

was an honorable service to the government," and all magistrates and others who failed to put the penal laws into execution "were betrayers of the liberties of the kingdom." The twentieth clause of the Act provides rewards for the discovery of papist prelates, priests and teachers according to the following whimsical scale: for discovering an archbishop, bishop, vicar-general or other person exercising any foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction, forty pounds; for discovering each regular clergyman, and each secular clergyman not registered, twenty pounds, and for discovering each papist school-master or usher, ten pounds. The twenty-first clause empowers two justices to summon before them any papist over eighteen years of age and to interrogate him when and where he last heard mass, and the names of the persons present, and likewise touching the residence of any papist priest or school-master; and if he refuses to give testimony, subjects him to a fine of twenty pounds, or imprisonment for twelve months.

These ferocious penal laws reached their full maturity in the first fourteen years of George III. But in 1778 the Franco-American alliance frightened Lord North's ministry into many concessions, and under the leadership of Grattan the Irish parliament passed an Act which abolished the penal laws as far as they disabled Catholics from purchasing, holding, and transferring landed property. The withdrawal of all regular troops necessitated by the American war, gave the Irish parliament a welcome opportunity of creating an army of volunteers under Lord Edward Fitzgerald for the defense of the country against a French invasion. With this army to back him Grattan demanded and obtained from England an independent Irish Parliament.

