

us no more. The Legislature, judging that what was sufficient for Republicans was sufficient for Catholics, abolished the oath, for the best reasons, some time before the disestablishment of the Irish Church. If there is no longer a special bond for the loyalty of Catholics, the fact is due to the deliberate judgment of the House of Commons. After having surrendered the only real Constitutional security their seems scarcely reason to lament the depreciation of a less substantial guarantee, which was very indirectly connected with the action of Parliament, and was virtually superseded by the oath.

The doctrines against which you are contending did not begin with the Vatican Council. At the time when the Catholic oath was repealed, the Pope had the same right and power to excommunicate those who denied his authority to depose princes that he possesses now. The writers most esteemed at Rome held that doctrine as an article of faith; a modern Pontiff had affirmed that it cannot be abandoned without taint of heresy, and that those who questioned and restricted his authority in temporal matters were worse than those who rejected it in spirituals, and accordingly men suffered death for this cause as others did for blasphemy and atheism. The recent decrees have neither increased the penalty nor made it more easy to inflict.

That is the true answer to your appeal. Your indictment would be more just if it was more complete. If you pursue the inquiry further you will find graver matter than all you have enumerated, established by higher and more ancient authority than a meeting of Bishops half-a-century ago. And then I think you will admit that your Catholic countrymen cannot fairly be called on to account for every particle of a system which has never come before them in its integrity, or for opinions whose existence among divines they would be exceedingly reluctant to believe.

I will explain my meaning by an example: A Pope who lived in Catholic times, and who is famous in history as the author of the first Crusade, decided that it is no murder to kill excommunicated persons. This rule was incorporated in the Canon law. In the revision of the Code, which took place in the sixteenth century, and produced a whole volume of corrections, the passage was allowed to stand. It appears in every reprint of the "*Corpus Juris*." It has been for 700 years and continues to be part of the Ecclesiastical law. Far from having been a dead letter, it obtained a new application in the days of the Inquisition, and one of the later Popes has declared that the murder of a Protestant is so good a deed that it atones, and more than atones, for the murder of a Catholic. Again, the greatest legislator of the Mediæval Church laid down this proposition, that allegiance must not be kept with heretical Princes—*cum ei qui Deo fidem non servat fides servanda non sit*. This principle was adopted by a celebrated Council, and is confirmed by St. Thomas Aquinas, the oracle of the schools. The Syllabus which you cite has assuredly not acquired greater authority in the Church than the Canon Law and the Lateran Decrees, than innocent the Third and St. Thomas. Yet these things were as well known when the oath was repealed as they are now. But it was felt that, whatever might be the letter of Canons and the spirit of the Ecclesiastical laws, the Catholic people of this country might be honorably trusted.

But I will pass from the letter to the spirit which is moving men at the present day. It belongs peculiarly to the character of a genuine Ultramontane not only to guide his life by the example of canonized saints, but to receive with reverence and submission the words of Popes. Now Pius V., the only Pope who has been proclaimed a saint for many centuries, having deprived Elizabeth, commissioned an assassin to take her life; and his next successor, on learning that the Protestants were being massacred in France, pronounced the action glorious and holy, but comparatively barren of results; and implored the king during two months, by his Nuncio and his Legate, to