.

From

From the year 1793 to 1795, when Lord Fitzwilliam was appointed viceroy, many things appeared to justify the opinions of those who objected to all disabilities and restraints, as measures the most mischievous and impolitic. The example of successful innovations in the domestic government of every state in Europe, and the rapid progress of principles of freedom, gave every reason to expect that the continuance of such a system might be dangerous. There seemed to be an imperious call on the government, to adopt some plan, of which the real efficient object should be the union of the *whole* nation.

The liberal views of modern policy appeared to justify the general expectation, that penalties should no longer be permitted to exist, but as preventatives to crimes; and that, being founded only on principles of public utility, they should cease to be, when they became a burthen to the people, without contributing to national security.

As early as the year 1779, the repeal of the disqualifying acts had, by many of the Protestant leaders of the volunteers, been considered as essential to the national prosperity*.

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* At a meeting of the Ulster volunteers, consisting of representatives of 143 corps, held in February 1782, "Resolved,

That

The diffusion of commercial wealth, the habits of familiar intercourse that followed the extension of trade, and the rapid change of property, contributed in a great degree to lessen the animosities which contending sects had long entertained against each other. The recall of Lord Fitzwilliam may be considered as the leading cause of all the subsequent miseries. It was a proof of a want of steadiness in the government of the country: there appeared to be but two lines of policy—the one to oppose all measures of relief, and the other to grant them. The government did neither, but, by a changeable system of politics, lost the affections of those whom perhaps they were desirous to benefit. It will be necessary to examine shortly into Lord Fitzwilliam's recall, in order to account for the fresh symptoms of disaffection to which that event gave life. It may be essential also to remark, that the various attempts that have been made in Ireland to repeal the whole code of laws, and the constant disappointment following those attempts, joined to the continual agitation of the question since the year 1778, have

That as Men, and as Irishmen, as Christians, and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, &c. &c."—Vide *Flowerden's History*, vol. i.

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tended more fully to fix the Catholics in the opinion of their *right* to complete toleration.

The government was not wholly inattentive to this change, which they knew had taken place in the public opinion. Towards the end of the year 1794, Lord Fitzwilliam was appointed Viceroy of Ireland. The correspondence of that noble Lord with Lord Carlisle, expressly states, that “a complete change in the system by which Ireland was governed, that is, in its religious and civil policy, was the object of his appointment:” he declares, in the most positive manner, that “he would not have accepted the situation under any other terms, for that since the year 1790, he had been convinced, that, not only justice, but sound policy, entitled the Catholics to the removal of *every remaining disqualification.*” On the 12th of February, 1795, Mr. Grattan obtained leave to bring in his Catholic Bill, which was objected to only by three persons*. It has been asserted, that these measures of emancipation were hurried on without the consent of government, and the English Cabinet had never admitted their *policy, expediency, and safety* †. It requires, however, no inconsi-

* Dr. Duigenan, Mr. Ogle, Col. Blaquiere.—*Plowden's Irish History.*

† The expressions of the Duke of Portland's letter.

derable portion of credulity to believe, that Lord Fitzwilliam presumed to propose measures for the concurrence of the Irish legislature, the *policy*, *expediency*, and *safety* of which had not been previously discussed and admitted in the English Cabinet, to which he owed his appointment, and from which he received his instructions. The dispute terminated in Lord Fitzwilliam's recall. On the 23d of March he left Ireland, and on the 3d of May the Catholic Bill was thrown out of the House of Commons, by a majority of 155 to 84. Such was the termination of the last measure proposed in parliament for the admission of the Catholics to a participation of the privileges enjoyed by the Protestant portion of the community.—From that hour there has been an end to all reasonable confidence on the part of the people, and to all indulgence from the government. Fifty thousand persons have perished in rebellion; but the result is not submission, nor is the fruit obedience. Every measure of force has been used, and Ireland is not subdued. The Irish people may hate the French as cordially as we do, but they remember that it is to the triumph of an obnoxious party, that they owe the calamities of the last seven years, their days of anxiety and their nights of terror; the waste of their wealth, and the depopulation of their provinces; the revival of their

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feuds, and the nourishment of their discontents. The advocates and admirers of the present system may extol the kindness of the British government, but the facts of the Irish history, and the present wretched state of the Irish people, leave their assertions without any other support than the authority of names and the influence of a faction.

Towards the conclusion of Mr. Pitt's administration, the measure of a legislative union was passed by the Irish parliament. A short time after that event Mr. Pitt resigned, and with him the principal part of the administration. Public report assigned as a reason for such resignations, the impossibility of prevailing on a Great Personage to consent to measures, which were deemed indispensable to the security of Ireland. A paper was circulated, by official authority, requesting the Catholics to remain quiet, and to leave their cause in the hands of those, who for their sakes had quitted place and power, rather than apply to any other quarter for relief*.

Yet

* It is not possible to print too often, these official communications of Mr. Pitt and Lord Cornwallis to the Irish Catholics.

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Yet it may be doubted if the retirement of Mr. Pitt from office was voluntary, proceeding from the

That the English cabinet was then sincere in their intentions to remove the remaining disqualifications, appears manifest in these instructions. What has since induced Mr. Pitt to retract his former promises, it may not be difficult to surmise. The Catholics, however, will make a true distinction between the manly independence of Lord Grenville and Mr. Wyndham, and the wretched politics of a minister, whose ambition is to be in power, and who is alike indifferent to the interests of his country, and to future fame. The papers were to the following effect :

“The leading part of his Majesty’s ministers, finding insurmountable obstacles to the bringing forward measures of concession to the Catholic body, whilst in office, *have felt it impossible to continue in administration, under the inability to propose it, with the circumstances necessary to carrying the measure with all its advantages,* and they have retired from his Majesty’s service, *considering this line of conduct as most likely to contribute to its ultimate success.* The Catholic body will, therefore, see how much their future hopes must depend upon strengthening their cause, by good conduct in the mean time : they will prudently consider their prospects as arising from the persons who now espouse their interests, and compare them with those which they would look to from any other quarter ; they may with confidence *rely on the zealous support of all those who retire, and of many, who remain in office, when it can be given with a prospect of success.* They may be assured that Mr. Pitt will do his utmost to establish their cause in the public favour, and prepare the way for their finally attaining their objects ; and the Catholics will feel, that as Mr. Pitt could not concur in a hopeless attempt to force it now, that

the discovery that he was unable to carry a question, which he deemed of so much importance.

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he must at all times repress with the same decision as if he held an adverse opinion, any unconstitutional conduct in the Catholic body.

“Under these circumstances it cannot be doubted that the Catholics will take the most loyal, dutiful, and patriotic line of conduct. That they will not suffer themselves to be lead into measures, which can, by any construction, give a handle to the opposers of their wishes, either to misinterpret their principles, or to raise an argument for resisting their claims, but that by their prudent and exemplary demeanour, they will afford additional grounds to the *growing number* of their advocates to enforce their claims on proper occasions, until their objects can be finally and advantageously attained.

“The sentiments of a sincere friend, *i. e.* Marquis Cornwallis, to the Catholic claims.

“If the Catholics should now proceed to violence, or entertain any ideas of gaining their object by conclusive measures, or forming associations with men of jacobinical principles, they must of course lose the support and aid of those, *who have sacrificed their own situations in their cause*, but who would at the same time feel it to be their indispensable duty to oppose every thing tending to confusion. On the other hand, should *the Catholics be sensible of the benefit they possess, by having so many characters of eminence, pledged not to enlist in the service of government, except on the terms of Catholic privileges being obtained*, it is to be hoped that on balancing the advantages and disadvantages of their situation, they would prefer a quiet and peaceable demeanour, to any line of conduct of an opposite description.”

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The publication generally known by the name of "Mr. Long's Pamphlet," maintains that Mr. Pitt offered to cede the point of Catholic emancipation, to the King, and to carry on the government without agitating that subject. His former colleagues, however, deny the statement, because, they say, that it was impossible Mr. Pitt, as a *man of honour*, could compromise a matter of such consequence in so shameful a way, and that, as it never was proposed for their concurrence, they were perfectly ignorant of the circumstance, until Mr. Long first published it to the world. Mr. Pitt singly returned to power: the public wait with anxiety for some explanation to be given of his former conduct, and as to his future plans. They think it impossible for him to forget the letter addressed to the Catholics, written as from him, by Mr. Canning, and a similar one, composed by Lord Castlereagh, in Ireland, and given by Lord Cornwallis to Dr. Troy. They judge it to be equally unlikely, that the King should not remember his well-founded resentment upon that occasion. From this view of the state of things, and how far Mr. Pitt is implicated not to shrink from the agitation of so great a question, a considerable anxiety is felt in both countries. It must

I have extracted these curious papers from the History of Ireland, by Mr. Plowden, to whose work I owe many obligations. The originals were given by Lord Cornwallis to Doctor Troy and to Lord Fingall, in the beginning of May, 1801.

be confessed, that as yet, the friends to the measure feel no small degree of alarm, for the promises of Mr. Pitt have not always been performed, and there seems to be a little suspicion that *his attachment to power* may overbalance *his love of consistency*. The experience of twenty years has taught, that a minister in office, sometimes disappoints the expectation that he raised when out of it.

The Irish Catholics are at present anxious to be informed, what are the reasons which have apparently effected this change in the opinion of Mr. Pitt. They do not indulge extravagant hopes of success, so will neither be again disappointed nor deceived. The continuance, however, of Lord Redesdale as Chancellor in Ireland, and the return to office of that person, under whose government *free quarters were first allowed*; all these early proofs of the plans of the present minister, have excited some dismay; not to say worse feelings, in the Irish nation.

The reduction of a whole people to despair, is no proof of political sagacity, and it argues little for the head or heart of a statesman, who renders hopeless the attainment of that which is eagerly demanded by a discontented people, and who has drawn the lines of eternal division between a Monarch and his subjects.

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The Irish nation have begun to contrast the flourishing state of their justifiable pretensions, even a few years back, with the melancholy prospect, which, perhaps, a long administration, hostile to their warmest wishes, presents to the view.

It is to be hoped, however, that the members of the Imperial legislature, who are sent there from Ireland, will cease to support a party, the success of which menaces the existence of the empire.

Mr. Addington has at length been reconciled to Mr. Pitt. Whatever hopes this coalition of the late with the present minister, may excite in some parts of our government, yet, at least it will give no satisfaction to those unhappy men, whose cause I have been pleading. The tenure upon which Mr. Addington held his former situation is well known. The claim of his administration to the public confidence, appears to have been a determination to persevere in a system, which the experience of a century had proved to be bad. He opposed the *most liberal* act of policy that has been attempted since the accession of the House of Hanover. He owed his situation to this opposition : he came into office to support a faction, at the expence of a nation. When he was in office, no one plan of conciliation or concession was even proposed.

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The union has been productive of no defined advantage to the Irish nation. The same system that prevailed before that union, is still continued. The Irish people, who consented to sacrifice an independent legislature, in the hope of finding under foreign protection, that liberality of sentiment and policy, which they in vain sought at home, may feel some disappointment, at their internal divisions being encouraged by the neglect, if not sanctioned by the authority, of an Imperial parliament.

