

overcharge the air, and the principle of new clouds and combinations exist undiminished.

How far then, the principle of dangerous combination may peculiarly belong to Romanism we are now to inquire, and for distinctness let us look first to the ecclesiastical department, and then to the lay-population. Pope Hildebrand my Lord—perhaps the most cunning statesman and imperious tyrant the world ever saw—was the first that usurped, and traced for his successors, the way to supreme dominion over his brethren the Christian Clergy. Having possessed himself by a train of wily policy of the powers of episcopal consecration and investiture, he saw that these enabled him to impose on all Bishops and their dependent Clergy—who should afterward be promoted—ANY CONDITIONS HE PLEASED; and then all his schemes of spiritual domination went on quietly: the canon of celibacy was but a step—the great move was an oath of fealty imposed on Christian Bishops—an oath which, with those of Priests and Regulars and some useful doctrines &c. for the Laity, forms the pillars on which the whole system of Romish Church militancy mainly rests.

The oath of a Roman Catholic Bishop is indeed, my Lord, very admirable! if you were to sit down, and frame one to secure all things possibly desirable, you could not perhaps add a single clause to those of the wily Hildebrand. Thus—by the strongest tie ever yet invented to bind human conscience—it binds a Christian Bishop as far as his ability reaches, first, to keep secret all secrets entrusted to him—secondly, to prevent and communicate any pernicious design—thirdly, to defend the royalties of Peter—one of which royalties is the kingdom of Ireland! fourthly, to increase the Pope's privileges and authority—and lastly to obey all Apostolic decrees and commands. (It was, I suppose, owing to the first of these items that this oath itself was kept a profound secret *even from the Romish Priesthood* for centuries, and that perhaps other important *secrets* still remain unknown to us!) There are other clauses too of less importance, for which I must refer you to the oath itself.—Thus being himself away from the field of action, this able statesman saw that the clause of mere obedience was by no means enough (for much liberty must be left to local and confidential officers,) but what more could any man contrive or desire, than to bind his sworn vassals—who are yet far the most influential men in our or any land—to energetic devotedness—offensive and defensive—to confidential secrecy, and to the office of spying out and communicating all things useful!

This oath however, with all its clauses, is not the only security for the good behaviour of *Irish* Prelates and their dependent Clergy; Popes have also in their hands the two important supplements of reward and punishment. Thus, in this country all patronage to places of chief rank is *in* the Pope—he appoints to Bishoprics, Deaneries, and to the chief posts in the *Regular* system—and seeing this, no doubt, many a holy Priest and zealous Bishop or ambitious Friar is induced,