

A LETTER
 TO
 LORD VISCOUNT SOUTHWELL;
 CONTAINING
 REMARKS
 ON
 VESTING IN HIS MAJESTY
 THE
 NOMINATION OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS.

BY J. B. TROTTER, ESQ.

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“ Frequentia vestrum incredibilis, Quirites, concioque tanta, quantam meminisse non videor, et alacritatem mihi summam defendendæ reipublicæ affert, et spem recuperandæ; quanquam animus quidem mihi nunquam defuit, tempora defuerunt.”—*M. T. Cicero, in Marcum Antonium, Philippica IV.*

“ In truth the independence of the Catholic Church is a remnant which Ireland holds, as the last stripe of the banner of national honour; and, in offering to yield it, to be hung as a trophy in Westminster, there would be a completion of suicide.”—*Political Retrospect, Belfast Magazine for October 1808.*



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A LETTER,

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MY LORD,

A LETTER, signed by you and Sir Edward Bellew, and addressed Doctor O'Reilly, having appeared recently in the public papers, I feel myself forcibly impelled to submit to your Lordship and the public my sentiments on the occasion. Your Lordship's letter, in adverting to the negative, proposed to be vested in his Majesty, says :

“ We, my Lord, in common with the gentlemen at whose
“ request we write this letter, consider the proposed negative
“ as merely purporting to give the Crown an additional secu-
“ rity, that persons to whom, for want of loyalty, a well
“ founded objection lies, shall not possess the influence which
“ attaches to the episcopal characters in our persuasion. This
“ security we conceive our religion by no means precludes us
“ from giving to a Protestant Government; and we, there-
“ fore, feel a conviction in our minds, that there exists no-
“ thing in the principles of our faith, or in the discipline of
“ our church, which interposes a bar to the concession of the
“ negative in question, should it be sought for under circum-
“ stances otherwise eligible and expedient, &c.”

From a solemn conviction that this view of the point is an erroneous one, and from

an ardent desire to conduce, as far as may be practicable, to the good of Ireland, I venture to differ thus publicly from your Lordship, and the highly respectable names which have sanctioned your Lordship's letter.

The question was proposed last session of the English Parliament, and then appeared a matter nearly settled. It was put forward by high parliamentary characters, by Messrs. Grattan and George Ponsonby, as a point which would do away all obstacle to Catholic Emancipation, if yielded; and also it was nearly asserted by them, that that concession would be made by Ireland. I, for one, read the statement with infinite surprise, for it seemed to me that the sense of the country had been by no means ascertained, and that if it had, the conclusion would have been diametrically opposite to that, which those distinguished characters were induced to think had been arrived at.

I could not conceive that the Roman Catholics of Ireland, after repeated rejection of their claims to equal political rights by the English Parliament; after
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experiencing that one Ministry had not brought forward those claims, though avowedly friendly to them, and had eventually reduced them to shreds and patches; and that another Ministry, openly hostile to them, had even derived popularity in England from their declarations against them; and had prided themselves on putting an end to all hope on the part of the Catholics; I could not, I say, conceive why the Catholics should be induced to prepare a new and unnecessary concession, to be proffered to England. With the existing Ministry all such attempts to conciliate must be unavailing. The Ex-Ministers were pledged to support Catholic Emancipation, without any such condition. My respect for the gentlemen, and particularly the former, who thus seemed to me incautiously answering for Ireland, without knowing the opinions of all the Roman Catholic prelates, and of the Catholics at large, was very great; but the bar struck me as so insuperable, that I was compelled to decide that those gentlemen acted lightly and erroneously, rather than admit that my country was

so mean, as to offer this consummation of degradation, as a *bonus*, to induce the English Ministry to comply with just demands. My ideas have been verified by facts: the Roman Catholic prelates having unanimously decided, on the inexpediency of a change. The decision has been approved of by the Catholic clergy and laity at large. I contend, that the decision ought to be approved by all the Catholic nobility and gentry; in a word, by Ireland herself. I contend that the decision is conformable to the interest, the honour, and happiness of the country.

The total extinction of public spirit draws after it every thing injurious to society. It is by venerable forms, which time has consecrated, and usage confirmed, that nations are enabled to preserve it.

