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(From Brownson's Quarterly Review.)

As far as we can judge, at this distance and with our very limited information, England is rapidly verifying the old saying, *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat*. She received from God, with the Catholic religion, a most excellent political and civil constitution; but she seems to be resolved on doing her best to destroy it. The so-called Reformation in the sixteenth century, which followed close upon the destruction of the old nobility in the wars of the Roses, by uniting in the king both the temporal and spiritual sovereignty, disturbed the proper balance of the estates of the kingdom, and made once free and merry England, under the Tudors and the Stuarts, virtually an absolute monarchy; the rebellion in the seventeenth century, which beheaded Charles the First, and the revolution which placed Dutch William on the throne, and more lately the Elector of Hanover, unduly depressed the authority of the crown, threw too much power into the hands of the aristocracy, and converted the government into an oligarchy; the Reform Bill of 1832, and kindred measures which have since followed, have in turn broken the power of the aristocracy, given predominance to the Commons, and subjected the government to the fluctuating interests and passions of the business population. A further change, which shall clear away both monarchy and aristocracy, and favor the British empire with a Jacobinical reign of terror, would seem to be only a question of time.

The Reform Bill established the supremacy of the Commons, and introduced the elementary principle of Democracy; the Free Trade policy, which Sir Robert Peel found himself unable to resist, places the nation under the control of the trading and manufacturing classes, to the serious detriment of the agricultural interests, and to the ruin or emigration of the rural population. To remedy the evils which necessarily follow, new political reforms are demanded, and these, if obtained, will demand others still, and thus on to the end of the chapter, because each new political reform will only aggravate the evil it was intended to cure. English statesmen have been applauded, and have applauded themselves, for the wisdom with which, during the convulsions of Continental Europe, they have staved off revolution and civil war by well-timed concessions to popular demands, but concession to popular demand is a mere temporising policy, and a temporising policy seldom fails in the end to be ruinous to every government that adopts it. It deprives it of the moral strength which is derived from fixed and determinate principles, and reduces it to a mere creature of expediency. A struggle immediately commences between it and its subjects,—they to get all they can, and it to concede as little as possible,—in which they are sure to come off victorious at last. The fact that the government yields at all, is a concession that it holds its power rather by sufferance than right, and gives an air of justice to the popular demands against it.

The effects of the past policy of the British government may be seen in the uncertain movements of the present nominally conservative ministry. It is a ministry without any mind of its own; it can only prepare the way for a democratic revolution, and consequent anarchy and military despotism.

The ministry seem to us to be hastening on this deplorable result—deplorable for England, and of no advantage to us—by their madness in renewing the old Protestant persecution of Catholics. Henry and his daughter Elizabeth, unhappily for their own country and the world, made England a Protestant state. The most shameful and barbarous persecution of Catholics preserved her as such down to 1829, when the Catholic Relief Bill, reluctantly conceded by Wellington and Peel, in order to avoid the horrors of a threatened civil war, changed her in principle from an exclusively Protestant state to a state professing no religion in particular, and leaving its subjects free to be of any religion they choose, providing it be nominally Christian. Great Britain then threw open the Imperial Parliament to Catholics, as she had already done to Dissenters, and recognized them as free subjects and free citizens of the empire. In so doing, she made her Protestant Church a monstrous anomaly in her constitution, and really committed herself to its annihilation as a state religion. A party resolutely opposed to it, strong enough in spite of its influence to recover their liberties as electors and senators, could have no disposition to sustain it, and could hardly prove unable, in the long run, to withdraw from it the support of the state. *C'est le premier pas qui coûte*. They could more easily, after having gained admission into Parliament, go further, and overthrow the Establishment, than they could gain that admission itself. They could not be expected to stop with that achievement. Logical consistency, if nothing else, would require them to

go further, and eliminate the anomaly from the constitution. The necessity of logical consistency might not, indeed, be strongly felt by the adherents of the Establishment, who generally contrive to dispense with logic, and to utter much solemn cant about *via media*, or the middle way between truth and falsehood; but the party opposed, and whom this solemn cant only insults and disgusts, could not be stayed by so feeble a barrier. They must have consistency; either the consistency of dissent with the non-conformist, or the consistency of truth with the Catholic. In opening her Parliament to Dissenters, and in signing the Catholic Relief Bill, Great Britain, whether she intended it or not, gave the death-blow to the Anglican Establishment. She committed herself to what was for her a new policy, and from which she cannot henceforth retreat without shame and ruin. The Anglican Establishment, or Church of England, it is well known, is a creature of the state. It was made by the crown and Parliament; and now that the crown counts for little, and the royal prerogative yields to the majority of the House of Commons, it is idle to suppose that a Parliament in which Catholics and Dissenters have seats will not, sooner or later, exert its power to unmake it, especially since it is no longer in harmony with the other parts of the constitution.

