

reinforcements. But with the good faith of honorable men, fifteen thousand laid down their arms, and were true to their engagements. The terms of this treaty were fair and advantageous. They secured to the Catholics the rights of property, of liberty, and of conscience, and all things seemed to augur well for peace, for unity, and for happiness.

Had the victors been merciful with power, and generous with success, had they been just, nay, had they been wisely politic, Ireland might have been tranquillized, and her prosperity might have commenced. But it was an age of faction, and faction was true to its vilest instincts. The legislation that followed this event, was intensely exclusive, and it was exclusively Protestant. The whole power of the country was in the hands of a Protestant aristocracy. The first action, then, of the Parliament in Ireland, after the reduction of Limerick, was to annul its treaty, a treaty as solemn as any that history records ; a treaty made in the face of armies, and which pledged the faith of nations. And, not only that, but it was followed by a code of laws, which would have been a shame upon the reign of Nero ; a code of laws which made, at one time, the Catholic religion a capital offence ; and which, when greatly mitigated, denied to Catholics the means of education, the claims of property, and the rights of citizens. Legislation like this was, of course, disastrous. Strange, indeed, if it were not. If it were not, history were a lie, and all experience a dream ; if it were not, human nature were, itself, a confounding delusion. It was disastrous to the Protestant religion, which it pretended to support ; it was disastrous to the interests of England, which it promised to maintain ; it was disastrous, also, to the unhappy people, whose energies it crushed ; but, that the law of compensation should not utterly fail—that some evidence should be given to earth, that even on earth crime does not go unpunished—it was disastrous to its enactors.