The Irish were contented to fall under the dominion of strangers, for they valued tranquillity above all other blessings, and indulged in the reasonable expectation of a time soon to come, when the Monarch of a free country would have gathered under his protection, all his people. They conceived, that the best inducement to shed their blood in the defence, was to bestow upon them the blessings, of the British constitution. They saw and felt the advantages which attended its possession ; and the wretchedness of four hundred years had taught them the consequences that followed the want of it. But faction and prejudice had prevailed, and the Irish Catholics feel more keenly than before, the distinctions between them and their fellow-subjects ; they are not more disposed to assent to the justice of laws that condemn them

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to a state of degradation, neither do they cease to contend for the performance of stipulations, which *good faith* as well as sound policy ought to execute.

It is evident, that since the passing of the last acts, in 1793, the Catholics have twice expected a repeal of the remaining disqualifications, and twice have they been disappointed. It is of no use to examine, whether Lord Fitzwilliam exceeded his instructions, or not—whether, in support of *the Union*, the acquiescence of the Catholics was secured by a promise of relief; it is sufficient to prove, in order to account for a part of the discontents, that they at least accuse the English government of having twice broken its faith. It is easy to discover a very natural origin for the disturbances which have so long existed in Ireland, in the severe laws we have been examining. Many causes, however, have contributed to the partial repeal of this dreadful code. If the compassion and kindness of later times have not secured the loyal attachment of the country to the extent expected, the reason why they have not, is to be found in those habits of jealousy and distrust, which the long period of persecution had formed. We ought to recollect what time elapsed before Scotland recovered the consequences of her civil dissensions, and that the change in the religious system of Ireland, has only existed thirty years.

There can be no doubt, that, under the last act of the King, the Catholics of Ireland enjoy more advantages than under those which preceded it, and yet they do not appear more satisfied with the government than they were before. To conquer the ill effects of bad laws, and to change manners, which often have more power and influence than the laws themselves, is a tedious and difficult task. The Irish Catholics are not unlike other men: they cannot love a system which oppresses them. Notwithstanding the acts of conciliation and concession that were passed by the government of Ireland, there were many circumstances attending the mode, as well as the times in which they were carried into effect, that almost defeated their object. It is true, that in some instances the people were benefited; but in most, if not all, there was so much faction and contention, between those who promoted toleration and those who opposed it, that the very grant by which the Catholics obtained their requests, contributed to inflame their resentment against the party which had been desirous to prevent their success. Imperfectly to grant what is contended for upon a principle of right, carries with it an air of measured and deliberate refusal of justice, that often excites keener feelings of discontent, than even that blind defiance of right which denies every thing altogether. But if in the heart of civilized Europe, and under an order of things, justly regarded as productive of happiness,

ness, to those who live under its easy sway, there exist persons so ignorant of the true foundations of their own freedom and security, as to wish or expect to hold the blessings they enjoy, to the exclusion of a large proportion of the subjects of the state in which they live; better would it be for such persons to pursue such a plan as at least would establish their own security. Better almost would it be to exterminate the Catholics, and recolonize Ireland with Protestants. Exterminate the Catholics, or remove for ever all disabilities and distinctions. The Samnite General advised the dismissal, then the massacre of the Roman prisoners: "the middle way," said he, "is no way—you gain no friend; you get rid of no enemy *."

The principal arguments that have been used against placing the Catholics on the same footing as the Protestants, may be classed under four heads: the acknowledgment of a foreign power as the head of the Catholic Church; the intolerance of the Catholics, and their disposition to combine together; their political principles; and lastly, the insecurity of Protestant property, when the Catholics shall be admitted to share the power of the state.

The first accusation brought against the Catholics, is founded more upon what were, than upon

* Livy, Book ix.

what are, the tenets of their religion. The objectionable demand of implicit obedience to the Holy See, was made when political power was the object of the church of Rome. There is no doubt that the influence of that church was just matter of jealousy; but the general advancement of knowledge, and the progress of civilization, has since induced the governments and people of Europe to resist the encroachments of a power of which the aim was universal rule. Absolute submission to the decrees of the Pope was the result of political apprehension, and not of religious faith. A distinction was made between the errors attached to his nature and the infallibility belonging to his office. Subsequent commentators, even of the Catholic church, on this extraordinary claim, have, however, denied this infallibility altogether. The declaration of the Catholics in March, 1792, signed by Edward Byrne, on behalf of the general committee of the Catholics in Ireland, positively affirms, *that the infallibility of the Pope, is not an article of their faith* *. It is true, that the Catholics admit the power of the Pope, or, more properly, of general councils, in spiritual matters, but they deny altogether that he or they have any authority in civil concerns. Yet, setting aside the opinion of former times, the question that most concerns us is, what are the *present* sen-

* Vide Appendix, No. 88, Plowden's History.

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timents of the Catholics*? In the year 1792, Mr. Pitt requested to be informed what were the opinions of the Catholic clergy abroad, with respect to the existence and extent of the Pope's dispensing power: three questions were accordingly framed, and sent to the universities of Paris, Louvain, Alcala, Douay, Salamanca, and Valladolid. The queries were as follows:

Has the Pope, or have the Cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, any civil authority, power, jurisdiction, or pre-eminence whatsoever, within the realm of England?

Can the Pope or Cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, absolve or dispense with His Majesty's subjects from their oath of allegiance, upon any pretext whatsoever?

Is there any principle in the tenets of the Catholic faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with Heretics, or other persons differing from them in religious opinions, in any transaction either of a public or private nature?

An answer to these questions was, without

* Vide Appendix, No. 91, of Plowden's History of Ireland.

hesitation or reserve, given by all: that the Pope, or papal authority, had *no where* any such power, and there was no tenet in the Catholic Church, by which Catholics were justified in not keeping faith with Protestants. The reply of the university of Louvain, concludes with this remarkable sentence: "that the doctrine of the Catholics is, that the divine and natural law, which makes it a duty to keep faith and promises, is the same, and is neither shaken or diminished, if those with whom the engagements are made hold erroneous opinions in matters of religion." The Catholics of Ireland, in Committee, maintained the same, which was signed by delegates from all parts of the kingdom. This decisive statement ought to set at rest the doubts of the most timid Protestants, as it is impossible to have, upon any subject, a more distinct and positive opinion. If it be remarked to this general declaration of faith and opinion, voluntarily given by the great Catholic establishments in Europe, that no reliance can be placed on the promises or word of the Catholics, a satisfactory reply immediately suggests itself, in the steadiness with which, in spite of persecution, they adhere to their creeds. The Dissenting Protestant is sometimes induced to profess occasional conformity. But it would be difficult to cite an instance where the Catholics have swerved from their religious belief. If the Catholics were indifferent to oaths, or regardless of promises, what

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has prevented their taking those tests imposed by the Protestants, the receiving of which would instantly have repealed all the penalties of the vexatious laws enacted against persons of their persuasion? If the Pope or the Clergy had the power of discharging those who take an oath, from its sacred obligation, what is it, I demand, that has deterred the Catholics from receiving as many as the Protestant parliament thought fit to impose? Their faith, say their opponents, could be mentally reserved, and the priest could give absolution for the sin. The fact is the reverse of what their enemies maintain, for all these Catholic disabilities have proceeded precisely from the reason that they would not forswear themselves. It may with equal justice be presumed, that as the members of the English and Irish Protestant Church are rarely scrupulous about oaths and declarations of faith, that they possess something, which the Catholics have not discovered, absolving them from the moral turpitude of professing what perhaps they may neither comprehend or believe. It is well known, that of those who swear to the belief of the Holy Trinity, some may be Unitarians; and that the Articles of the Church of England are often signed, without being considered as either necessary or true.

It may also be suspected, that of the many who make a declaration previous to being ordained to the

the priesthood, that they are directed to that office by an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a few may have the more worldly motive of immediate preferment, in the prospect of a valuable situation in the vineyard of the church. I shall contend, that it would be uncharitable to suppose that these cases often occur.

If the question of conscientious scruples be imprudently agitated, the Catholic may retort the charge of equivocal meanings, and mental reservations.

The intolerance of Catholics to other religions, is the next object of discussion. That religion, with all the others in Europe, has, upon this point, experienced a remarkable revolution. The old tenets of the Church of Rome, which maintained the eternal damnation of heretics and unbelievers, have long been tacitly repealed, or at least only avowed by the most unimportant members of the church. It is not denied that religious persecution may be countenanced in some Catholic establishments, may be propagated by a few bigotted churchmen, and be assented to by the illiterate vulgar; but it has long ceased to be generally recommended as the active duty of the zealous Christian. The ordinations of the Catholic Church are, in this respect, as little likely to be reduced into practice, as Protestant prosecutions upon the acts of Edward VI. and Elizabeth, or excommunication

nication for the non-observance of Lent. With few exceptions, all the different modes of faith that have sprung out of the Christian dispensation, have allowed of punishment for religious differences*; and it is with regret we are obliged to confess, that there are creeds professed by the Church of England, which decide, rather positively, upon the everlasting happiness of those who do not believe what is *there* called the Catholic Faith. The tenets of the Popish Religion were mixed with its political power, and the former were instruments to secure the possession of the latter. With the power of Rome has ceased the terror of its religious dominion. The Roman Catholic Faith remains at present, upon that point, similar to the Protestant, which, authorizes penalties upon the score of religion, and would, perhaps, be tempted to inflict them, if the temper of the age, and the indolence of an establishment, allowed them to put in practice all that is sanctioned by law. It seems also inconsistent with the principles of those who respect religion, to contend, that the civil obedience and loyalty due from the subject to the state, may be affected by his religious theoretical opinions; while, at the same time, the law allows the disbelievers of all creeds—the Infidel and the Atheist,

* In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the writ *de Heretico Comburendo* was repeatedly issued, and many persons were burnt for heresy.—Vide *Hales' Pleas of the Crown*.

who will only assent to what they despise, to fill all the offices of state. The scrupulous Dissenters alone, both Catholic and Protestant, whose principles of religious faith force them to object to a religious test of loyalty, are in consequence compelled to sacrifice their consciences to their interest, or to renounce those rights which nature has given to all, and which form the foundation of the British constitution. There can be, however, no doubt that extreme cases may arise, when it may become the civil power, in its capacity of guardian of the public morals, to interfere in the administration of religious establishments; but the extent of the interference ought to be regulated by that lesson which the Catholics, in the days of their tyranny, have taught the Protestants, "that persecution may make hypocrites and martyrs, but not converts." The oppression exercised by the Catholics when in power, can in no greater propriety be produced to sanction the employment of similar means by the Protestants, than it would be justifiable to enact sanguinary laws against the Anabaptists, on account of the crimes committed by that sect at the time of its first establishment in Germany. If indeed the profession of principles of intolerance could authorize the infliction of penalties, with how much greater severity of legislative enactment, ought we to repress the diffusion of those Calvinistical doctrines of exclusive salvation, *now openly preached* in a society which,

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by the latest accounts, exceeds 100,000 persons*.

It may not, however, be considered as altogether superfluous, to examine a little more in detail the doctrine of exclusive salvation, which is thought to be peculiar to the Catholic Religion. Every one who has read Lord Redesdale's letters to Lord Fingall, must be aware of the dreadful consequences the learned lord had conceived to attach to the belief of what he justly termed a most dangerous tenet: he indeed appears to attribute, in a great degree, to its influence the last rebellion in Ireland.