Parliaments, or spiritual synods, deriving from the people, and exempt from controul of the Crown, have owed their independence to those forms; every thing connected with them, therefore, has wisely been held sacred, as tending to support those bodies, by which any portion of
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public spirit has been saved from extinction. In England, when tyrants dispensed with, or trampled on Parliament, the clergy often restrained them. The exorbitance of their pretensions, or greatness of their pride may have been very reprehensible ; yet, as a barrier between Crown and people, their interposition was often useful, and their defects pardonable. When Henry found the opposition of Becket disagreeable, and instigated his death, there is little doubt but that it was the deed of a tyrant, overwhelming the intrepid though haughty defender of the people. Henry VIII. cast off papal authority from caprice and passion : Elizabeth from policy pursued his steps.

The reformed established Church became dependent on the Crown : at this period the despotism of Elizabeth was complete : the bishops were nominated by her ; the Parliament was kept in strict subjection ; and we must admire her more for her wisdom and vigour, as an arbitrary and absolute Prince, than for regard to the liberties of the subject. The crimes of the succeeding Stuarts caused a better order of things : Parliaments

Parliaments received additional lustre; the established clergy obtained reasonable weight; and the people grew contented, rich and powerful. Very different is the story of Ireland. She embraced the Roman Catholic religion above six centuries before the coming of the English, and acknowledged the Pope as head of the Church above a thousand years before the complete subjection of the country under James I.

Could I, my Lord, lead you to the mouldering towers, and melancholy yet venerable ruins, where the creeping ivy possesses what once resounded to the harp, and echoed the praises of the Deity; could I, then, say to you, my Lord, was there not something august in your countrymen adhering, through the long lapse of time, to what they deemed the earliest and first doctrines of christianity? The storm blows now unheeded past these walls; the revelry, the minstrelsy, and the sounding anthem, are gone; but the stamp of antiquity remains, and a vestige, which the changes and innovations of years have not swept away, is yet within your grasp: will you drop it without

out veneration for its ancient appearance, or examination of its value? The memory of the early days of Ireland must produce some consideration of this sort; but I do not rest the case on an appeal to the feelings, however in consonance with reason, on this point.

Ireland, having been converted to christianity in these distant times, has never ceased to acknowledge the authority of the Pope. England became reformed, Ireland did not; and it is now an incontestible fact, that every endeavour to substitute the Protestant in room of the Roman Catholic religion, has failed. By the charters of English kings, Ireland obtained a Parliament and Constitution. Her Parliament, over which his Majesty's representative presided, did not think fitting or necessary to exact from the Roman Catholics the concession now called for. The Ministers and Statesmen, who so long have directed the councils of England, saw nothing formidable in the matter. Charles V. and Philip II. threatened Europe with pretensions to universal Monarchy; Lewis XIV. alarmed it still more.

more. The Catholics at one time formed a part of the legislature in Ireland. Under all these circumstances nothing dangerous was perceived in it: the Treaty of Limerick, the violated Charter of Catholic Ireland, contained no provision against it. William was as likely to be jealous of foreign influence as any modern statesman, and fully as competent to appreciate its danger. He saw nothing to apprehend: on the contrary, he respected the valour, and solemnly pledged himself to protect the religion, of the Irish. His politics indeed were very different from modern ones: toleration at home, and war against despotism abroad, went hand in hand with him. He scorned to make religion a pretext for tyranny; but as a general and statesman, who had seen the world, desired to make use of the energies of the human mind for the best of purposes. The Treaty of Limerick unconditionally secured the integrity of the Catholic religion. "The Roman Catholic religion in Ireland obtained the sanction of regal authority," are the words of the historian.* William did not pick out little objections

* Smollet.

objections to perplex, or raise harassing obstacles to distress the consciences of men.