The late ministry, probably for the purpose of breaking up the Tenant League that was forming in Ireland, and boding no good to Irish landlords, made a show, in its Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, of re-establishing Protestantism, and governing as if the state were still a Protestant state. Its success threw it from place, and secured it the contempt of the Christian world. The Derby ministry, seeing the embarrassment the English and the Irish Catholics might cause them in carrying out such policy as they have, seem to be in earnest to restore deposed Protestantism, and to administer the government as if the Catholic Relief Bill had never been granted. This we regard as a proof of its madness. It is too late to threaten the disfranchisement of Catholics, or to hope any thing for the state from the persecution of the Church. Statutes may be passed against Catholics of the most oppressive nature, the old penal codes of England and Ireland may be revived in all their Satanic rigor, but all in vain. England can never become again an exclusively Protestant state. The Catholic element in both England and Ireland is stronger than it was in 1829, when it was strong enough to force Wellington and Peel to concede Emancipation, and graver consequences would follow the repeal of the Catholic Relief Bill than were apprehended from a refusal to grant it. Neither English nor Irish Catholics are now the timid and depressed body they were then; they have a firmer and a bolder spirit, a higher and a more thoroughly Catholic tone; and are, in England at least, more numerous and better organized. They are cheered now with visible tokens of God's grace. The Lord seems to have withdrawn the rod of chastisement for the present, and to permit his countenance once more to shine upon them. In the light of his countenance they rejoice and are strengthened. The day of their deliverance, and of his vengeance on their oppressors, is apparently nigh at hand. Persecution cannot now break their spirit; it will serve only to give them fresh courage and zeal, and to add daily to their numbers and influence; for the present seems to be one of those seasons when in the Divine providence judgments are not delayed, and punishment follows close on the heels of the offence. This may be seen in the results of the late Red Republican revolutions. They were got up and directed primarily against the Church, the only solid basis of society, and they swept as a tornado over more than half of Europe. They have all failed, and their only notable result has been that of breaking the bonds with which infidel governments and paganised statesmen had bound the Church, and giving her a freedom and independence of action she has hardly enjoyed before since the breaking out of the Protestant Reformation. Even the republic of France, with General Cavaignac at its head, found itself obliged to send its troops to restore the Holy Father, compelled by the very party that made that republic to fly from Rome.

It seems to us that the time for reviving the old persecution of Catholics is exceedingly ill chosen. Such persecution will naturally force Catholics to seek the means of self-defence. The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill has destroyed their confidence in the Whigs, who can never again count on their support as a body. They never had much confidence in the Tories, and will certainly have less if the Tory ministry continues to persecute them. They will be driven, then, to unite with such as are opposed to both the Whigs and the Tories, and therefore with the Manchester politicians; that is, with a republican party. If you turn both crown and aristocracy against them, they will, however reluctantly, combine

their force with the party from whom crown and aristocracy have nothing to hope, but much to fear. The accession to power of the Manchester school, commanding as it does the sympathies of both the people and government of this country, would be virtually the accession of democracy; and Great Britain cannot become a democracy without descending from her present proud eminence to the rank of a third or fourth rate European power. Catholics are loyal and patriotic, and would not join with the party whose views are so hostile to the temporal interests of their country, without a severe struggle; but they do and must place their religion before their politics, and they know perfectly well that the prince who persecutes their Church forfeits his right to their allegiance. Our obligation to obey the temporal ruler is restricted to obedience in those things which are not repugnant to the law of God, as interpreted by the Catholic Church. When the prince commands that which is contrary to that law, so interpreted, we are released from the obligation of obedience; for we must obey God rather than man. How, then, could the support of Catholics for a government that persecutes them? or not expect them to oppose such government by all means in their power, not in themselves unjust? If the temporal interests of their country suffer by the course they adopt, let it be so. The Church of God is more to them than country, and they can never hesitate to sacrifice the interests of the latter rather than the rights of the former, when you place them in a position in which they must sacrifice one or the other. You have no right to seek the temporal interests of the state at the expense of the interests of religion. If you do not, you will find Catholics among your most loyal and patriotic subjects; if you do, you must expect them to oppose you. You have no right to complain of them, for you, not they, are the party in the wrong. It seems to us, then, a very mad policy, in a professedly conservative British ministry, to force the Catholics of the empire into a union with radicals or democrats as the only means of securing the freedom of conscience.

