

THREE LETTERS
ON
IRISH
CATHOLIC AFFAIRS.

BY
DETECTOR.

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1809.

Houses of the Oireachtas

TO THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC
CLERGY AND LAITY
OF THE
COUNTY of LOUTH.

LETTER III.

—•—
GENTLEMEN,

IT is not so much with a view to discharge the promise formerly made under this signature, although an honest man will adhere to the decorum of truth, notwithstanding any disguise of name, as to acquit myself of a duty, and, at the same time, to perform a most grateful part, in which if words should fail, yet the heart is not impotent of speech and purpose, I return to address you for the third time. I congratulate you on the Resolutions of your meeting in Dundalk—I thank you for

the address to our Prelates. Your expressions are Irish and Catholic, that is, they are unanimous and they are true. In this congratulation I but follow or concur with all that still obeys a principle, in Ireland, or acknowledges a country, and this description embraces the thousands of our fellow-christians, as well as includes the millions of our own faith. For be assured that no man, worthy of this generous soil, let his antipathies be what they will to our mysteries of belief or rites of worship, could have beheld without regret the triumph of methodistical Vandalism, in the demolition of that Church, from which the day-spring of Christianity had travelled the climates of ancient Europe, which had never capitulated to wide-wasting heretics or despotic popes, which stood lofty, yet unambitious, amidst the old and the modern ruins of Irish splendour, and on which, as on holy ground, the national feeling had taken stand against the invasion of prone, ferret-eyed, pitiless monopoly. If therefore, it was to honour you looked, in framing those Resolutions, you have been most prodigally overpaid. But I am certain that you speculated beyond an immediate reward, when you interposed to protect the sacred reputation
of

of the dead and the sacred hopes of the unborn. Thus your voice has become an evidence of Irish Catholicism. As such it will outlive the season. It will be entrusted to memory; nor will it be forgotten when Irish Catholicism shall be crowned in deliverance. I resume my labours, under its just and fortunate auspices.

DETECTOR.

TO THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC INHABITANTS

AND

PROTESTANTS

OF

DUBLIN.

YOU will solemnize, Fellow Catholics of
 Dublin, the approaching Jubilee, proclaimed
 by their Holinesses the Corporation, with feel-
 ings such as the occasion is meant to inspire,
 and with such vigilance as the duty of self-pre-
 servation will undoubtedly suggest. If those
 exalted gentlemen, RICHMOND and MANNERS,
 are suffered to continue in the Government, no
 outrage upon your dwellings, no *feu de joie*
 against your windows will be abetted or for-
 given. In the same supposition, I will even
 venture

venture to guarantee your lives. Let this much relieve you from scruples of ill-founded dismay, and animate you, one and all, on this unlooked for celebrity, to shake your irons in submissive transports. The day, in itself, contains a festival of state, the anniversary of his Majesty's enthronement; and Catholics are taught by Religion to pray for the King, that his reign may be tranquil, his senate faithful, his armies victorious—AND SO BE IT. Besides this necessary prayer, a supplementary petition may whisper itself to you, who remember, that God draws near to the afflicted; that no Famine, with Death at his heels, may rush in upon our carnival, to chide the stinking surfeit of Hypocrisy; that the measure of our crimes against the world, in blood causelessly and impenitently spilled and trampled upon, may not be filled up by the new impiety of self-absolution. If, lastly, you are enthusiasts for his Majesty's renown, you will pray that, ere he demise an earthly power, he may be advanced to the very height of all glory; that he may proclaim a Jubilee to IRELAND, by emancipating from penal, barbarous law its unhappy children, on whom the protection of his fame and of his posterity will devolve. To have begun, to have consummated

consummated the Royal exploit, would furnish an epitaph that no aftertimes would suffer to be profaned, and would impose an oblivious silence on the disasters of half a century. The only title which interests mankind for the helpless dead, is the title of *Once-Benefactor* to the oppressed of mankind. Every other pretension is beaten to atoms by tardy Justice, or is contemptuously abandoned to the blotting finger of Time.

But Protestants! for there are still amongst you men of heart, was it by any trespass, on our part, beyond the vale of *enlightened toleration*, this affront was solicited? or is the tameness of the Catholic to be perpetually the justification of a first insult, as the repining of the Catholic is the provocation for a second? A Corporation has combined, these fifteen years, in denying to Catholics, what the law pretended to bestow, a Citizen's Freedom.—A Corporation has uniformly combined in petitioning *against all Catholic Petitions*. (And here I purposely confine myself to the history of its peaceful deeds.) This arch-enemy then to just prayer, this hunter down of the stricken, this Satan of afflicted men, this inexorable sentinel over deluded and struggling captives, now comes forward to or-
dain

dain a merry holiday even for us Catholics, whose hearts it is confederated to bruise !