* He appears to have acted, as in the case cited by Vattel, whose opinions on this head are worthy of the deepest consideration.* The spirit of William's treaty
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“ * If there be as yet no religion established by public authority, the nation ought to use the utmost care in order to know and establish the best. That which shall have the approbation of the majority shall be received, and publicly established by law; by which means it will become the religion of the state. But if a considerable part of the nation is obstinately bent upon following another, it is asked—What does the law of nations require in such a case? Let us first remember, that liberty of conscience is a natural right, and that there must be no constraint in this respect. There remain then but two methods to take,—either to permit this party of the citizens to exercise the religion they chuse to profess,—or to separate them from the society,—leaving them their property, and their share of the country that belonged to the nation in common,—and thus to form two new states instead of one. The latter method appears by no means proper: it would weaken the nation, and thus would be inconsistent with that regard which she owes to her own preservation. It is therefore of more advantage to adopt the former method, and thus to establish two religions in the state. But if these religions are too incompatible,—if there be reason to fear that they will produce divisions among the citizens, and disorder in public affairs,—there is a third method, a wise medium between the two former, of which the Swiss have furnished examples. The cantons of Glaris
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yet lives, in the unremitting exercise of the appeal to the ancient head of the Roman Catholic religion: the assertion of it is the sole and melancholy remainder of Ireland's dignity and honour as a nation.

Treaties stand on record before Heaven, and the adherence to a fragment of them is acceptable in its sight. England seems to have left this point of national honour to Ireland, accordingly, to this hour; and, in the shipwreck of her hopes, to have spared one little anchor to steady the wreck, and bind it to the shore.

The Statute Law, and a compact of modern days, the Union between England and Ireland, sanctioned and confirmed the independence of the Irish Roman Catholic Church. The fifth article ensures the established Protestant Churches of England and Ireland, and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland: the Roman Catholic religion is

and Appenzel were, in the sixteenth century, each divided into two parts: the one preserved the Romish religion, and the other embraced the reformation: each part has a distinct government of its own for domestic affairs; but on foreign affairs they unite, and form but one and the same republic, one and the same canton."—*Vattel's Law of Nations.*

is not mentioned. Either the Treaty of Limerick was supposed to have provided for that Church's integrity or independence, or the English Ministers thought fit to gratify the Roman Catholics by a silent approbation of their form of religion, and left the legal construction on the article, that what is not forbidden is permitted; or, not venturing to propose openly what could have been with most propriety discussed in the Irish Parliament, the Union remained imperfect, through the common error of temporary statesmen, mistaking haste for decision, and the triumph of circumstances for the solid approval of a nation; or they conceived it impossible and unconstitutional to place a Protestant King at the head of the Irish Catholic Church. From whatever motive it may have been on the part of England, the fact of the actual independence of that Church exists, and proves that, though the Parliament has been abolished, there is yet in Ireland an independent body, surviving the compact of Union; and, from one small reservoir, capable of communicating and spreading,

by innumerable little rills, that life-blood of society, public spirit. Dependence on the people, not on the Crown, not on the Pope, is the characteristic of the Catholic Church. The Catholics solemnly disavow the smallest exertion of influence by the Pope in political affairs. There is not a single case attempted to be brought forward, in support of the assertion, that this influence operates improperly in Ireland. The Catholic Church of Ireland, in fact, nominates its own prelates and clergy; and in its present form, with its poverty, its intimate connection with the lower orders of the people, its humility and disinterestedness, approaches nearer to the spirit and appearance of the early Christian Church than perhaps any other. Bonaparte, when first consul, made a concordat with the Pope, and took to himself the nomination and paying of the bishops. His object was manifest; imitation of him in this point cannot be recommended by rational lovers of freedom. A clergy, nominated and pensioned by a government, must be its instruments. The futility of calling this nomination a "limited veto,"

veto," and inferring that it will give no improper increase of influence to the Crown; the idle distinction of "negative" and "positive;" the contemptible insinuation of "factious motives," in those who oppose the surrender of Ireland's Catholic clergy into the hands of Ministers, be they "hostile" or "friendly," are unworthy of attention.

It is constitutional and laudable to be watchful against the undue increase of the influence of the Crown. The distinguished Irish members who acted with Dr. Milner, in laying the basis of a new treaty, the consummation of which would have left Ireland "poor indeed," appear to have been incautiously lending their aid to further that increase. Another padlock for the loyalty of Irishmen was deemed necessary, and Ministers were not to be considered strong enough with the purse, the sword, the established Church, the weight of England, and the support of orderly and rational men: additional security was thought necessary, and the independence of the religion

religion of the Island of Saints was a trifling sacrifice to appease the doubts which power might conjure up.

