

ORIGINAL.

ON CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

It is acknowledged by all that nothing happens but by the will, or permission of God; whose omniscience foresees; whose omnipotence controls; and whose wisdom infinite directs every thing towards his own just and merciful purposes. And yet, how few, in their historical details and descriptions of public events; even of such as affect the general state of mankind; ever notice what is clearly manifested to the rational observer, *the finger of God*, and the designs of his all-knowing superintending and disposing Providence.

Of the many wonderful events, which have taken place in these our days; and which must render the present age a most remarkable one in history; we shall single out but one; an important one indeed; which has claimed in a political; but which claims still more in a religious sense, the attentive consideration of mankind: I mean CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION. On this subject we shall call the attention of our readers to some interesting particulars; which, though strikingly obvious seem to have escaped the general observation.

The Catholic religion has, as every one knows been, for these three hundred years past, the object of persecution in the British dominions: the cause of which persecution, as impartial history shews, were in England, her uncompromising nature with the criminal propensities of a proud, cruel and libidinous tyrant; the envied wealth of her establishment; though wholly expended for the benefit of the public: the jealousy of a bastard Queen; and the eager efforts of a hungry and time-serving crew of dogmatizing adventurers to get themselves substituted in the room of the ancient Clergy, the sole successors of the Apostles. In other countries the same effect was produced by rebellion, and the usurpation of Church property by the great; and the general proneness of the ignorant multitude to throw off the yoke of faith and moral discipline; and adopt the LIBERAL PRINCIPLES of their mock reformers; preached up to them as *the liberty of the children of God*, the equal liberty granted to every one, of judging and acting according to his own caprice. It is of these seducers that Saint Peter prophesies thus: "promising them liberty, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption."—2 Peter ii. 19.

Such were in sum the unhallowed causes of the cruel and long enduring persecution commenced in England and other countries against the Catholic church. With what lying misrepresentation of her doctrine did they not unceasingly in their books and preachings endeavour to blind the public, and indispose them against the venerable religion of their ancestors; in order to get their own whimsical systems established in its stead: till at last they succeeded by dint of the most virulent and invective declamation; backed as they were by the whole weight of the civil power; and armed with the most barbarous and bloody penal statutes ever record-

ed in history; statutes denouncing fire, confiscation of property, imprisonment, bodily torture, banishment and death, to the teachers and followers of the ancient faith; those who dared against their decrees to worship God as all christians had hitherto worshipped, and still generally worshipped him: till at last they succeeded in so darkening the minds of the community, and crusting them over so thickly with prejudice against catholicity: as to render them quite impervious to truth; and insensibly callous to all the sufferings which their fellow creatures, and fellow countrymen endured merely for conscience sake.

It is in the total removal of these hideous atrocities of the English reformation, that we now call upon the public to mark *the finger of God*; and the wonderful interposition of a just and merciful Providence: who, after trying so long his chosen servants; has stretched forth at last his arm in their defence.

Had any one, only forty years ago, predicted this event; who would have believed him; and considering the seemingly insurmountable obstacles to its realization? How, one would have asked, could the whole Protestant public, having the Legislature on their side, be brought spontaneously to share with Catholics, whom they had been taught to consider: whom (before they could obtain the meanest place of trust under their sectarian government,) they were compelled to denounce upon oath, as wicked and idolatrous monsters; how could they be brought to share with such outlawed and authorizedly reputed miscreants, their own exclusive perquisites and preterments. By what avenue was the sacred light of truth to find its way to their close-obstructed and benighted minds: and the black brooding phantom of prejudice to be scared from its dark haunt by the broad beaming blaze and noon-day brightness of evidence? Catholic books of instruction they never read. Catholic teachers they could never be brought to listen to. All the known possible means of being undeceived with regard to the long misrepresented doctrines of the Catholic Church, were scrupulously avoided by them. And the spirit of untruth seemed securely enthroned in their hearts and minds, and destined to possess and sway them forever. Yet, by that very authority, which established him there, was he doomed to be cast forth: and all his mischievous workings to be exposed to the horror and detestation of his own very dupes and votaries.

It would seem as if God had intended to shew forth his protecting power in favor of the persecuted Catholics in Ireland; as he had formerly done in favor of the persecuted Israelites in Egypt; and to make Catholic Ireland in the British dominions resemble *the land of Gessen* in the dominions of the Pharaohs. For in both places alike did the inhuman decree go forth to extirpate and destroy the people of God: and in both places alike, in scorn of that decree, did God multiply his oppressed people prodigiously. The oppressors in both instances were troubled, and grievously alarmed for their own safety, at the growing numbers of the oppressed; and wished the country rid of their dreaded

multitudes. The Israelites were therefore suffered to depart, carrying with them the only religion and worship of the true God; which they were destined to plant in other nations. The Irish, in like manner, forced forth by their persecutors from the land of their nativity, have filled the earth with their emigrations; and planted the sole true religion and worship of the Saviour in the transatlantic regions of the new world; over all which they are numerously spread. Thus, as ever finally happens; the enemy of truth has been completely foiled with his own weapons: and by seeking with all the help lent him by a mighty government for hundreds of years, to root out and destroy Catholicity in Ireland; he has only forwarded its propagation over countries vastly greater than the one which he endeavored to make all his own.