Yet that person must have read little of the history of the Christian Church, who has not discovered the liberal use which its ghostly fathers have made of the tenet of exclusive salvation, and the fervent zeal with which it has been supported by the secular arm. The Presbyterian Faith having been once a persecuted, became in its turn a persecuting religion; and the settlements of many provinces on the other side of the Atlantic, owe their rise to the intolerance of a sect

* Vide Miles's History of the Methodists.

This curious question will be found in the Minutes of the Third Conference—"Can an unbeliever, whatever he be, challenge any thing of God's justice?" Answer—"Absolutely nothing but hell; and this is a point which we cannot too much insist on.

which fled from its native country on account of similar persecutions. The Independents alone, with all their errors upon their heads, enjoy the singular but honourable distinction of having *incurred the reproach of toleration*, and of being contented to allow to scrupulous believers the liberty of finding among the numerous branches of their sect, some church of which the principles approached their own.

It would be most difficult, in the history of papal persecutions, to discover more instances of the unrelenting bigotry of churchmen, than the Protestant Episcopal party exhibited during the reign of the House of Stuart.

The cruelty of Archbishop Sharpe, aided by the civil and military power of Scotland, rivals in diversity of crime, and in extent of mischief, the ferocious government of the Duke of Alva, or the more regular persecutions of the Catholic League. "The clergy," writes an able historian, "instead of interceding for the people, abetted the crimes of the military, with whom they associated, aided or cherished their violence, connived at their excesses, and, amidst calamities productive of a transient conformity, rejoiced at the golden days which the church enjoyed*."

* Laing's History of Scotland.

The Protestant Church of Ireland, in theory at least, justified the right of religious persecution; for a paper, styled the Judgment of divers Bishops, with Archbishop Usher at their head, contains an unequivocal proof of the principles of the Episcopal party; an extract from which will shew the spirit by which they were led:

“The religion of the Papists is superstitious and idolatrous—their faith and doctrine erroneous and heretical—in respect of both, apostolical: *to give them, therefore, a toleration, or to consent that they may freely exercise their religion, and profess their faith salvation, is a grievous sin, and that in two respects; for, first, it is to make ourselves necessary not only to their superstitions, idolatries, and heresies, and, in a word, to all the abominations of Popery, but also, which is a consequent of the former, to the perdition of the seduced people, who perish in the deluge of Catholic apostacy*.*”

But whatever may be the errors of other sects upon the fearful subject of exclusive salvation, it would be at least prudent for the members of the Irish Protestant Church to remain silent. Their liberality to other religions is well known, and the beneficial effects of their own toleration are but too visible in all parts of the country.

* Vide Plowden's History, Appendix, No. 18.

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But if, indeed, the Irish Protestants seek to bury in oblivion the transactions of the last century, and to practise, as well as preach, doctrines of benevolence and charity, we would ask, by what means are the Catholics to be taught these doctrines of tolerance; but by seeing the Protestants in a more amiable light than that of mere conquerors and persecutors? If they who know better things, will not set them the example, what must be the end? If the Protestant will not hazard something, may not all be lost? May not the want of political courage be sometimes the most lamentable folly? If the Protestant will not step forward as a benefactor, by what magic is the stupidity and ferocity of Catholic intolerance, if it really exist, to be removed?

There can be no doubt, that a disposition is manifested by the Catholic Church to live in peace and amity with its neighbours and opponents, in the different kingdoms of Europe. The effects of such inclination is visible in Germany and Holland; and modern history has not recorded, that in any well regulated state the constitution is considered as being in danger, on account of the different modes of worship which it tolerates. Hungary even enjoys, in respect of indiscriminate toleration, advantages of which free states are deprived. No distinction is there made in the distribution of offices between the Protestant and Catholic

Catholic Faith. Whatever blame may attach to the memory of Joseph the Second, it ought at least to be remembered, that he ventured, among a bigotted and superstitious people, to limit the progress of ecclesiastical usurpation; and that he gave to Europe the glorious example of a sovereign who sided with no sect or cast, but loving all his people, had the hardihood to think a subject might be useful to the state, and a soul might be saved, out of the pale of the established church. Throughout the greater part of the Continent, both sects live in harmony together; and it has been found by experience, that they can jointly administer all the offices of government in union and in peace. There seems no necessary cause of hatred and separation between them. Marshals Saxe and Turenne were not less zealous commanders against the enemies of the state, because they were Protestants when the establishment was Catholic; nor was it the grant, but the repeal, of the edict of Nantes, that was so injurious to France. “*I see no reason,*” says the enlightened and rational Payley, “*why men of different religious persuasions may not sit upon the same bench, deliberate in the same council, or fight in the same ranks, as well as men of various opposite opinions, upon any contested topic of natural philosophy, history, or ethics.*” Independent of the political principles of the Romish Church, which the bigotted only in that persuasion will encourage, there appears
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to be no essential theoretical difference between it and the Reformed Religion, except that the Catholic Pastor claims a more extensive faith than the Protestant, from his followers. Both bow to the decrees of general councils; both are naturally interested in the propagation of their faith, and in the extent of their influence; and have become more lenient to their adversaries, and less intolerant to their own adherents, rather, perhaps, from their indolent habits, which are generally the concomitants of wealth and security, than from any radical change in their characters or principles.

It is curious to attend to the difference that subsists between the tenets of the Catholic religion, where it is established, and those which it maintains when under persecution. In Germany and Italy, long possession has made its professors nearly as indifferent to proselytism as the Protestants themselves. To those who contend for the alliance of church and state, it may be sufficient to cite the example of Saxony—the Elector is a *zealous* Catholic, while his subjects are Protestants. No one has there heard of any religious dispute. To those who maintain, that the Catholic faith is incompatible with the security of a Protestant state; and that Catholics never can be zealous defenders of any established authority where their religion does not predominate, the example of Prussia,

Prussia, which tolerates all religions, and does not enjoy the privilege of a religious test, to qualify its people to serve their country, will furnish the best reply. When Joseph the Second seized the property of the Priests, and limited their civil power, there arose a considerable ferment; but the establishment in Austria at present enjoys as perfect a state of repose as even the most ancient apostolical institution, in the most rigid Protestant country of Europe.

The history of the Reformation informs us, that its leaders were no less arbitrary than the supporters of the papal power. It is not merely because Luther and Calvin may perhaps have maintained doctrines in theology, purer than the Popes of Rome, that they are entitled to our gratitude, but because the separation of the Reformed Church from the Catholic, broke the power that had long subdued the understanding of mankind, and established the claim of each individual to judge for himself in matters of religion. It was this that led to the acknowledgment of that great principle, which asserts that the free undisturbed exercise of our reason upon all subjects, is a right which the beneficent Author of our being has conferred upon his creatures. It is then no longer in the power of the supporter of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, to justify the principles and practice of religious persecution, by the terrible

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decrees of the Council of Lateran. When the errors of one age can be pleaded as an excuse for those of another, and statesmen and lawyers can be permitted to ransack the records of ancient crimes, to be enabled to discover precedents for the commission of fresh enormities ; then, and not till then, can the abuses of power in the 18th or 19th centuries, be defended by the citation of greater abuses that existed in the 13th. But it seems impossible that any one, who, according to Mr. Burke, is suffered to be at large without his keeper, can give any credit to the tales, and forgeries, and falsehoods, that have so long been received as the foundation of solid arguments, against admitting the Catholics to the same privileges enjoyed by the Protestants. The parliament and people of Great Britain must concur with Mr. Pitt, who, in 1793, proposed ; and with the King, who countenanced, the removal of almost all the Catholic restraints ; they must agree with the parliament of Ireland, that assented to the projected plan—for it is evident, that the King, the parliaments, and the minister, were convinced that there was no danger to be apprehended either in a moral or political view, before they consented to repeal laws which had been considered, at least by the Irish parliament, as formerly essential to the national security. The combination of a sect follows its oppression.—Where men suffer as individuals, they will seek as a party, to extort from the fears, what they

they have been unable to acquire from the justice of their persecutors.

The restraints and disabilities imposed in Ireland, have tended more to unite, than to divide, the people against whom they were directed. To argue against a depressed party, because as a community they are enabled to resist, where as individuals they are compelled to yield, and to discover fresh reasons for the continuance of penalties, from the very evils which they have caused, is an unwarranted mode of reasoning. If this combination be produced by bad laws, it is surely time to repeal them; if by bad manners, there is a necessity for a reformation; but it is neither sense nor justice, to punish others for consequences which have flowed naturally from causes of your own creating. In England the Catholics form the smaller proportion of the state; yet the distinctions still existing by law between the two sects, have united the Catholic party together, more, perhaps, than is advantageous to the general interests of society. At the same time, though a foolish jealousy may be found, among weak and interested people, of their influence and power, there is no one in this country who doubts the loyalty of that body of men*. Besides, they form by much the smaller
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* There perhaps exists one modern exception. A Catholic nobleman, in Essex, was, under the administration of the
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part of the state, and though they feel the odious distinctions which are still in force, they enjoy so many advantages under the laws, that they have little inducement to oppose the existence of a government, of which the general rule is to promote the happiness of its subjects. Yet, even in England, where no dread can reasonably be entertained of the Catholic influence, distinctions still remain, cruel to individuals, and injurious to the nation; nor do indeed the English Catholics enjoy as many advantages as the Irish, a fact which perhaps may be accounted for from the smallness of their physical force: apprehension sometimes forcing governments to adopt a policy which wisdom ought to have dictated. Little attention is however paid to the sufferings of a party of which the complaints are considered as obtrusive, even now, when these abominable persecutions of manners and of laws have almost ceased; it may be asked, if a Catholic family have the misfortune to have many children, what are to become of the boys? Is the army or navy open to them? Alas! the honours of those professions may be gained by all but a Catholic. The Dane, the Russian, the Swede, and the French emigrant, may contribute to advance the glory of England, when the English Catholics

zealous Mr. Addington, denied the liberty to raise a volunteer corps for the national defence.

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are proscribed by the laws, and excluded from the service of their country. If indeed they do enter into the subordinate stations, they must renounce, for they dare not exercise their religion, and are prevented from attaining the superior rank of their profession. Nor could there be any just reason for surprize, if the consequences of this system should be found in public discontents, "for the greater the general liberty is which any state enjoys, the more cautious has it usually been in introducing slavery in any particular order or profession. "These men," as Montesquieu observes, "seeing the liberty which others possess, and which they themselves are excluded from, are apt, like eunuchs in the Eastern seraglios, to live in a state of perpetual envy and hatred towards the rest of the community, and indulge a malignant pleasure, in contributing to destroy those privileges to which they can never be admitted*."