But it does not appear what fresh equivalent was contemplated for this fresh concession. That Dr. Milner did not feel as an Irishman is evident. Can we imagine Mr. Grattan and Mr. George Ponsonby coolly deliberating on a completion to the Union, which Mr. Pitt shrunk from, and Lord Castle-reagh did not accomplish? If, in the reign of terror, a number of Catholic prelates would have yielded their independence to the English Minister, was the expiring voice of patriotism to be wept over, or made a precedent for new weakness? The projected treaty on foot between these respectable characters, was of all others the most strange: a material point of difference between England and Ireland was agitated: parties, not empowered by their principals, were acting, and concerting together: concession was entirely on one side: a new sacrifice on the part of Ireland—no new consideration
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for it: the English government clearly not represented by the opposition members, and as manifest was it also, that Dr. Milner was not the channel for the voice of Ireland.

Had some grand idea, as inducement, such as the repeal of the Union in a constitutional manner, or the total abolition of all corporation and test laws, been started, the projected treaty would not have looked so degrading, and something like terms of equality between contracting parties would have appeared. Quite the reverse was the case: these unauthorized ambassadors met, and held council on the affairs of Ireland. Dr. Milner was all concession; the other parties were perfectly free from it. The fate of Ireland was apparently decided; Parliament assembled; the proposition was made, and had great effect, as well it might. The contracting parties thought they had brought their treaty to a happy issue: they did not conceive that Ireland, in her humbled state, was to think for herself; and they totally overlooked the feeling of national honour, dormant,

dormant, but not extinct, in this country. The meeting of the Catholic bishops in September has rescued their native land from the reproach of supine indifference to the public good. They felt the powerful impulse of the national voice; they felt the sacred call of duty; they felt exalted by the sentiment, that they were at once defenders of their religion, and champions of their country. In the true spirit of christianity, they spurned at emolument and honours opening before them; clung to the plank, on which religion and national honour were engraven; and, rallying at their post, when the vessel heaved and laboured under new and unexpected assaults, they brought her triumphant to the harbour, amidst the tears of joy, the shouts of applause, and the blessings of their countrymen!

The decision of the Catholic prelates cannot be shaken; the judgment and the heart are with it. Time immemorial, the charters of kings, an ancient treaty, statute law, and a modern convention sanction it: the constitution and the law do not forbid the
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ancient privilege it has asserted: the majority of the nation have warmly approved of it.

I sincerely hope, my Lord, that I shall not appear presumptuous to you, in expressing my wishes and expectation, that your Lordship, the respectable characters who act along with you, and all those, who have entertained the same opinion as you, may be inclined, by deeply considering the merits of a question, the most important that could have occurred to Ireland, to join in a common sentiment of approbation for the decided conduct of the Catholic prelates. A part of the Catholic gentry cannot stand aloof from the main body of the Catholics, without feeling that they are destitute of strength; and they ought to consider, that popular opinion, generally expressed, is seldom wrong. Your Lordship must regret that the cause assigned by you for additional concession on the part of Ireland, conveys a reproach that this country does not merit. Another pledge for loyalty from Irishmen, implies a want of confidence, which is not justifiable after a Union,

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which was considered the panacæa for all political evils in this island. But with what propriety can natives of it proclaim the errors of their countrymen, if such errors exist, and offer to the sister island, not a vindication for partial delusion, and an explanation of irritating causes, but the expedient of giving the supremacy of the Catholic Church to a Protestant monarch? If there is disloyalty, the laws can punish. If there is disaffection, good government will reclaim. Your object, my Lord, appears to be a remote and uncertain one indeed; that is, to prevent any disloyal persons in future from holding ecclesiastical dignities. (I repeat that no cases of such impropriety have been, or can be produced.) The possibilities of futurity are, by your plan, my Lord, to be anticipated, and by what? By putting the whole Catholic clergy into the power of the English Ministry. Let me conjure you to reflect on the term "disloyal;" how uncertain in signification, and how much the perverted creature of malignity, fear, and revenge. Reflect on those who might be the interpreters and definers of
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the word, and on the passions and selfishness which might actuate them. The candidate for promotion must no longer appeal to his clergy and parishioners for support; he must learn to fawn and crouch; and the apostolic character must be merged in that of the courtier's. An English viceroy must select the bishops, whose learning and virtues have heretofore been the credentials for preferment. The dignus, dignior, and dignissimus of Dr. Milner, must turn their eyes to the Castle, but it might be indignissimus who would be preferred. The most honourable and virtuous of the Catholic clergy, whose independent minds had flattered no great man, or made no interest at court, might be doomed to feel all "the insolence of office," and be rejected. Nay, characters the most excellent and patriotic might be scowled at as improper. Slander and envy, which love so much to bite the heels of merit, might have preceded them: the secretary or clerk, or messenger, might have heard something disadvantageous: suspicion might meet patriotism at the doors of the Castle, and the epithet "disloyal"

