

O'CONNELL'S BIRTHDAY.

To the future historian of Ireland the sixth of August shall be an anniversary laden with glorious recollections. The sixth of August is the birthday of O'Connell. To every Irishman who has a heart capable of entertaining a generous sentiment the sixth of August shall henceforth be an antithesis to the day on which the green soil of his native land was first violated by the hostile tread of the Saxon. In future days, when the nationality which we now successfully strive for shall have become a substantial and enduring reality, the sixth of August shall be commemorative of the man whose genius and energies, consecrated to freedom and fatherland, won for them an imperishable triumph over alien despotism, and secured for his fellow-countrymen the blessings of "happy homes and altars free!"

When, on this his present anniversary, we contemplate the marshalled hosts of the Irish people, under O'Connell's guidance, about to overstep the threshold into the temple of independence, we cannot help contrasting their present condition with what it was when he first started into political existence. At that time our country, after a "bright and brief era" of prosperity which excited the malignant jealousy of England, having been forced by lawless violence into an irregular resistance, had been deprived of the support of those whose counsels had raised her hopes, but whose arms had failed to achieve her independence. The people, without their leaders, disconcerted, though not dismayed, had struggled in vain (for what could undisciplined and unprepared valour effect?)—Like a flock whose shepherd had been slain, they were scattered wide, and became the prey of relentless wolves. Military licentiousness worked its wicked will; and a more pitiless tyranny, in form of law, seized in its cruel and crushing fangs whatever the bayonet and the sabre had spared. The leaderless and panic-stricken multitude had now bade adieu to hope, and resigned themselves to black despair. The hated alien and his vile agent knew no control.—But that Providence, whose mysterious agency raised up a Moses to lead forth his chosen people from the midst of their oppressors, and conduct them to a land of freedom, forsook not the suffering and the afflicted in the hour of their tribulation. Through the gloom of oppression there shone forth the star of hope heralding a day of refulgent freedom. As among the shepherds of old, he that had been predestined to lead them forth from bondage was fitted for the task by his skill—"in all the learning of the Egyptians," so was it with him whose ordained mission it was to be the guiding one of the Irish people. A witness of the atrocities and inhumanity exercised upon his fellow countrymen under the names and forms of law, he speedily became convinced that from the law only could they then obtain redress, and accordingly to its study he devoted himself. His genius soon mastered its great leading principles, and his ardent perseverance successfully pursued

through its subtlest windings the most minute details. From the arsenal of the enemy he drew the arms which had been so annoyingly directed against the people, and retorted them upon their assailants.—From the very weapons of the antagonists he constructed a bulwark behind which he rallied the discomfited people. From the very commencement of his career in what an uninterrupted series of vast and various toils do we behold him engaged. At first labouring to elevate into a posture of dignity the mind of Ireland, then prostrate from recent defeat; being under a necessity of almost creating the very materials and implements wherewith he had to work—collecting slowly around him those who had not totally abandoned themselves to despair—encouraging the dispirited; consoling the sorrowful; giving hope to the faint-hearted; confounding the calumniator—and, as he worked upon ardent temperaments, checking the rash and impetuous—guiding, counselling, encouraging, controlling—he followed on his determined course through the many impediments of open enemies and perfidious seeming friends, till, in spite of every opposing barrier, he won Catholic Emancipation. Had he rested here, his glory though incomplete, would yet have been secure.—But he regarded nothing as done whilst anything remained undone. Emancipation in itself he rightly looked on as of no advantage, save as a means for arriving at an ulterior end. A little time sufficed to convince him that the proposed end was unattainable in a foreign parliament, and he addressed Ireland on the subject of Repeal. In the mean time the reform question, long canvassed by abstract reasoners in England, assumed a palpable and bodily form, from the influence of the French revolution of 1830. The people of England clamoured for reform, but aristocratic corruption, strongly entrenched in its parliamentary citadel, scornfully defied them. The Irish people, flushed with recent success, led on by O'Connell, came generously to their aid, and at once, beneath their united assault, the outworks were forced, and the citadel thrown open to the English by Irish generosity, as many a bastioned city had been won for them by Irish valour. Such are the triumphs that O'Connell has won—such are some of the victories which he has disciplined the Irish nation to achieve. Thanks to his teaching, they have learned the way to win. Docile and prudent they have become—at the same time, determined and persevering. The past serves as a mirror, wherein they can contemplate the future. In educating the national mind, O'Connell has taught the Irish people to know the perfidy of their oppressors in the history of the past—they never shall be dupes for the future. He has shown them the successful result of combination and unity of action. What they practised with success for the attainment of Emancipation and Reform, they are determined unflinchingly to adopt for the winning of Repeal.