In Ireland, however, where the majority of above three to one are Catholics; where manners, as well as laws, operate powerfully against them, where oppression has produced discontent, and aggravated sufferings have provoked rebellion, and mutual alarm and animosity have arisen from both, it is not wonderful that they should adopt the only means that God and nature have placed in their hands, to gain those rights, and that po-

* Vide Blackstone, vol. i. ch. xiii.

litical power, without which existence is intolerable.—“Nothing can save you,” writes Mr. Burke to Dr. Hussey, upon the subject of Catholic committees, “but a committee of this kind. I wish something of the sort re-established; your enemies are embodied, what becomes of you if you are only individuals*?” The political principles which are said to attach to the Catholic faith, have undergone a material alteration. The Roman Church, which inculcated unreserved and unlimited obedience to the ruling powers, in civil concerns, nevertheless allowed of some latitude in religious matters. The interference of temporal government in ecclesiastical affairs, was always the object of their abhorrence; and though they scrupled not, when their own worldly interests were concerned, to invade the properties of others, yet they never submitted, without a struggle, to any attacks upon their own. At present, indeed, the temper of the age has moderated the influence of all principles that are contrary to the general feelings of mankind. It must, however, be granted, that the portion of civil and religious liberty, which the Englishman enjoys under the English constitution, is not recommended by the tenets of the Catholic religion.

The high church party in England and in Ire-

* Vide Appendix, No. 109, of Plowden’s History of Ireland.

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land, which is supposed to be the most inimical to the Catholic cause, can certainly not blame that sect for entertaining political opinions similar to their own.

Before that tribunal, however, the Irish Catholics must plead guilty to the charge of loyalty, during the rebellions in England and Scotland in the last century. If they be convicted of the negative crime of always supporting the government under which they live, they have at least avoided the indiscretion of their enemies, who *once boldly* commenced an opposition to measures, the object of which, was the security of the constitution, the extinction of revolt, and the safety of the House of Brunswick*.

It is, perhaps, the peculiar attribute of almost all creeds, to consider submission as a virtue, and resistance as a crime; to deprecate reform, and to oppose inquiry and discussion. It is not easy to discover where the Catholic dissents from the Protestant in this particular; yet, notwithstanding what we have said, we are not to forget, that during the time when our ancestors were Catholics, and in an age when the rights and liberties of mankind had not undergone such scrupulous exami-

* Vide the conduct of the high church party, during the reigns of George the First and Second.

nation as in modern times, they resisted the progress of arbitrary power. *Magna Charta*, and the statutes of *Tallage* and *Premunire*, attest that the Catholic parliament and people were not insensible to the advantages of civil and religious freedom.

Of all the arguments that have been advanced for the continuance of the system of things established in Ireland, there is none that appears so plausible as that which considers the property endangered by the repeal of the Acts of Exclusion; yet, at the same time, there is, perhaps, none, the real importance of which has been so much exaggerated. The calculation of Dr. Duigenan states, that the Protestant property, real and personal, is to the Catholic, as 49 to 1. Calculators less biassed have, perhaps, approached nearer to truth, when they state it to amount to little more than 15 to 1. Mr. Richard Burke, who was well acquainted with the influence and power of the Catholics, maintains, that those who signed the famous address, held property to the amount of above ten millions sterling. The objection to the repeal of the Laws of Exclusion was made before the Union. Whatever was its former force, it now can have no weight. That argument, which went to prove, that if a very small proportion of members of parliament, suppose 20, being the fifteenth part of 300, were Catholics, that number would be sufficient to
 overturn

overturn the Protestant establishment, has no longer, if indeed it ever had, any force. But allowing that all the Irish members sitting in the united parliament, were Catholics, in what possible way could they endanger (being as 100 to 558) the security of the Protestant Religion in either kingdom? As, however, the Protestant property exceeds the Catholic by 15 to 1, that event is not likely to happen; and probably out of 100 members, not more than seven Catholics would be returned; a proportion that makes any dread of their power in the highest degree ridiculous. Nor is it fair reasoning to justify their exclusion on account of their inferiority, and at the same instant to assign the magnitude of the influence which they would necessarily acquire, as a cause for refusing to repeal the act. Either the first or second argument may be right; both cannot: if their local influence be small, their political power will be trifling; if, on the contrary, from property, character, and talents, it be great, there is a constitutional injustice in depriving them of their due weight. Should the apprehension, extending beyond what they have at present, go to what they may acquire, it may be asked, of what nature is a government, so jealous of the prosperity of its subjects, as to deprive the majority of its people of political rights, for fear such an acquisition should help them to political power? But can any dread of Catholic influence be justly entertained?

tertained? the property of the Protestants will always command influence, in the *ratio* of its extent. The Catholic freeholder, according to the nature of that possession, will necessarily be as much under the direction of those who are in the enjoyment of power, property, or character, as he is at present. When there is no persecution, it is idle to say that the feelings of Catholics are different from those of other men. In times of civil contention, interest may be forgotten, and animosity indulged; but the legislator ought to endeavour to shorten the continuance of this deplorable state of things, by the removal of the provocations that have caused it. In examining the motives by which men are ordinarily governed, he may safely conclude, that wealth will gain followers, and property secure respect. In what way then is the Protestant Ascendancy, as it is called, to be overturned? It is impossible to argue that the Imperial parliament is likely to sanction the enactment of laws that would diminish the security of property, by inquiries into original titles, or disturb the church establishment, from a desire to advance another religion. As to property, if the educated and civilized part of the Irish Catholics could be polled, there can be no doubt that they would all feel an interest in contributing to its security. Though the Catholics, from the beginning of the last century to the year 1782, could not hold in fee, nor take a lease, nor lend

lend on mortgage, yet private interest defeated legal enactment, and various modes were found, by which the Catholic personal property became intermingled with the real property of the Protestants. Besides, Ireland, as a commercial country (and many of its greatest merchants are of the Romish Persuasion), is interested in the preservation of tranquillity; for what would become of commerce, if all the property of the country was once more, by violence, to change hands? Is any thing more to be dreaded than the confusion and misery that would necessarily follow? It is, indeed, impossible to conceive such a revolution, and it is as likely, as far as property can influence it, to happen in England as in Ireland. Nothing short of successful rebellion can give it existence; and the best preventive measure against that dreadful experiment is, the removal of public discontent. Though the poor may look upon wealth with envy, it is only when they are precluded from the acquisition of it, that the possessors are viewed with abhorrence. But as the fear of the resumption of property has been the principal reason for the continuance of the Catholic disabilities, it is of the utmost consequence that the minds of the Protestants should be set at rest upon that subject. It is impossible to suppose that a fair consideration of the case can justify any alarm. The quiet possession of estates for an hundred years, whatever may have been the original title, is a security for

the continuance of that quiet possession as long as society exists: the Catholics are interested in preserving the tenure, for a general convulsion would endanger all property, personal as well as real. The civilized and educated part of a nation ought, and do, decide upon all public measures, except in a state of revolution; and that dreadful extremity it is the demonstrable interest of all property to avoid. There appears no reason to apprehend the success of what must entail universal ruin. That the mob may love plunder, there can be no doubt; the Agrarian Law has been popular in all countries; but the sober and the thinking part of the community could never allow, even if they had the power, the execution of a project from which they could not benefit, but would certainly be undone. That the Catholics could never have the power of the state, is nearly evident. The liberty of sitting in parliament, would be of advantage but to few; the places from which they are still excluded, a small number only could ever hold. The influence of the establishment being both in the country and the parliament, and the offices of the government being in the gift of the crown, would be a sufficient check, if any be necessary beyond what naturally arises, to preserve the property in the hands in which it now is. The fair transfers and alterations of that property is what our laws encourage. It is no fair objection in favour of the Catholic, that such an event

event might be produced by time ; for to provide against it, the legislature must be compelled to apply the means of arbitrary distinctions and hurtful prohibitions.

Among the numerous writers that have distinguished themselves in religious and political controversy, there is no one who appears to be more entitled to attention than Dr. Duigenan. He has always stepped forward the champion of the laws of exclusion, and the supporter of the Irish government. An enemy to toleration, his writings are curious, as presenting another melancholy proof of the difficulty of conquest in the warfare of reason and truth, against ignorance and prejudice.

We who have been the unfortunate spectators of the consequences resulting from his rash and intemperate politics, may be permitted to suppose, that the temporary reputation which his writings have enjoyed, has originated more from the zeal of party, and the violence of the times, than from the justice of their arguments.

Dr. Duigenan seems not to have discovered the difference between spiritual and civil interference ; he argues that the Pope, because he confirms the recommendation of the Bishops whom he nominates, is necessarily possessed of the power
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of the state. He argues, because Catholics were bigots in the thirteenth century, that they are necessarily so in the nineteenth, and seems not aware that the same argument may be employed against the Reformed Religion, and that the Catholic may retort by the citation of the book of Calvin, upon the necessity of the sword to extirpate heresy, and the doctrines and laws of Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth, upon religious matters of faith and practice. But there is one part of his pamphlet that has hitherto escaped observation, which is of the highest importance. An anonymous author, to whom he was replying, had truly advanced, "that as property is the basis of representation by the British constitution, the Catholics ought to sit in parliament in proportion to their property*."— "Admitting property," says Dr. Duigenan, "to be the basis of representation, yet by no force of argument can it be proved that a class of people, *from religious principle*, determined enemies of the state, *traitors in theory*, and *always in practice when they dare*, be their property what it may, have a right to be admitted into the supreme legislative power of the state; they ought to be extremely well contented with, and, if they have any spark of gratitude, very thankful for, *being permitted to remain within the territories of the state, and enjoy the protection and benefit of it.*" The princi-

* The Case of Ireland Re-considered.

ple of making men ignorant and cruel, and then punishing the consequences of your injustice, has been already examined; but the mis-statement of the first part of the sentence is only exceeded by the dreadful sentiment in the last. One had hoped that the folly of Spain and France, in expelling from their soils their industrious and innocent inhabitants, had been recognized by every one, and that states would have profited by the consequences of such impolitic persecutions. The Irish Catholics have surely very little to be thankful for, that one violation of their natural rights has not been followed by another; for religious liberty must be valued as one of those rights to which men are entitled by nature. They cannot be justly reckoned to be more obliged to those who do not *altogether* deprive them of it, than they can be that they are not banished from their own country; an obligation which innocent men have seldom considered as reasons for any peculiar gratitude. Nor can there be a greater contradiction of terms, than to talk of power, without including protection: where there is no favour, no gratitude can be due. The love of a people to their government owes its birth, not to oaths of allegiance, nor to artificial bonds, invented by statesmen and lawyers, but to the security of private and of public happiness; however those may push their reasonings too far, who attribute all public discontent to the conduct of government, it cannot be

be disputed that it proceeds from public suffering. There are, it must be confessed, few among us who do not compassionate the wanderings of religious and political error; and who do not find, even in the greatest examples of those delusions, something to pity, and much to forgive. Nor are there many out of the sphere of the contagious distemper of Irish politics, and free from the influence of a poison "holding such enmity with the blood of man," who do not shudder with horror at the principles of religious persecution thus openly advanced. None will envy the author's triumph at every exercise of power, nor participate in his dislike to all species of conciliation; and few will condemn Lord Cornwallis and his officers, for desisting from the destruction of an unarmed peasantry.

There is but one more writer to whom it may be necessary to allude in this discussion. Yet is it of no small importance to the policy and justice of the cause of complete emancipation, that the few novel remarks he has condescended to make, should not remain unanswered: the character of the person, as well as the station which he fills, entitle him to something more than neglect. A correspondence that has been published between the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland and the Earl of Fingall, is now before the public.