But, has it not disavowed, at least has it not expressly relinquished the idea of religious distinctions, in its manifesto? Yes, I do confess that it undertakes to play the tender part, and that it encroaches on our sensibility with the thrilling caresses of the porcupine. It has indeed graciously expressed its hope, that every subject here will correspond with its liberal and patriotic views. This would be right enough, if the Corporation were not about to chaunt its own victory over us, who are subjects; if its agents were not tricking up, during the interim, its equestrian god, of College Green, in the lewd old blazonry of the cause. It would be right, if the propounder and real enacter of this Jubilee were not he, whose permanent duty it has been to infest the misery of Catholics and to assassinate their feelings.

The Corporation would *now* be happy to *unite us All* in *giving thanks* for this *glorious Reign*, and in *praying* for its *long continuance*. Right also would this be, excellently right, *in the Law*. But the same Corporation united *against us all*, when it *gave thanks* for a Declaration, which it construed to mean nothing less

less than staking this *glorious Reign against the Catholic Claims*. And this very Declaration, so construed, is the grand felicity of the felicities, for the long enjoyment of which, *by us all*, the Corporation would piously enlist our sympathetic prayers, that a glorious Reign may be prolonged! O sweet Conciliators! O divine Orangemen! To prepare the cup of *your* welcome to *us All*, with the mingled waters of jealousy and despair, and grinningly to pledge us, in the reviving social wine of loyalty: To invite us to accompany your bacchanalian "God save the King," that we may stand confessed of having canonized our own doom, and of having loudly exulted in the malediction against our offspring! For this, "My soul abhors your Sabbath days and your new moons." Yet I too can bless the KING, from the hard station of captivity, to which, as you boast, I am assigned by his promise; but I will not exasperate the Deity by acquiescing in a temporal curse, upon the innocent hopes the Deity has granted, of a better age. I will say, May HE reign beloved, may they be free and obey him; May Both prosper! May the indivisible wish ascend as one, and be heard!

DETECTOR.

TO THE
ROMAN CATHOLICS

OF

IRELAND.

TO You, it is becoming that I should introduce myself formally. With those of Louth or of Dublin I might possibly demand credence from my signature. My titles are these, brief, domestic, emphatical:—**I BELIEVE AND I SUFFER ALONG WITH YOU.** The partnership of faith and affliction I took up as an inheritance: I have cherished it by meditation beyond every other care. I took it up under the military testament of those, who stood with your fathers, side by side, perhaps stepped be-

fore them to die, for a Country and a King, and shall I not bear a Catholic heart? But I presume on a third title, though it be readily assumed and more easily derided: I seldom mistake the victorious cause. What else I am, it is beneath you to ascertain, save this—the temptations of ambition I have long since repulsed; of avarice and revenge I know not. **GOD SAVE OUR IRISH CHURCH!** Through its venerable spirit we are as yet exempt from that severely impotent guardian of morals, an Inquisition. The visit of our Priests is not, as yet, *domiciliary*; the College of our Pontiffs is not, as yet, a club of Eavesdroppers. A man as yet, may speak for his Country, without apprehension of the torture. The man who is *just*, before social law, may blame public errors, without fearing that his own bosom will be searched with pains, or the bosom of his friend by terrors and seduction, in order to crush the accuser, and the charge, in one.

I appeared ten months ago, for the first time, in a case of extreme and pressing danger, which to me, and to those that I esteemed wise men, was the more to be dreaded as it was prepared in treachery. The Catholics of Louth judged justly. Their honour, at least, is now secured.

I bowed

I bowed to their victory in silence, and withdrew. I re-appear to you, because the danger returns.

I must, however, first shake off the dust from my feet. Bishop Milner has appealed to you, against *Detector* as one of a wicked combination in Dublin, who have conspired to overwhelm his popularity by every means of falsehood. This appeal lies before you, near seven months, and I hope it has gained from you that attention, which the name of its writer is accustomed and worthy to command. The idea was noble; had it been carried into effect somewhat differently, his popularity would not only have revived, but towered far above its greatest range; and those enemies whose combination he indignantly deploras would either have become his worshippers, or "vainly bayed" at his re-ascending fame. But Milner has ever conquered by not yielding, and therefore he knows not how to yield: he has never offered parley to his antagonist, and therefore he frequently mistakes courtesy for tribute, and silence for dismay. In this very appeal, he comes to surrender in his coat of mail, and fills the dock with his trophies: he anathematizes his accusers before he enters upon his de-

fence, and what I groaned to observe, he places the *Rational* on his breast, and sits diademed as a Judge of our faith, in order to fulminate some pasquinade or other called "the Journal of the Pimlico Parliament," which he treats as something real, and not less terrific than the National Convention.