be in itself rejection and justification. Consider this picture, my Lord, and in your own candid mind weigh the fatal effects of reducing the Catholic clergy to the dependence and servility which must inevitably result from your plan. To part with the power, and yet to talk of *limitation*, is to reason and act like the frail fair, who yields her honour with facility, and expects the respect and adoration of the lover to continue. It is impossible, my Lord, to reconcile the difficulties of your plan. To make his Majesty coadjutor to the Pope; to give real power to one, and still refer to the other; to restrain, modify, or recal power once granted; to preserve respect for your clergy, and yet make them suitors at the castle; to blend religion and politics, and not hurt both; these and others are problems, whose solution are fitter for speculation than experiment.

I am fully aware that the source of my argument, and the sentiments I have addressed to your Lordship, are liable to violent misrepresentation. Interested, or timid, or bigoted minds, will condemn me as inflaming or alarming. I desire neither;
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and where a subject is fairly before the public, and interests it much, the accusation is foolish.

I do not write to please the sickly fancy or intemperate zeal of any person, or body of men. My object is the good of Ireland, and, under this repetition of idea, I shall claim the attention here of Protestants, and of every other religious sect. If a cause be intrinsically good in a community, the prejudices and systematic way of thinking, appertaining to different religious sects, should be restrained as much as possible, which are likely to be injurious to it. It cannot inflame the Catholics, to repeat what they have long known, that the independence of the Irish Catholic Church is inseparably joined to the welfare of Ireland, and that the maintenance of it is upholding the cause of the country: this is familiar to them. Energy may be called forth in preserving this part of their privileges, yet no inflammation be created; for that implies stirring up forgotten, or producing new irritating matter. Neither ought Protestants, Dissenters, or any other class of men, to be alarmed at the promulgation
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of opinions strongly tending to the general good. The test of the question of the veto is, whether the advantage of Ireland at present consists in adding to the influence and power of the present and all future Ministries, or in withholding the remnant of independence, which escaped the operation of the measure of Union. On the question there is no middle path: the Protestants must have the magnanimity to decide in toto for the Catholics, or they must connive at the final wound to her independence. The Catholic body must all coincide in supporting the late decision of their prelates, or they leave themselves open to division, to future temptation, and to lasting contempt. Let England behold this country no longer recumbent, but raised on the venerable constitutional ground, which the workings of party has placed on so prominent and extraordinary a degree of eminence: she cannot withhold respect. Venerating her own hierarchy and constitution, this unlooked for struggle in Ireland, to preserve the residue of hers, must excite admiration, if it does not obtain approbation. The more des-

potism

potism is reprobated by her on the Continent, the more pleasure and pride ought she to feel, at the apparition of this ray of public spirit in Ireland, piercing through the gloom, and penetrating to the abodes of indolence and dejection.

The main and primary point, for the attention of all parties in Ireland, is the additional surrender of power, which it was in agitation to make to English Ministers, and the difficulty, rather the impossibility, of modifying, controlling, or recalling it, when granted. The Rubicon of the veto passed, the honour and independence of the Catholic clergy would not long survive, and repentance for the unconstitutional concession would be all that would rest with Irishmen, in their hour of total degradation.

The investigation of this particular question, respecting the Catholic bishops, leads us very naturally to consider, what effect their late decision may have on the grand affair of Catholic Emancipation. Let me request you, my Lord, to ponder on the injurious consequences which must arise to it, from the opinions, to which
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your name is affixed, being carried into execution. Catholic Emancipation, with a dependant hierarchy, would be exchange of greater for lesser good: it would be abandoning something solid, and something at home, for something distant and dazzling. It is internal improvement which Ireland most wants. The leading off more of her gentry and nobility to expend their incomes abroad, and acquire English habits and manners, with a distaste for their own country; the admission of a few Catholic gentry into the English Parliament; and the remaining privileges which the Catholics are entitled to, as matter of right, rather than favour; if accompanied by the Roman Catholic clergy's subservience to Ministers, would form a melancholy result for Ireland; the good would be particular, the evil general: the one would operate abroad, the other at home: public spirit would lose a support throughout the nation: families would be aggrandized, and individuals exalted: the whole domestic economy of Ireland would be changed; the access to general opinion be nearly choaked up, and