Voltaire

Lord Redesdale, in a letter to Dr. Coppinger (in my opinion, by far the most intemperate and unguarded of all the correspondence), has advanced one sentiment that appears in no small degree extraordinary:—"My letters," says he, "could not have been injurious to you, if they had remained with Lord Fingall." Is it then affirmed, that a Catholic Bishop, who is accused of *something like rebellion*, is not injured by the Chancellor endeavouring to persuade the first Lay Lord of the Catholic Religion, of the truth of that accusation; extracting therefrom arguments for the continuance of restraints on the whole persuasion, and accusing more than half a nation, of rooted dislike to its government? The Chancellor was not a private man when he wrote those letters; they were letters of advice to an Irish Earl, in relation to the execution of an office to which the Lord Chancellor had appointed him. The advice contained but few rules and directions for the legal discharge of that office; its professed object was, to raise a doubt in Lord Fingall's mind, as to the conduct of the ministers of his religion, and thence to justify the suspicions of government. The letters maintain throughout, a distinction between the real and nominal professions of attachment, and contain a charge against the whole Catholic Clergy, as being, by *faith*, as well as by practice, hostile to the English government. The

nature of the Catholic Faith has been before discussed, and there is no occasion to repeat it here: it is, however, essential to remark, that if the Catholics consider, in theory, those who dissent from them as heretics, the Learned Lord must have been aware that the Articles of the Church of England, and the legal penalties attached to those who *speak* or *write* against the Common Prayer*, are not very pleasing proofs of the Christian Charity of our own religious establishment. All men ought to concur with Lord Redesdale, in his objections to the exclusive doctrines, as productive of ferment and discord; but few will join him in the opinion, that the remedy is to be found in restraints and disabilities. The last Irish rebellion, if no other proof could be furnished, is sufficient evidence, that the Irish Priests do not inculcate doctrines of revolt, and that they are not enemies to the English government. A few of them, indeed, joined the rebels; but the general conduct of the Ministers of that persuasion, was no less honourable to themselves than useful to their

* The act of Elizabeth, art. 1. chap. ii. 1, 9, 10, 11, declares, that if any person whatever shall declare or speak any thing against the Common Prayer, he shall forfeit for the first offence, 100 marks; for the second, 400; for the third, all his goods and chattels, and suffer imprisonment for life.

country.

country*. There is no occasion to recall the national recollection to that dreadful period. But it is a matter beyond all doubt, that there was no want of personal exertion from the Catholic Priests. In the midst of every danger, both from friends and enemies, they were foremost in the cities and villages, exerting their utmost efforts to bring back to obedience a rebellious multitude, equally adverse to religious and civil restraint. The inhabitants of the city of Wexford are an evidence of the zeal of the Catholic Priests. The thanks of Lord Cornwallis may plead something in their favour; and it will not be difficult to find Protestants who claimed and received their protection, and who were not ashamed to avow that they owed their lives to the intercession of the Catholic Clergy. Be it too remembered, that the county and town of Wexford were the parts of Ireland in which the Protestant system had been the most fully established: the inhabitants of that part of Ireland had long experienced the horrors of war, in murders—in burnings—in insults to the sex—in acts, which, from their nature, it is better to leave to general conception; but to which the history of human calamities scarcely furnishes a parallel. It argues little in

* Vide Plowden's History; Gordon and Hays' Narrative.

favour of a government, when its subjects are anxious to destroy it; even the advocates of the present state of things in Ireland ought to be ashamed to acknowledge, that it owes its existence to force of arms, and is imposed on an unwilling people. The British Constitution elsewhere does not pride itself on being maintained by the sword of the army. The Irish Clergy, indeed, failed in their attempt to check the rebellion, though they succeeded in saving the lives of thousands; but their failure is a proof of the exasperated state of public discontent. It is true, that the influence of the Catholic Priests over the minds of their followers has been much diminished; and it is a fact well known, that in the Confessional, Defenderism was hardly ever avowed, though it be now clear that almost all Ireland was sworn. Nor, indeed, had they taken the opposite line, and sided with the people against the government, would it have been contrary to the past experience that England has had upon the subject of rebellions, or to feelings which are supposed to influence the motives and actions of mankind. Where the salaries of a clergy are paid by voluntary contributions from the people, it is possible that private interest may occasionally outweigh their public duty, and induce them to support a party from which they derive their subsistence.

The Catholic Clergy differed from the Presbyterian

terian Ministers in our civil wars, and supported the state against the rebellion of the people. The loss of their power has been the consequence of their espousing the Protestant party. It is unjust then to say that they preach revolt, for they have given solemn pledges to the contrary; and in moments of danger and tumult, what pledges are so convincing as those, by which the persons who make them endanger their property, their power, and their lives?

There is nothing more praiseworthy than the conduct of the Ministers of that religion; they are willing to sacrifice worldly advantages for the cares and suspicions, and unpopularity of their office: living among their fellow-subjects, doing good to all men, and patiently enduring the taunts and scorns of a triumphant faction, they are content to look for their reward in the affections of those whose interests they espouse; and expect the fair recompense of a life of labour, from the more equal justice of another tribunal. The power of the Catholic Clergy, if it do harm, has done much good: great benefits are now gained by its exertion. But if it be fit to restrain it, that can only be done by elevating the nation beyond the want of it, by extricating the whole people from the thralldom of superstition and ignorance, by giving to every individual of the community the
rights

rights that belong to his talents and property ; by the encouragement afforded to education ; and by placing the Catholic, *in every respect*, on the same footing as the Protestant.

The Lord Chancellor need not look for the causes of the rebellion of Ireland in the heavy folios of theological controversy : he may, unfortunately, discern causes in other quarters not so remote, perfectly sufficient to produce all the calamities which that unfortunate country has experienced. If the Catholic Priests have lost their influence over the minds of their followers, and their *exhortations* to *loyalty* and *obedience* have no effect, how strong must necessarily be the animosities subsisting in the minds of the Irish people against the government. The Catholic Religion influences most powerfully the lower orders, and if its theoretical tenets, of perplexing, though harmless dogma, as well as its more offensive creeds of exclusive salvation, are said to make such impression, whence arises the impracticability of preventing the people from engaging in rebellion ? Peace is surely more attractive than war ; and the people of a country, who have always more to lose than to gain in civil dissensions ; on whom one week of idleness may entail certain ruin, are easily persuaded that submission is more profitable than resistance, and that the object so anxiously sought

sought after, may by force and violence never be gained.

The second letter to Lord Fingall contains a passage that I cannot refrain from citing, being most anxious that the argument, such as it is, may appear in the words of the Learned Lord.

Lord Fingall had intimated a wish, "most natural to him who loved his country," that a time might come when all its people should participate in the advantages of the British Constitution. To this the Learned Lord, with some anger, replies, "if your Lordship means they," the Catholics, "are discontented because they are not admitted to be members of parliament, or to hold certain great offices, or because they are *excluded from the throne*, I must confess that I cannot believe that the lower order of the people of Ireland, amongst whom the ferment principally prevails, have any anxiety upon the subject, except it may be raised in their minds by others." He then proceeds to remark upon the Quakers, who are not discontented, and yet who suffer disabilities for conscience sake.

There can be no doubt that the chances are but small, in favour of any particular individual, among the poorer classes of society, being elevated by his talents to the highest offices of the State.

Yet

Yet the experience of our own times shews that, *out of numbers*, many do succeed, by the exertion of industry and genius, to the first situations of the country. A thought may sometimes obtrude itself into the mind of the Catholic peasant, when he hears of the triumphs, and honours, and dignities of men no better born than himself, that it is not just, that his religion should debar him alone from the chances of similar advancement. It would be an hardship unworthy of any laws in Europe, to deprive *one* man of the means of benefiting his country by the exertion of his abilities, and to exclude him, by legislative enactment, from the honours which successful merit has a title to receive. But when that prohibition extends to above three millions of people out of four, one is at a loss to conceive how it can be contemplated without indignation. It is the claim, "and a proud one too," of the English Constitution, that it gives free scope to the genius of the people whom it governs, and that no where is talent excluded, or enterprise checked. In some states of Europe, particular employments have been appropriated to the different classes of society; but this has always been condemned, as tending to deprive the government of the exertions of its subjects. This plan was founded on a notion that every class had that species of ability best suited to the discharge of the employments assigned it.

What-

Whatever appearance of truth these reasonings appear to possess, yet a different mode of thinking has gradually been adopted in Europe; and few states now exclude, by positive laws, any portion of their subjects from the chances of public honours. The pride of high descent, and the influence of hereditary nobility, may tend to continue awhile a prejudice so inimical to national interest; yet no resemblance can be traced between the inhabitants of Austria and those of Ireland.

The case of the people now before us is, indeed, different, three millions of whom are excluded from all share in the lottery of life, and are not permitted to try their chance for prizes, which others, in no respect superior, may gain. Here is no distinction on account of birth or education, but solely in favour of religious differences. There appears to be a natural inclination in mankind to believe in the real superiority of those whom fortune has favoured, and to view the success of the rich and the noble with complacency. Besides, they are few in number, and far removed from the mass of mankind; all of which is the reverse in religious distinctions. Surely the Protestant mode of worshipping God is not, in the minds of those who dissent from that mode, a title to any pre-eminence. Where there is little equality, there will be but little struggle; but among those who

are equal in other respects, a claim to honours and emoluments, such as the triumphs of a sect, must produce disorder and discontent. Independent of the loss to the state, in thus disabling the majority of a people from all chances of obtaining the great prizes of ambition, as these distinctions tend to form public manners, they are of the highest importance. The Catholic peasant is allowed to vote, but his suffrage must be given to one whose influence he considers as too great already. He thus exercises one right to deprive himself and his whole persuasion of another. He votes for a Protestant member of parliament, who is interested to exclude him, and all who are of his way of thinking, from sharing the honours, the confidence, and emoluments of his country. His only share in it is a vote for the men who exclude him*. "The taking away a vote," writes Mr. Burke, "is the taking away the shield which the subject has not only against the oppression of power, but that worst of all oppressions, the persecutions of private society and private manners." This observation was made before the Catholics were permitted to vote at elections; the principle, however, is at all times applicable, as it asserts the necessity of giving influence to the people, as a guard against the power and combination of the

* Vide the Case of Ireland considered.

higher classes of society. In order to tranquillize and conciliate, it is essential to change the manners of the reigning party; and no measure is so likely to conduce to that end, as the removal of any distinctions which laws may have contributed to form. Consequence always follows power. It is an insult to talk to men of the security of civil independence, who have no share of political influence. To make the Catholics respected, it is essential to grant them authority; and until they have that, they will be discontented, because they will remain oppressed. The example cited of the Quakers, is here of little weight; first, because activity in political pursuit is not the character of that sect; and, secondly, because their number in Ireland does not exceed 30,000, while that of the Catholics comprehends above 3,000,000. The principle is equally unjust and hard in either case, though the oppression be clearly of much greater consequence and extent in the latter.