In calling the attention of our readers to the history of the Liberator this day, we attempt not panegyric. O'Connell's niche in the Pantheon of immortality is already marked out. Distant nations and remote climes have already anticipated the decision of posterity. His name is borne to us from far America, mingled with that of their own Washington. The fiery and marshal Gaul for a moment forgets Napoleon to shout O'Connell.—To the echo of the Alps it is almost as familiar as that of Tell, and the chivalrous Pole shouts his hurra at the same time for Kosciusko and O'Connell. When ever men struggle in bondage or despotism, the name of our O'Connell is a word of hope and fear.—*Daily Freeman.*

"The following remarks, made by Mr. O'Brien in the House of Commons, present succinctly the causes of the discontents in Ireland:

HOUSE OF COMMONS, July 14.

Mr. Smith O'Brien drew attention to the state of Ireland, moving "that this House will resolve itself into a committee for the purpose of taking into consideration the causes of the discontent at present prevailing in Ireland; with a view to the redress of grievances, and to the establishment of a system of just and impartial government in that part of the United Kingdom."

He pointed to the late events as proving the necessity for inquiry; the congregation of immense multitudes at eight-and-forty hours' notice; the rising of the rental rent from 500*l.* to 3,000*l.* weekly; the junction of the middle classes, of the Roman Catholic clergy, and even of members of the aristocracy. All this agitation could not be the work of one man, as some superficial inquirers supposed. He read a passage from a letter by Dr. Kensing, titular Bishop of Ossory, a prelate most moderate in his political sentiments—who, in declining to attend a repeal meeting, admitted that he saw no hope of relief for Ireland, except from a domestic Legislature. That feeling had been engendered in Ireland by the manner in which the country had been governed by a British Parliament. Mr. O'Brien took a retrospect of Irish history, to illustrate the position that the feeling was caused by no recent act of Government. Before the Union, Ireland was distracted by internal disputes fostered by England. Then came the penal code of William and Mary. During the American war, Ireland obtained all the points at issue between the two countries, and relapsed into apathy. The rebellion, fomented by England, was followed by the Union; when England's debt of 446,000,000*l.* (annual charge, 16,560,000*l.*), and Ireland's of 28,000,000*l.* (annual charge 1,942,000*l.*) were converted into a joint burden—a difference which no subsequent remission of taxation for Ireland had counterbalanced. Another effect of the Union was to increase absenteeism; which the Irish people expected to be cured by the attractions of a separate Parliament, and by a tax on absentees. Another consequence was the consolidation of public establishments, of which he did not question the propriety; but some compen-

sation might have been made, to Ireland. Why should not Ireland have some of the finest harbors in the world? England has 9 dock yards—Ireland not one. Of the £6,500,000 for navy estimate this year, he calculated that only £10,000 was expended in Ireland. There was, indeed, an army expenditure in Ireland; but he never heard that it was intended by way of compensation. The Irish exchequer remits to England £25,000,000 or £26,000,000 yearly; the English exchequer to Ireland £8,000,000. Catholic emancipation was conceded to Ireland in the dread of civil war; for six years it was practically inoperative; for, with one or two exceptions, Catholics were as much excluded from office as before, until Lord Normanby's proclamation of equality for all classes. The Catholics form four-fifths of the population of Ireland; he calculated (for returns were refused to him) that twenty three Protestants had been promoted to office in Ireland by the present Government, and three Catholics; against which must be set off the causeless dismissal of two Catholics. Other grievances were inflicted by the Irish reform bill; Ireland ought to have 135 or 175 representatives, in order to have a proportionate share in the representation. In England, the electors are as 1 to 24 of the population; in Ireland, as 1 to 100. The Irish had been exasperated by the Spottiswoode conspiracy, and by Lord Stanley's registration bill, which the Tories used in turning the late Government out of office, saying that the subject would not brook delay, though they had been two years in office without doing anything! While a church establishment is maintained for one-tenth of the population, the Catholic clergy are not even provided with residences; and the miserable grant to Maynooth meets with insulting opposition. If he were a Roman Catholic, he should not hesitate for one moment to become a Repealer. They did not want ascendancy—they wanted only equality. The principal question if the Union were repealed, would be whether it was desirable to have endowments for all churches, or no endowments for any.—The present Government, when they were out of power, promised they would take all these subjects into their anxious consideration, and not lose an hour without reforming the abuses of the church. But two years have they been in office without doing it. He was rather in favor of endowing the clergy of all religious persuasions. Lord Lyndhurst's declaration of alienage rankles in the minds of the people. They claimed equal corporate reform with England. The management of the poor law had been overbearing; and of the commissioners, six were English and four Irish. Government call upon Parliament to pass an obsolete arms bill, with new enactments, protested against by the majority of Irish members. What had Parliament done for Ireland's local government? What for railways? Lord Morpeth proposed to guarantee a portion of capital for railways in Ireland; but the proposition was rejected by the House. For Canada, who rebelled, Government guaranteed a loan of 1,500,000*l.* for public works and 240,000*l.* was spent for steam navigation.