

franchise—but still 'tis in possession of the shield and helmet, the legislative, executive, and judicial powers—(as far at least as these functions of the state, have not been transferred to a newly-created body, and withdrawn from the hands in which the Constitution has placed them)—such defensive armour we still possess, handed to us by an ancestry whose skill in matters of law and politics is superior to praise or imitation, and whose established Constitution—in defiance of rebellions, wars, foreign or domestic foes—has made Britain to be the Queen of nations! Before, then we give up these inherited defences, and make a vital change in an illustrious Constitution—which we are bound by every tie of interest and honor to transmit unimpaired to posterity—should we not at least cautiously make inquiry, first, respecting the power, and secondly, respecting the disposition, that moves and governs the Roman Catholic Body.

These two points I take to be the most essential of all connected with “the question” and yet they are not the oftenest examined nor the best known, plainly they can only be known, by ascertaining what *that* is which gives to the body its *objects, union, and name*—by ascertaining in fact what Romanism is, or its system of Church polity, and discipline, and doctrine—yet these are matters, as I said, but rarely inquired into, thought to be things *merely ecclesiastical*; fit only for divines and pedants, and respecting them accordingly most modern politicians, whether occupying seats in the Imperial Legislature or deliberating in a more humble sphere, express an absolute indifference if not a sovereign contempt. First, then, let us look to the power of the Romanish body.

The power, my Lord, of any community may be learned at once from an old *sablé*—in one word, it is union, or combination; an army, we know, of 100 men might disperse 100,000—and in civil matters, though the disproportion be not at all so great, yet the least experience will prove the overwhelming power of an extensive indivisible combination—over which suppose there presides an able Governor, and the whole plan of which presents, like the military plan, a system of graduated and well adjusted subordination, every part being simply governed by the law of obedience to its superior.

The consideration of the efficacy and the existence of such a combination is, I think, a matter worthy of present attention; and in this I am glad to find myself agree with the noble lord now holding the helm of the state, who in Parliament, last Session, imputed the troubles of Ireland to the remarkable combination, now existing in the country—a view which I shall endeavour to open and pursue—and, as philosophy requires a *successive* investigation of causes, I shall try to investigate the *source* and *principle* of that combination; and mark, Gentlemen, particularly that, should that source and principle be permanent or be allowed to remain, the danger is permanent and will remain—in that case, even for the combination to cease in point of fact is nothing; it is but a passing and a returning phenomenon; 'tis as if a thunder cloud should roll away, and yet the electric fluid still