Great Britain is, at the present moment, not only threatened with a democratic revolution, but also with a formidable foreign invasion. We have no doubt that Napoleon the Third wishes for peace, and will seek it, if by it he can effect his purposes; but we cannot suppose him afraid of war, placed, as he just has been, at the head of an empire whose chief recollections are of military glory. He not unlikely wishes to repair the defeat of Waterloo, and we cannot presume him unwilling to return at London the visit paid by the British troops to Paris in 1815. He appears to be preparing to return that visit, and the attempt to do so we can well believe would not beat all distasteful to the French army, or to the French people. Appearances certainly indicate that at no distant day the haughty island queen will be visited by a French army, and that she will have to fight—not to annex new kingdoms to her Indian empire, not merely to save her distant colonies in Africa or America, but in defence of her own fireside—against an enemy her equal in bravery, her superior in military science, and urged on by the enthusiasm of a new dynasty, the memories and rivalries, the victories and defeats, of seven hundred years. England's insular position has saved her from being the theatre of the principal foreign wars in which she has been engaged; but we recollect no instance in her history, from Julius Cæsar down to William Prince of Orange, in which she has been invaded without being obliged to succumb to the invader. If the new French Emperor should effect a landing on her shores, as it is thought he may without serious difficulty, she will find it no child's play to prevent it from becoming another Norman Conquest. The Catholics constitute about one-third of the population of the United Kingdom. Can she afford, in the present juncture of affairs, to alienate the affections of so large a portion of her population? Can she dispense with their aid? Or can she, if she disfranchises and persecutes them for conscience' sake, count on their support? Will Catholic Ireland, whom she hardly keeps tranquil by one half of her regular army at home, consent to shed her blood in defence of her tyrant and persecutor? Ireland is indeed somewhat apt to disappoint the calculations of her friends, and by her internal divisions, or by often deceived hopes of conciliating a hostile government, to secure the triumph of her aggressors; but we can hardly believe that she will support in peace or war any ministry mad enough to attempt to deprive her of her religious freedom. The Church is all that she has left of her ancient national greatness, and it is only in the independence of her Church that she retains any vestige of her former national independence. Destroy the independence of her Church by subjecting it to the state, or even to the Catholic hierarchy of England, and you extinguish the last spark of her national life, annihilate the

Irish as a distinct people, and absorb them in the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman population of the empire. That conquest, which you have been trying in vain for seven hundred years to complete, would then be consummated. Ireland lives only in the freedom and independence of her Church of all authority save that of the Holy See. Her faith and piety, her strong national feeling, and her deep sense of wrong and insult, of unheard of oppression, and unrelenting persecution continued for centuries, with all the malice, the cruelty, and cunning of hell—as well as all her old Celtic memories, associations, and affections—must indispose her to support a government that makes war on her Church, and the most that you can hope the influence of her clergy will be able to effect will be to restrain her from acts of open hostility. There are, also, the Irish settled in England, to the number, it has been said, though we can hardly believe it, of three hundred thousand men able to bear arms. Can a ministry hostile to their religion, and determined to deprive them of the rights of conscience, count on their support, or even their neutrality? Will they shed their blood for the power that is gorged with the spoils of their Church, that oppresses the land of their fathers, and deprives them of their dearest rights?

Great Britain is the main stay of the enemies of God and his Christ; she is drunk with the blood of martyrs; and in the approaching contest the prayers of two hundred millions of Catholics throughout the world will daily and hourly ascend for her defeat. Of English descent, a warm admirer of many traits in the character of Englishmen, speaking the English language for our mother tongue, and nurtured from early childhood in English literature, we have personally no hostility to England, and certainly should regret to see her become a French province; but we cannot deny that we should not grieve to see her humbled, for till she is humbled we cannot hope to see her return to the bosom of Catholic unity. She is and has been the bulwark of the Protestant rebellion against the Church, and of all the nations that broke the unity of faith and discipline in the sixteenth century, she has been the most cruel and barbarous in her treatment of Catholics. How, then, should we grieve to see her weeping in sackcloth and ashes her apostasy and cruelty to the people of God! Sorry are we that she needs punishment, but since need it she does, we cannot be sorry to see it inflicted, and warmer sympathy than ours she need expect from no Catholic heart. The prayers of Catholics she may, indeed, make light of, but they will not ascend in vain. They will be heard in heaven. For nations any more than individuals can always go on sinning with impunity. They must at length fill up the measure of their iniquity, and when they have done it, vengeance is sure to overtake them, and they fall, to rise no more for ever. To us the statesmen of England seem struck with a preternatural blindness.

The *London Quarterly Review* for last October, in its article on *Parliamentary Prospects*, shows even more alarm than virulence. It appears to be fully conscious of the critical state of the ministry, if not of the empire. It sees very clearly the embarrassment the Catholics of England, and especially of Ireland, may produce by their determination, partially carried into effect in the recent elections, to use their political power as electors and senators to force the government to repeal the acts repugnant to their religious freedom, and it seeks to arrest their action, well knowing their scrupulous fidelity to their oaths and engagements, by pretending that in so using their power they are violating the declarations and oaths on the strength of which the Catholic Relief Bill was granted. It assumes that their determination is an act of aggression on the Protestant constitution and the Church as by law established, which they had sworn not to disturb, and makes out what appears at first sight rather an awkward case against them. But who cannot make out a strong case when he is free to invent premises to suit a foregone conclusion?

It is not our province to criticise the declarations and oaths cited by the reviewer. We presume them to be such as a Catholic can take without heresy or schism, otherwise they would have been condemned by authority; but we say for ourselves, personally, that we would be hung, drawn, and quartered before we would subscribe to them. Our Catholic friends, no doubt, deemed them not only allowable, but also prudent; and they may have judged wisely. We, however, are no friend to liberal concessions of what is not our own, and we regard it always as highly imprudent even to appear to restrict the power or province of the Papacy in favor of the secular government. The arguments of our London cotemporary only confirm us in this opinion. When hard pressed men naturally concede every thing that they can in conscience, and if we cannot approve, we can at least excuse them; but the concessions they make seldom fail in the long run to return to their serious embar-