The interest or wishes of the *whole Irish people* have never been sufficiently the object of legislative consideration. The mass of that people could never be trusted, for no reliance could be placed on constrained submission. Who could support what they were excluded from enjoying? or fight the battles of a party, who were partners indeed in the contest, but who alone divided the spoil? Besides, the larger classes of the community, as they are

the sources of national strength, when friendly to the government, so are they, when hostile, its most dangerous enemies; for where can there be more danger than from a quarter of which the force is always consolidated in the heart of a country, and of which the means of attack and defence are always prepared? It has been the long received argument against persecution, that it always contributes to increase the evil it purposes to correct. Men are naturally disposed to affirm what they are called upon to renounce, and there is a fortunate disposition to resist arbitrary commands, even amongst the most enslaved, that opposes a barrier to the progress of usurping power. The persecuted and proscribed form a compact sect, apart from their oppressors, and the union which common misery produces, is firm and lasting. There is also a certain credit which attaches to a party steadily suffering persecution for conscience sake, that allures proselytes, and augments the list of enthusiasts. An active principle of shame, forbids yielding to force that which has not been conceded to argument, and resists the temptation of profit, where entreaties and menaces have failed. It is in all times the constant incitement to persevere in the pursuit of that which, though it entail danger, secures honour. As long as the world exists, sufferings will excite pity, and the step is easy between pitying a cause and espousing it.

The

The appointment of Lord Redesdale to Ireland was most popular, because all men remembered the liberal policy which he once recommended in England to the legislature: it did indeed excite some faint hopes among the Catholics of Ireland, that the system was about to be changed; but these hopes are most lamentably disappointed. The publication of the Letters may possibly be regretted; but being before the public, they are subject to its criticism. They mark pretty clearly the intentions of the late government towards Ireland; intentions which call for the animadversion of all friends to peace and union. It only remains now to hope that the government will endeavour, by all means in their power, to calm the disturbances of the country; and, amidst all the projects of conciliation and concession, they will not forget that, than which none will be more agreeable to the wishes of the whole people, the recall of the Author of the Correspondence.

Such is the result of all the arguments advanced by the advocates for the continuance of restraints and disabilities. Some indignation may well be felt on being obliged to contend for those principles of government and policy, which have been so long recognized by the enlightened part of mankind.

The framers of the Irish Religious Code of
Penal

Penal Statutes had evidently three great objects in view:—1st, The diminution of Catholic power. 2d, To lessen the number of the Catholics. 3d, The security of the state. The success with which the first has been accompanied, has certainly neither contributed to the peace nor to the prosperity of the empire. With respect to the second, the Catholic population is said to have increased in a proportion far exceeding that of the Protestants*. There is no occasion to remark upon the security of Ireland: it is an invidious topic; and the government and people are well aware of the state of the country in this latter respect.

There appears then to be no doubt that the Protestant Ascendancy has not been beneficial to Ireland: it neither has diminished the number of the Catholics, nor added to the wealth, nor increased the security of the kingdom. On the contrary, by forming two parties in the state, it generated a factious spirit, which has broken out in numerous rebellions, and which still shews itself in the general discontent of the larger proportion of the people. It is not asserted, that it has been the sole cause of such disturbances, for the political grievances of the other sects are not now examined; but religious distinctions in a state will produce disorders, and all restraint and disabilities, discon-

* Vide Appendix, No. II.

tents. It is not easy to reason those who suffer disabilities, into the belief that they merit them.

The feelings of mankind are always on the side of that party which suffers in the defence of its principles; and that cause is always popular, the supporters of which renounce the rights belonging to the society in which they live, for the love of what they seek to inculcate.

Where the government presses equally upon all, what is universally the lot may be borne with patience: power may be exercised with moderation, and submission may be cheerful. But the insolence of a slave-merchant and a slave-master is proverbial, and from this extreme of human degradation, to the last shade of difference between the powers and privileges of men, exclusive enjoyment will be accompanied, as long as the world exists, with intolerant presumption. The principles of liberty are more strong in those provinces of America that carry on the slave trade, than in those which have desisted from that inhuman traffic. Freedom in Virginia is worth twice the value of the same blessing in Pennsylvania. The moral character of the two states is *indeed different*; and a parallel might be easily found on this side of the Atlantic.

It is of no importance to the argument, to examine

mine at present, whether the establishment in Ireland be more or less intolerant, or the Catholics be more or less submissive than they were a few years past ; it is sufficient to remark, that the existence of any distinction, proceeding from any cause, inevitably leads to a party feeling, always hostile to the interests of the country : the former party may not govern with insolence, the latter may patiently submit ; but the division of its people into two classes should not be the aim of a legitimate government, the duty of which consists in the promotion of union, and which finds its reward in the affection of its subjects. Were there even equality of numbers in that division, any difference pre-supposes pre-eminence on the one side, and degradation on the other : the first will entail bigoted faction ; the second may produce rebellion.

Whether the state then be Protestant or Catholic, it is its duty, as well as its truest policy, to encourage, by all the means in its power, an union of the whole people. The league between the injured, to resist the encroachments of power, ought to be prevented. The existence of such league is a proof of some defect on the part of government, which it is bound to correct. Instead of enforcing the pains and penalties that caused that combination, all the principles of public and private interest call upon it to dissolve such

such union, in the only manner in which such dissolution can in safety be effected, by the removal of all the causes that contributed to its formation. Independent of the state of insecurity and alarm in which a government must always remain, when its existence is owing to the weakness or forbearance of the people whom it oppresses, that state of things is hostile to the narrow interests which it attempts to support. As natural objects of hatred and envy, the poor and the miserable are armed against their rulers. A general suspicion of each other pervades every part of the empire; and the government, tottering under the weight which it had accumulated on itself, exists in hourly expectation of general revolt, and is compelled to support a precarious being at the expence of the lives and liberties of its subjects. If, on the contrary, the wealth of the community be an important consideration to the state, there appears to be no means so secure for the tranquil possession of it, as well as for its rapid increase, as an encouragement held out to the collective industry and ambition of all its inhabitants: that industry is best excited and stimulated by the hope of improving their condition—an expectation that sets in motion all the activity both of body and mind, of all the nations of the world. In proportion as this object, so important to be attained, is increased or diminished, in the same ratio does the industry of a people increase or decline. This

proposition is universally true, and nations who follow the contrary system, pay the penalty they have levied upon themselves. As they lessen the value of their people, they weaken the force and diminish the wealth of their country. Persecution drove the arts of commercial opulence from France and Spain, to England and to Holland. Persecution has checked in Ireland the rapid advances which free and happy states have made during the last century, from poverty to wealth, and from national weakness to national strength. Her riches as well as her power have been augmented, as the restraints upon her people have been removed; and all the benefits which Ireland has gained, may be traced to the repeal of her religious and political code. Yet, where manners, supported and framed by laws, operate against any body of men, it is fallacious to say they are satisfied, because they do not rebel: nor is it true, that the Catholics have always continued quiet and contented. From the year 1760 to the present hour, the southern and central provinces of Ireland have been infested by a numerous banditti, who, under different names, but upon the same principles, connected by the same views, have been induced, from the pressure of real misery, to risk the penalties of the law. The Irish Statute Book, and the penal enactments, and the White Boy Acts, mark the temper of the people. Without examining the origin of the last rebellion, it may be asserted, that

that the wretchedness of a large proportion of the people, formed no small part in the causes that produced it. The Catholics were not its authors; but the quarters where the insurrection happened to break out being in provinces where Catholics constituted the majority of the people, they were most likely to be found in the largest number. In Wexford, Wicklow, and Kildare, the rebellion raged in its greatest fury. The Catholics of those counties were no more, at first, engaged in it from motives belonging to their religion, than the Protestants of the North.

Kerry and Galway, the counties chiefly inhabited by Catholics, were perfectly quiet. It is not, therefore, just, to consider the rebellion as begun upon religious principles, as the government of Ireland *know, and have reason to rejoice,* at the fortunate occurrence that prevented the Protestants in the North from rising in a general mass. The Presbyterian and Protestant Minister would indignantly repel the charge of propagating doctrines of revolt, or that they belong to their creeds: the Catholics claim the same privilege, and appear to have the same right to it.

Here, then, we have at last ascertained the grievances of the Irish people, and the value of the objections raised to the remedy proposed. If ever there were a time in which it became the in-

terest, as it always is the duty, of governments, to watch over the welfare of their subjects, it is surely that in which we live. A disposition to criticise and canvass the actions and motives of all those in power, is the peculiar character of the age. In every measure, therefore, of the state, whether of innovation or reform, or resistance to both, it is essential that the government should be on good terms with the nation it rules. These are the common interests of ordinary times; but in a war, which the antagonist of the country carries on upon principles of division, who speculates as much upon internal discontent as upon the force of his own arms, there can be no safety where there is disunion. As long as the country to be defended is as a fortified camp in the territories of an enemy, it is not Ireland or England that is to be maintained, but a foreign possession, as it were, held in defiance of its ancient possessors. Instead of the zeal which springs from an attachment to our own country and home, and to the government which protects both, there arises in its place the sullen obedience of smothered discontent; and a numerous population is estimated as a source of alarm, not as an instrument of power. What I should, therefore, advise is, that government should, without delay, remove all the remaining disqualifications and restraints on account of religious opinions; should substitute a political instead of a religious test, and endeavour to make the people forget that

that a contrary one had ever been imposed. There should be no distinctions retained, and it is the interest of the state to promote the most entire oblivion of those which formerly existed. The effects of these measures will be, to give consequence and consideration, where there is already property and character. It will be a cheap purchase, for the government will buy the support of a numerous party of the rich and respectable, at the expence of what it has no claim now to retain. It will be selling what is of no utility, for what is above all price. The Catholic landholder, merchant, and peasant will derive an additional motive to maintain, at the hazard of their existence, the security of a government, the latest actions of which entitle it to their gratitude and love. "These," says Mr. Burke, "are chains that, though light as air, are strong as links of iron." This repeal, while it joins the two persuasions in power, will unite them in affection. All the talent (and in what country is there so much?) will then be employed on the side of the state, at a period when all that can be brought forward ought to be called into action.

The next consideration will be, to provide for the support of that religion which it is thus proposed to admit into our establishment; and in so doing, the object should be, that the burden imposed upon the people for the purpose of obtaining

ing the necessary funds, should be no more than just sufficient to enable every man, with decency and comfort, to live by his ministry. The Irish government allows, at present, salaries to the ministers of the Presbyterian worship. There seems to be no reason why the same indulgence should not be granted to the Catholics. Policy, as well as justice, demand it. A small, but independent hierarchy, ought to be established. Supposing the parishes to amount to 1200, allowing a salary of 100l. per annum to each resident priest, and 400l. to each bishop, the amount of the whole establishment would be less than 160,000l. per annum: an ecclesiastical establishment not of a very splendid nature, but perhaps sufficient for the moderate wants of the Catholics, and conformable to the principles, not of encouragement but of toleration, on which it is proposed to acquiesce in their demands*. This establishment, when compared to the Protestant, which exceeds half a million, furnishes a proof, at how cheap a rate an institution of so much importance can be purchased. The Catholic religion

* I have selected this sum in preference to a larger, because in the reformation of English curacies, laudably commenced by the English bishops, 100l. per annum was esteemed a competent provision for an English clergyman. The Scottish ministers are supposed to enjoy, upon an average, nearly the same sum, independent however of a house and glebe of ten acres.

now existing in Ireland, under all the disadvantages of penury and contempt, is still equal to the maintenance of public morals, and to the support of Christianity. The numbers too of the two sects, are of some consequence. The Protestants of the regular church do not exceed 600,000 souls, and their establishment costs the *whole* nation half a million. The Catholics amount to three millions of people, and they would be amply contented with the payment of 160,000*l.*

But the great subject which should occupy the attention of those who wish practically and permanently to forward the interests of the two countries, is the subject of tithes.