and the people be rendered less manageable, by ceasing to have independent pastors, the confidential organs, and respected advisers of the multitude. Apparent tranquillity would follow, but the seeds of anarchy would drop in the soil, and prepare the way for commotion and disorder. Assertion may advance, however, that the independence of these spiritual guides may be dangerous in another way, by improperly guiding and influencing their flocks; but insult such as this, to the people of Ireland, and to the Catholic clergy, is no way countenanced by fact. Both have exhibited a patience and moderation defying calumny. The severe bills which distinguished the close of the late, and commencement of the present Ministry, have been proved unnecessary, as they were unexpected. Modern days give the epithet of "French party," ancient ones* that of "Irish party," to the inhabitants of this country; now they have ground for denominating themselves a constitutional party, and they will maintain it. Standing on that ground,

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however,

* Spencer's State of Ireland.

however, the claimants for Catholic Emancipation find themselves not equally assured of a favourable reception in the English Parliament. Prejudice, with narrowed vision and hardened bosom, may be found in the portal, may creep into the palaces of the great, and whisper of dangers, of impossibilities, of firmness, of limited vetos, and of the influence of the Catholic clergy. She may rouse, to assist her, the spirit of superiority in the elder, which cannot bear to acknowledge the pretensions to original character and peculiar sensibility in the younger sister. She may invite the self-conceit, which would dictate for a nation, to join her, and thus, blindfolding one party, and irritating another, she may, with half concealed hand, shut up the gates of concession and mercy; and, in the triumphant chuckle of underhand malice, scoff at the imprudence of the Irish, in demanding, and applaud the dignified resolution of England, in refusing, Emancipation on its new grounds. Nevertheless the Catholics owe it to themselves to go on:

“Tu ne cede malis; sed contra audentior ito.”

They must do so, on the conception,
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that the resolutions of the Catholic bishops are irrevocable, and also that they are to be avowed and supported as such. The vote of thanks from Kilkenny place the affair in a most honourable and just light. To the dignified and spirited language of that address I request your Lordship's attention: the country, and the unaltered form of selecting the bishops, are there identified. Innovation is deprecated; and a zeal, which is at once patriotic and religious, illuminates the address. The Kilkenny resolutions embrace Ireland; your Lordship's letter applies to a part of a party. I therefore think that the petition for Catholic Emancipation would be not improperly accompanied if this address were affixed to it. A constitutional veneration for an ancient religious form ought not to displease England, so long struggling, at the expence of immense loss of blood and treasure, to uphold similar institutions, and the ancient order of things, abroad. What a field for the orator, who, in the English Parliament, would thus advocate the cause of the Catholics: "Ireland feels

that new force is added to the question of Catholic Emancipation. She has the rare merit, in addition to the justice of the cause, of resisting innovation, of adhering to a part of her constitution sanctioned by ages, and immemorially permitted by England. Partial benefit was held up, but Ireland, low in her fortunes, and exposed to temptation, disdained the hope of boon, at the expence of honour. The Continent is strewed with the wreck of kingdoms and constitutions. All that was respected for its antiquity has been bartered for the profit and the convenience of the day. The melancholy fall of Spain, fighting for her altars and her constitution, is perhaps about to be recorded on her bloody plains, as the last effort for resisting that change, which is new modelling ancient governments, religion and property."

"It was for the forms which time had hallowed, that Spaniards fought: it was in prevention of changes, hurtful to their feelings and prejudices, that the patriot warriors stood forth against the disciplined armies of France. Brave men!
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your graves are shaded by laurels ever verdant; your names and deeds shall agitate the trembling hand of history, and her tears shall stain the record which she inscribes! These were the allies of England. I fortify my cause by assimilating the adherence to principle, and preservation of ancient forms in the Irish, to the conduct of the Spaniards. I bring forward their humble claims for admission to the privileges of the British Constitution, with the confidence of advocating what England has approved in Spain, and the principle of which she has acted upon herself."