But there is this remarkable difference between the case of the Jews, and that of the Irish; that the Jews left Egypt all to a man; whereas the many Catholic thousands leaving Ireland, still left the growing Catholic millions behind them. The brimful fountain, in sending thus forth its stream, suffers no visible diminution in its remaining waters.

The inexterminable nature of the ever-growing Catholic population of Ireland, began at length to be felt by its heartless government. The voice of a mighty people, acquiring influence with wealth, could no longer be stifled. They demand at length, in a firm, but loyal and constitutional tone, the restitution of their natural rights, from that very Legislative body which had deprived them of them. And now, above all is displayed God's intervention in behalf of his unjustly persecuted and long suffering people.

His chaste and only spouse, like the innocent and beautiful Susanna, had been falsely accused of corruption by the judges of the land. His calumniated church was now to be tried in open court; and her case to obtain for once a public hearing. The Irish petition for their civil rights; or what was called the *Catholic petition for emancipation*, introduces the subject.

But who are to plead her cause in that court, which none dare to enter, but her sworn enemies? the very representatives of her rulers? These, then, to whose pleadings in her favor no suspicion of partiality can attach; as it certainly would have done to those of her own friends or children; these are chosen to be her unobjectionable advocates, and strenuous defenders. These are brought to refute within their parliament the very charges against her which, in their test-oath, they had sworn to without; and thus to prove themselves perjured by their vindication of her innocence. Who, but the Almighty could have brought things to such a pass; and have ranked on the side of her defence all the illustrious and great in that assembly; the only individuals looked up to as politicians and statesmen; or whose names have been thought worth the recording? Who, but He, could have made them, though divided on every other subject, so firmly and perseveringly united on this? which fixed upon their assembly and church the irremovable reproach of systematic cruelty, falsehood and injustice;

acted upon with unabated rigour for three whole centuries; during which their church and state had bound themselves together in sworn compact to degrade, ruin and reduce to nought the most loyal and conscientious portion of his Majesty's subjects. From the harangues of such, uttered in parliament, and transmitted by post to every corner of the Empire in the public journals, was that people to be undeceived; who mistrusting every Catholic statement or remonstrance, carefully shut their ears and eyes against whatever was said or written in their defence by the persecuted.

Time, however, was necessary, in order, by dint of demonstration, to wear off from the public mind the long formed and hard crusted prejudice; and that time was given in the long delay of granting the repeatedly urged, and as often rejected claims of the Irish Catholics. Little did the petitioners imagine that the very rejection of their just demands only tended to insure and render permanent the attainment of their object. For every new refusal to grant their petition brought on a fresh discussion on the merits of their claims; till, the whole world being made at length acquainted with their wrongs, the general voice declared itself against their oppressors; and the awakened sympathies of their fellow beings universally called for a redress of their unparalleled grievances.

What the petitioners craved was the restitution of their temporal rights; but their religion, for their firm adherence to which they had incurred their civil disqualifications and forfeitures; but the Saviour's spotless spouse; their long and much calumniated mother, had her character to clear in the face of the world; admitted as her case was now for once into a tribunal the most public of any, and open to the inspection of all mankind. She had there to compel with the irresistible force of truth her very traducers and adversaries to declare, in their own full and open court, her character in every sense unstained; and her whole conduct unimpeachable. Had she not, with the fullest knowledge and consent of all parties, obtained this verdict in her favor; the temporal rights, which by a hasty decision of Parliament her children might have regained; would have soon again been torn from them by the hostile still, as uninformed and misdirected multitude.

It is still further remarkable that this signal victory obtained by the Catholic Church, has been wholly fought and won by her very opponents. Nay, those the most opposed to her, have been made to sustain the brunt of the battle in her favor, and have triumphantly terminated to her wish the long enduring and still doubtful contest. It was not a friendly and a truly liberal Canning; but a Peel, a party man, sent in against her from the enemy's camp; it was not her well-wisher, a Marquis Wellesley; but her avowed enemy, a Duke of Wellington; who, yielding to a mightier force than the one he conquered at Waterloo; presented her with that civic crown, which he, and his anti-catholic colleague, had solemnly pledged themselves never to grant her.