It surely cannot be just to call upon the larger proportion of the community to support the religious establishment of the smaller, from whose mode of worship they dissent. Every argument for an established church has always presumed that the national faith was that which was to be established. The private interests of the few were forgotten, when those of the larger division of the people were consulted; but it never has been contended that numbers are of no importance, and that the policy or caprice of the legislator or conqueror left him at liberty to make the property of the mass of the people, dissenters from the

the religion, pay a tax for its maintenance. It appears to be the unanimous opinion of those most conversant with the subject, that there is no species of public imposition so burthensome as tithes. Operating as a direct tax upon labour, they are fitted only to diminish the industry, and consequently the wealth of the country. The tithe is a tax upon all the possible labour and capital that can be expended. Where so many contingencies may affect the produce upon which this tax is levied, to assign any fixed proportion unaffected by those accidents, is an injustice too manifest to require argument. Even in this country, therefore, where there are not the same circumstances to aggravate the odious light in which this tax must always be received, it is attended with the worst of consequences*: the clergyman is considered as an extor-

* It is not easy to discover the amount of tithes which the clergy receive in England. No fixed proportion has as yet been given, as it varies according to circumstances, being affected by the nature of the soil, system of cultivation, mode of collecting, &c. The value of tithes has, however, generally been estimated at one-seventh of the crop, and in arable districts it amounts to about one-fifth. As a proof of this statement, it may be remarked, that upon the inclosure of common-field lands, in the midland counties, where the impropiator of tithes agreed to take lands, to exonerate the remainder from the payment of tithes, the proportion was calculated

extortioner, whose interests are always opposed to those of his flock. If these sentiments be common amongst men of the same religious belief, what must be the opinions of those who are called upon to support what they dissent from, and to countenance what they oppose? The Irish Catholic is placed in the extraordinary situation of being obliged to pay for an establishment, the existence of which he deems a national evil, the faith of which he is not only compelled to support at the expence of his political rights,

calculated at one-seventh of the value. But when matters were more investigated, and better understood, it got to one-fifth of the whole value. This supposes the soil to be good, but in bad lands, where corn is cultivated, the tithes amount to a greater proportion of the value of the land. In many cases they are equal to the rent, furnishing the greatest obstacles to the improvement of indifferent ground.

The cultivator thus expends and risks his capital for an *uncertain profit* to himself, *but a certain gain* to the tithe holder. The whole average tithe of England, has been stated to amount to one-seventh of the value of the land, and labour employed in agriculture.—That this tax is injurious in this country, is now no longer a matter of dispute. But if wealth and industry suffer from its operation, what must be its effect on poverty and indolence? Mr. Pitt considered this tax as a *practical grievance*, and insinuated that its repeal would be a consequence of the Union. Notwithstanding that opinion, Mr. Pitt has never projected a remedy; *having carried the question of Union*, he remains perfectly indifferent to the nature of a species of grievance stated by himself to be burthensome and oppressive.

but of his individual comforts. The same man is still to give, from the sweat of his brow, from the savings of laborious penury, a scanty subsistence to the priest of his own faith; to his friend and comforter, to one who doubles his pleasures, and divides his sorrows. He thus pays a pittance to the support of his own religion, but lends his assistance to provide a splendid income for the minister of a faith whom he knows not but by his tithe proctor, whose charity has not relieved his poverty, and who has furnished neither instruction nor example. To say the truth, however, if the labours of the church of Ireland be examined, they will not be found to be of very material value. Never did opulence and knowledge make so few friends, or do so little good. The mass of the people pay the tax for their support, and the fund for the maintenance of the ministry is taken principally from a description of persons, who derive little or nothing from their offices. Public payment generally pre-supposes the employment of the sum collected to the public advantage, but it would be difficult to state the national benefits gained by the mass of the people from the Irish ecclesiastical establishment*.

There

* Potatoes, in the province of Munster, pay more than one half tithe; whence arises the salaries of the Protestant clergy. It is to be remarked, that this article forms the whole

There is, besides, a circumstance that is of material importance to the Irish peasant, and makes his situation more grievous than in any other country where tithes are demanded. In the southern part of Ireland, wages are remarkably low: instead of advancing them, it is usual to lease out to the tenant a small portion of land, though at a high rent, which he cultivates as a potatoe garden. In 1735, the House of Commons passed a vote, that the demand for tithe, or agistment of cattle, was burthensome, and a grievance, and that all legal ways should be taken to prevent such tax being levied.

The effect of this law of agistment is, to whole sustenance of at least two millions of people. In the poor dioceses of Cloyne and Cork, the potatoe tithes amount to 10 shillings per acre; in some parts they have even risen to 27 shillings: the average may be taken at 12 or 13 shillings. They are tithed principally in the south: very few instances occur in the north. The south is also more generally tithed than the north, and the peasantry are, almost to a man, Catholics. The *practical grievance* of tithes is indeed dreadful: in some parts of Ireland every thing is taxed—wheat, barley, rye, potatoes, bere, flax, hemp, sheep, lambs, milch cows, turf, pigs, apples, bees, cabbage, oziers—besides Easter offerings, oblations, and burying money. Vide GRATTAN'S speeches on tithes, 1789. *The system has not been changed.*

throw the principal burthen of the tithes upon the poorer classes of the community. It enables the rich man to compromise with the clergyman, who, if he refuse a modus, is threatened with having all the land laid down in pasture, cattle paying no tithe. On the contrary, the poor man, who is compelled to cultivate his pasture-garden for his subsistence, and to pay the rent, often 5*l.*, sometimes 7*l.* an acre, pays this tax in addition. To explain this more clearly, a small farm of ten acres is lett for 50*l.* per annum, and the whole tithe amounts but to seven shillings: the proprietor is rich, and compounds with the tithe proctor; whereas, if this same portion of land was divided into ten small cottages, with one acre each, the rent would remain the same, but the tithe might alone amount to 100 shillings, as in many parts of Ireland potatoes pay from ten to thirteen shillings tithe per acre. In this manner the peasant is oppressed by the operation of this exception in favour of pasture land. Upon the whole, there seems little reason for continuing this worst method of providing for the clergy; at the same time it is not here intended to discuss the merits of the different plans which have been suggested in its room; but the national church, as it subsists at present, is a direct violation of the principles upon which a national establishment has hither-

to been defended: it is inimical to the cause of religion, which it affects to support; and not less detrimental to the national morality, which it is instituted to protect; nor will it be contended, that Protestant property is unable to support the establishment of the church of Ireland, when it is remembered that *the Catholics contribute not only to their own, but even to that of their-opponents, from funds at least in the proportion of one to fifteen.* A few other reliefs, such as the repeal of the act authorizing the taxation of Catholics for the buildings, or repairing Protestant churches, should be granted. It is essential for the legislature to repeal these laws, which tend to keep alive religious hate; and as the Protestant churches are not generally in the best repair, the tax fails in the object attempted to be attained.

On the whole, then, it appears that the ancient system under which Ireland has been governed, is not of a nature to increase the loyalty, to preserve the affections, or to augment the prosperity of its inhabitants. It has, on the contrary, by dividing the people into two classes, weakened the force of the nation, and diminished the security of the state. A spirit of discontent has been nourished, and animosities and distrusts encouraged. The government has even pretended to derive some portion of its strength from this disunion of its subjects; and, as it never pretended

tended to legislate for all its people, it has, in consequence, received only the cordial support of a part. As long as the causes which produced this separation of interests continue, the natural consequences of disaffection and disloyalty will follow from their operation. That in Ireland there is much evil and great misery, is obvious to the most unattentive observer. It is for the legislator and statesman to proportion the means to the end; and as the value of national unanimity cannot be disputed, they are to calculate, what it is worth while to concede for that which it must be their object to attain.

The principal causes, from the extensive influence of which the present lamentable state of Ireland has been produced, have been already enumerated. The formation of her national character has been explained.

We have traced the miseries of Ireland to the laws by which she has been governed, and have shewn that her private happiness, as well as her public power, has increased as they have been repealed. The deplorable consequences of disunion and division, have been detailed, and we have endeavoured to mark the links in that terrible chain of public calamities, which begins with oppression and ends with rebellion.

The

The bad system of morals and manners so universal in that country, might probably be shewn to proceed from the want of a *public opinion*, which can only be found in that state of society, where perfect equality of rights, and a community of interest extend without interruption, from the highest to the lowest order of the people—where there is neither oppression on the one hand, nor abject submission on the other.

Indignant patriotism has complained of the difference between the Irish and English peasant; and the reasons of that dissimilarity have been shewn to originate from the importance set on the one, and from the contempt and degradation into which the other has fallen. It may be remarked, that a people who are now discontented, turbulent, and ferocious, might, under a better order of things, have been loyal, peaceable, and industrious. The real genius, and natural vigor, which belongs to the Irish character, fostered by the hand of a mild, parental government, might have shared with Great Britain other honours, more useful to society, than the triumphs of war or the palm of victory. Had the government of Ireland consulted the prosperity of all its people, they might have not only increased in a greater degree the opulence of their country, but by augmenting the
 knowledge

knowledge of the world, have extended the dominion of reason, and aided the civilization of mankind.

To give, then, the due weight to the energies of that country, would be the greatest glory which the United Parliament could attain. From a review of what Ireland is, and what she might have been, some conclusions might be drawn, most mortifying and disgraceful to ourselves. Yet it is not now too late. The Irish people must be convinced, by *facts*, of the value that is set upon their affections. These appeals to the sense and feelings of a whole nation, are never made in vain.

There is no nation in the world whose affection is so easily won, or from whom greater exertions can be expected, than from the Irish people. With real peace and real union, we may stand the shock of the world in arms. Let us hope, then, that the good sense of the two nations will no longer tolerate the prosecution of a system, the justice of which is so very doubtful, and which has so completely failed of success; the fruit of which is midnight assassination and lurking rebellion, that has made a manly, generous, and warm-hearted people, cowardly, treacherous, and cruel: that has turned
the

the servant against the master; that has extinguished gratitude, and dissolved all ties; that has armed the poor against the rich, associated numbers against property, and presents the dreadful picture of barbarism without independence, and civilization without order or enjoyment.

I want to see the world, that has
 been made, and dissolved all this, that
 has seen the poor against the rich, associated
 against property, and presents the dead-
 end picture of barbarism without independence,
 and civilization without order of enjoyment.

Houses of the Oireachtas

A P P E N D I X.



No. I.

THE English Catholics, in the year 1788-9, previous to their petition to parliament for a further relief than had been granted to them in 1778, thought it necessary, in consequence of the existing prejudices in the minds of a large proportion of the Protestants, that some formal disavowal of the principles imputed to them should be made; accordingly, prior to the passing of the act, brought in by Mr. Mitford, now Lord Redesdale, the following protestation was drawn up by a committee, chosen by the Catholic body, which consisted of clergy as well as of laity.