It is thus Ireland ought to be brought forward, if Catholic Emancipation be again made a question in Parliament. Let the "limited veto" disappear, as the delusive meteor which had dazzled for a moment, but vanished when truth and patriotism stepped forth. It is for party to concede to Ireland, not Ireland to party. Under the existing circumstances, if an application to Parliament be deemed unavailing or improper, a Petition to his Majesty, couched in those respectful terms, which
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would befit so august an occasion, and delivered by persons of weight, respectability and rank, in the Catholic body, might call his Majesty's attention to his Irish subjects, occupied, as it must be, by the portentous aspect of foreign affairs. Should it produce a recommendation from the throne that Parliament should take the matter into consideration, the happiest effects might be expected, and the strength of the empire be incalculably increased, through the benevolence of the Monarch, and the liberality and justice of the Parliament.

In whatever mode it may be considered judicious by the Catholics to prefer their claims, it is satisfactory to reflect, that the agitation and discussion of the point, relating to the veto, did not originate here. The former rejections of the prayer for Catholic Emancipation left Ireland resigned, but not dispirited; she was therefore neither intemperate or servile. A certain misapprehension, in some leading characters in England, having produced discussion there, the part taken by the Roman Catholic prelates, in publishing

lishing their resolutions in September last, and the sanction given to their proceeding by the Catholics at large, and all those who disdain to view religious faith as political disability, followed naturally and unavoidably. Resistance to a projected change, likely to diminish the respect paid to the Roman Catholic religion, and to produce bad political consequences, has arisen from some of the best feelings of man. Nothing irregular, nothing disorderly or tumultuous, has appeared. The gradual concurrence of Irishmen, on this most interesting point, will be the fruit, it is rationally to be expected, of so vigorous a plant. Its spreading branches will flourish, through the care of the community; against its trunk the plaintive and ancient harp shall lean, and breathe betimes low notes of gratulation and applause; whilst the awful ruins, which sprinkle the land, shall send from their recesses a faint echo of approbation. The self estimation, which grows out of the consciousness of disinterested and honourable exertion, will take place of supineness; and Ireland, cheered by the preservation

vation of honour, and of the last distinguishing gem of her ancient diadem, will pursue the paths of peace and industry, satisfied that good order is the sweetest charm of society, and contented to wait the amelioration of her economy and the participation of all her sons to equal political rights, with the modest firmness and dignity which her long privation and unexampled patience justify.

I have now, my Lord, discharged the duty my mind imposed on me. It is with great respect for your Lordship, and the gentlemen with whom you acted, that I have ventured to publicly differ from you; and, while I submit my view of the question to you, I do not arrogantly desire, but I earnestly entreat, a reconsideration of the affair. That your Lordship's motives, as well as those on the other side of the water, who have contemplated it in a different manner from me, were pure, proceeding from a wish to conciliate party, and to overcome prejudice, is indubitable. That very respectable character Dr. Milner, whose zeal for the common good has, in my opinion, hurried into the appearance of

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of indiscretion, will pardon, I hope, the freedom of adverting to his name; it seemed to me that truth required it.

There is one whom honour and reverence must always follow, notwithstanding an apparent political aberration, which Ireland drooped at fancying she observed. From him I have differed, as I always shall, with extreme pain. The anguish of friendship at the imagined discovery of a shade of error, in a character exalted by sublime talent, and still more by the rich treasures of private virtues, can alone be conceived by hearts of great sensibility.

There are many, of a different religion from the Roman Catholic, whom I esteem most highly, and whose dissent would be matter of great concern to me. To them I trust that I offer the language of reason, while I disavow the slightest intention of courting or inflaming party: I trust to their judgment, and await its decision with tranquillity. There are illustrious characters in England who may disapprove of those pages, and from whom I would differ most unwillingly: but the paramount duty of man is the study of the

welfare of the community in which he lives; if that leads him to think differently from those he most cherishes, his path is obvious, though thorns may beset it. He ought to walk straight forward, and, contemning equally the dangers and the snares of calumny, trust to time, his own conscience, and an all-seeing Providence for his reward.

I have the honour to be,

With the highest respect, &c. &c.

J. B. TROTTER.

Richmond, Dublin,
Nov. 1808.