I will not join issue with his Lordship. I had not accused him of guilt, but I proved him obstinate in fatal error. Nor would I have proved this, were not his obstinacy pernicious to my people. Compared to me, I willingly grant him all that superiority, which his prowess can justify, or his imagination will embrace. Compared to the feelings of Irish Catholics, which *his feelings* did not stoop to,—compared with the anxiety, with the consternation, with the dangers, he brought on and was upholding, his titles were stubble and chaff, and his achievements a fable.

But I *will* meet that *Associate* in the composition of his "Appeal," who, as it seems to me, with considerable folly, has tampered with the public text of my former letters. When I have submitted the quotation and the original, you will judge on two points; the first, whether any thing less than his apparent coalition with his

his Lordship entitles the *Associate* to any notice of mine ;—the second, whether such an exhibition of candour and argument is likely to dispossess Irishmen of the prejudices they had conceived against the introduction of foreign authorities, to *enlighten* this Country.

The first specimen is this. “ They who, to use Detector’s swaddling language, ‘ *have been saved by their Religion,*’ are chiefly distinguished by uncharitableness, and by their open, continued violation of the Commandment, “ *Thou shalt not bear false witness.*”*

Were Doctor Milner not a Catholic Bishop, I should here content myself with saying, that he had, for the honour of the sister country, made common cause with those English preachers, whom I shewed, as they were, in my second Letter. Recollecting, however, his dignity, and my former unbounded admiration of the man, I cannot but consider this quotation sufficiently important to be deserving a grave animadversion.

In the first place, no *Swaddlers*, even of the latest importation from England, have asserted that they are *saved by their Religion*—they are saved by *Faith*, or *imputed righteousness*, or they

* Appeal.

they are *predestined*. No Protestants have ever said that they are saved by their *Religion*. But Roman Catholics, when they understand, in that term, the System of Doctrines, and works meritorious, have said, and do say, that *they are saved by their Religion*. Consequently the Interpolator of the Appeal betrays himself equally ignorant of Catholic, Protestant, and *swaddling* modes of faith and language. In the second place the pretended text is a total fabrication. No mention whatever of salvation was in the passage; no common sense of Readers, nor unseduced deviation of idiots could have found in my words the meaning inflicted on them. My object was to guard Catholics from a villainous crew, who, under the pretence of Deism, were attempting to make away with that common asylum of *Catholic Religion* which, during so many years, had kept us together. So far was I from urging religious ideas, that I studiously called my audience to the *social* consideration and *public* effects of the thing. My words were these—"A spirit at once *impudent* and *atrocious*, of *contempt* for the *holy* bonds of that Religion, by which *hitherto* we have been saved and sheltered, has newly arisen from amongst ourselves, affecting to be *impious* and
convicted

convicted of being traitorous."* In no instance hitherto, I will undertake to assert, has the term *saving* been explained to *ultimate salvation*, unless where the subject of discourse was such, or the theme were HE, whom Christians cannot lightly name. The Interpolator is pleased to invert all language, to slight all honorary rules of warfare for the attainment of a blank jest, if a jest, and of a wrong, if he be serious; and this he does, while *his Lordship* is in appeal against me, as an unfair man!

Second Specimen. "Detector describes your four Metropolitans, and six other Prelates as "*guilty of Robbery and Sacrilege!*"†

If Detector, in the month of December, so described the Bishops who, three months before, had unanimously agreed in a Resolution, which has saved this island from dissension, from sedition, from civil war, from solitude; I say, that Detector would deserve to be hanged, in company with him, whosoever he was, that precipitated the crisis, or with him who would excite it anew. But Detector says,—he has proved that *no Bishops were guilty*: That he has defended them from *guilt*, to which other advocates, though officially bound to interfere, surrendered

* Detector's Second Letter, Even. Herald, Dec. 2.

† Appeal, p. 48. Evening Herald, Dec. 2.

rendered them, selfishly and contemptuously. Detector has never yet pronounced a Bishop *guilty*. He did not think Bishop Milner *guilty*, but he thought him strangely persevering. As to Irish Bishops, Detector vindicated their names from *guilt*, because he exhibited circumstances, which, before God and man, acquit of deliberate consent without which there is no *guilt*, above all, no *guilt* of *sacrilege*. Detector retrieved their case by bringing it home to facts, which their more noisy defenders have warily evaded, and their authoritative champions have denied by implication. He described them as men wrought upon by terror and by artifice.* He proved the artifice. Is it necessary, in Ireland, to prove the *terror* of that month and year, † when, as Bishop Milner has said in his letter to a Parish Priest, those four Metropolitans and six Prelates were assembled in *solemn* deliberation? Would to God he had also mentioned, that, during this *solemnity*, Roman Catholic Chapels were burning around them!

DETECTOR.

* Detector's first Letter.

† 17, 18, 19 January, 1799.