The committee affirm, in a letter addressed to the Right Hon. John, Bishop of Centuria, vicar apostolic of the southern district of England, dated Feb. 2, 1791, that the protestation was signed by six bishops, by more than 200 of the clergy of the four districts, and by almost every name respectable among the Catholics of England; it was signed by the vicars apostolic of the London, middle, and western districts: the late vicar of the northern district authorized, after some delay, the late vicar apostolic of the London district, if necessary to sign it for him.

The committee declare that so full, explicit, and unequivocal a declaration, from the whole body of the Catholics,

tholics, of the integrity of their civil and political principles, had not appeared since the revolution.

The Declaration and Protestation signed by the English Catholic Dissenters.

We whose names are hereunto subscribed, Catholics of England, do freely, voluntarily, and of our own accord, make the following solemn declaration and protestation.

Whereas sentiments unfavourable to us, as citizens, and subjects, have been entertained by the English Protestants, on account of principles which are maintained to be asserted by us, and other Catholics, and which principles are dangerous to society, and totally repugnant to political and civil liberty; it is a duty that we, the English Catholics, owe to our country as well as to ourselves, to protest in a formal and solemn manner against doctrines that we condemn, and that constitute no part of our *principles, religion, or belief*. We are the more anxious to free ourselves from such imputations, because divers Protestants, who profess themselves to be real friends to liberty of conscience, have, nevertheless, avowed themselves hostile to us, on account of certain opinions which we are supposed to hold; and we do not blame these Protestants for their hostility, if it proceeds, as we hope it does, not from an intolerate spirit in matters of religion, but from their being misinformed as to matters of fact.

If it were true that we, the English Catholics, had adopted the maxims that are erroneously imputed to us, we acknowledge that we should merit the reproach of being dangerous enemies to the state, but we detest those
 unchris-

unchristian, vile, and execrable maxims, and we severally claim, in common with men of all other religions, as a matter of natural justice, that *we*, the English Catholics, ought not to suffer for or on account of any wicked or erroneous doctrines we publicly disclaim, any more than British Protestants ought to be rendered responsible for any dangerous doctrines that may be held by any other Protestants, which doctrines they, the British Protestants disavow.

1st, We have been accused as holding as a principle of our religion, that Princes excommunicated by the Pope or council, or by the authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or by other persons.

But so far is the above-mentioned unchristian, vile, and abominable position from being a principle which we hold, that we *reject, abhor, and detest* it, and every part thereof, as *execrable and impious*, and we do solemnly declare, that neither the Pope, either with or without a general council, nor any prelate, nor any priest, nor any assembly of prelates or priests, nor any ecclesiastical power whatever, can absolve the subjects of this realm, or any of them, from their allegiance to his Majesty King George the Third, who is by authority of parliament the lawful King of this realm, and of all the dominions thereunto belonging.

2d, We have also been accused of holding as a principle of our religion, that implicit obedience is due from us to the orders and decrees of Popes and general councils, and therefore if the Pope or any general council, should,
for

for the good of the church, command us to take up arms against the government, or by any means to subvert the laws and liberties of this country, or to exterminate persons of a different persuasion from us: we, it is asserted by our accusers, hold ourselves bound to obey such orders, or decrees, on pain of eternal fire.

Whereas we positively deny that we owe any such obedience to the Pope or general council, or to either of them, and we believe that *no act which is in itself immoral or dishonest*, can ever be justified by or under colour, that it is done either for the good of the church, or in obedience to any ecclesiastical power whatever.

We acknowledge no infallibility in the Pope, and we neither apprehend nor believe, that our disobedience to any such orders or decrees, should any such be given or made, could subject us to any punishment whatever; and we hold and insist, that the Catholic church has no power that can directly or indirectly prejudice the rights of Protestants, inasmuch as it is strictly confined to refusing to them a participation in her sacraments, and other religious privileges of her communion, which no church, as we conceive, can be expected to give to those out of her pale, and which no person out of her pale, will, we suppose, ever require. And we do solemnly declare, that no church, nor any prelate, nor any priest, nor any assembly of prelates or priests, or any ecclesiastical power whatever, hath, have, or ought to have, any jurisdiction or authority whatsoever, within this realm, that can directly or indirectly affect, or interfere with, the independence, sovereignty, laws, constitution, or government thereof; or the rights, liberties, persons, or properties of the people of the said realm, or of any of them; save only, and except by the
authority

authority of parliament; and that any *such assumption of power* would be an usurpation.

3d, We have likewise been accused of holding as a principle of our religion, that the Pope, by virtue of his spiritual power, can dispense with the obligations of any compact or oath taken or entered into by a Catholic; that, therefore, no oath of allegiance or other oath can bind us, and consequently that we can give no security for our allegiance to any government.

There can be no doubt that this conclusion would be just, if the original proposition upon which it is founded were true; but we positively deny that we do hold any such principle, and we do solemnly declare, that neither the Pope, nor any prelate, nor any priests, nor any assembly of prelates or priests, nor any ecclesiastical power whatever can absolve us, or any of us, from, or dispense with the obligations of any compact or oath whatsoever.

4th, We have been accused of holding as the principle of our religion, that, not only the Pope, but even a Catholic priest has power to pardon the sins of Catholics, at his will and pleasure, and therefore, that no Catholic can possibly give any security for his allegiance, to any government, inasmuch as the Pope or a priest can pardon perjury, rebellion, and murder.

We acknowledge the justness of this conclusion, if the proposition upon which it is founded was not totally false, *but we do solemnly declare, that no sin whatever can be forgiven at the will of any pope, or of any priest, or of any person whomsoever*, but that a sincere sorrow for past sin, a firm resolution to avoid future guilt, and every possible atonement to God, and to the injured neighbour, are the pre-
vious

vicious and indispensable requisites to establish a well founded expectation of forgiveness.

5th, And we have also been accused of holding as a principle of our religion, "that no faith is to be kept with heretics, so that no government, which is not Catholic, can have any security from us, for our allegiance and peaceable behaviour.

This doctrine, "that faith is not to be kept with heretics," we *reject*, *reprobate*, and *abhor*, as being contrary to *religion*, *morality*, and *common honesty*. And we do hold and solemnly declare, that no breach of faith with any person whomsoever can be justified, by reason of, or under pretence that such person is an *heretic* and an *infidel*.

And we further solemnly declare, that we make this declaration and protestation, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words of the same, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever.

And we appeal to the justice and candour of our fellow citizens, whether we, the English Catholics, who thus solemnly *disclaim*, and from our hearts *abhor*, the above-mentioned abominable and unchristianlike principles, ought to be put upon a level with any other men, who may hold or profess those principles.

Signed by the Committee,

STOURTON,
 PETRE,
 HENRY CHARLES ENGLEFIELD,
 JOHN THROCKMORTON,
 JOHN TOWNLY,
 THOMAS HORNYOLD,
 CHARLES BERRINGTON,
 JOSEPH WILKS.

In

In order to prove that the sentiments entertained in the above paper, are generally revered by the Catholic church, I shall cite the 1st and 4th article, of the declaration of the clergy of France, in 1682 : it was drawn up by Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux. This excellent bishop does not defend the declaration *as the privileges of a particular church, but as those of the whole Catholic body in the world, and containing a doctrine universal.* This declaration was signed by the archbishops, bishops, and clergy of France.

Que Saint Pierre, et ses successeurs, vicaires de Jesus Christ, et que toute l'eglise même n'ont reçu de puissance de Dieu, que sur les *choses spirituelles*, et qui concernent le *salut*, et non point, sur les *choses temporelles et civiles* : Jesus Christ nous apprenant lui-même que son royaume n'est point de ce monde, et en autre endroit, qu'il faut rendre a Cesar ce qui est à Cesar, et a Dieu ce qui est à Dieu, et qu'ainsi ce précepte de l'apôtre St. Paul ne peut être alteré ni ebranlé, que toute personne soit soumise aux puissances supérieures, car il n'y a point de puissance qui ne vienne de Dieu; et c'est lui qui ordonne celles qui sont sur la terre, celui donc qui s'oppose aux puissances, résiste à l'ordre de Dieu. Nous déclarons en consequence que les rois et les souverains, ne sont soumis à aucune puissance ecclésiastique par l'ordre de Dieu, dans les *choses temporelles*, qu'ils ne peuvent être déposés directement ni indirectement par l'autorité des chefs d'eglise ; que leurs sujets ne peuvent être dispensés de la soumission et de l'obeissance qu'ils leur doivent ou absous de serment de fidélité et que cette doctrine, nécessaire pour la tranquillité publique, et non moins avantageuse à l'eglise qu'à l'etat, doit être inviolablement suivie comme conforme à la parole de Dieu, à la tradition des saints peres, et aux exemples des saints.

4th, Que quoique le Pape ait la principale part dans les questions de foi, et que ses décrets regardent toutes les eglises et chaque eglise en particuliere, *son jugement n'est pourtant pas irréformable*, à moins que le consentement de l'eglise n'intervienne.

Nous avons arrêté d'envoyer à toutes les eglises de France, et aux Eveques qui y président par l'autorité du Saint Esprit ces maximes que nous avons reçues de nos peres, afin que nous disions tous la même chose, que nous soyons tous dans les mêmes sentimens, et que nous suivions tous la même doctrine.

No. II.

Since the foregoing sheets were sent to the press, I have read an ingenious work, upon the population of Ireland: Mr. Newnham, the author of the treatise on that subject, has laid before the public a variety of curious facts, upon the state of the Catholics, in point of numbers, when compared to that of the Protestants, at the Revolution.

I have therefore to retract what I advanced upon the extent of the Catholic population at that period. Several writers have contributed to mislead me, and the testimony of the Primate Boulter, forty years afterwards, was, I considered, too important to be wholly disregarded.

The Lord Justice writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1727, says, "We have five Papists to one Protestant." Yet, four years after, a return made to the House of Lords, states the numbers to be as eight to three. This calculation was made, including all the towns where the Protestants chiefly inhabited, the Catholics being in the country as *twenty to one*. In the return, however, made to the Lords, in 1731, it appears that the Catholics numbered 1,309,768 persons, and the Protestants 700,453.

Mr. Newnham affirms the whole population of Ireland to consist of 5,395,436 persons, out of which number 1,08000 are Protestants, making the Catholics little more than five to one. The detail of this calculation is too long to insert, it however well merits attention—he also maintains, that in the provinces of Leinster, Connaught, and

Munster, there is an excess of Catholic population of nine to one ; even the Protestant town of Bandon, over the gate of which was written, "*Turk, Jew, or Atheist may enter here, but not a Papist,*" contains at present more Catholics than Protestants. In the province of Ulster, the Protestants are numerous, but whether the proportion between the two sects remains unchanged, is a matter of doubt.

The result of this inquiry seems to prove, that the Catholic population has nearly exceeded by two-fold that of the Protestants in seventy years. Notwithstanding the penal statutes, it still gains ground. Persecution has here again failed : we have tried force—why not try toleration ? Is the system never to be changed, and are we to grow no wiser by experience ?

THE END.

ERRATA.

- Page 10, line 4, for *no*, read *new*.
— 15, — 14, for *the*, read *their*.
— 32, — 24, dele *bad*.
— 42, — 19, for *in*, read *with*.
— — — 20, for *produced*, read *adduced*.
— 45, — 13, dele *salvation*.
— 46, — 27, for *free*, read *freer*.
— 85, — 17, for *latest*, read *last*.

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