

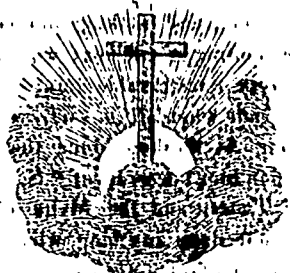
place in these Conventicles; to which things, therefore, may be justly applied, the saying of Cælius Natalis to Minucius Felix, but in a different cause—“Honest things always rejoice in publicity, but crimes are secret.” Observe that this cause for excommunication has no reference whatever to the proved iniquity of these societies, but to the simple fact of their secrecy. Whoever a secret society is found, however innocent it might be imagined to be, this ground of condemnation holds good.

“A third, is the oath by which they bind themselves to keep this secrecy inviolate; as if it was lawful for any one under the pretence of such a promise or oath to guard themselves when interrogated by legitimate authority, against being bound to confess all things that may be enquired into for the purpose of judging whether in these Assemblies anything is done against Religion, or the Common wealth, or the laws.” This third reason, again, has no reference to the goodness or badness of the society, but to the simple fact of secrecy secured by an oath. No matter, therefore, how innocent the intention of the Freemasons may be supposed to be in England or in Malta, they are condemned in spite of their intentions, and not by reason of them.

The fourth cause enumerated by this Pope is taken from the Civil Law. The fifth refers to the condemnation of the secret societies by many Princes and States. The sixth and last testifies that “these Societies and Aggregations are of bad fame among prudent and upright men, and that by their judgment whoever joins himself to them, incurs the blot or mark of depravity and perverseness.”

Such are the joint objections of Popes Clement and Benedict. Similar reasons are assigned by Pius VII.; and Leo XII. is not less vehement and explicit in denouncing as impious and wicked, impium ac sceleratum, the oath which binds the members of these societies to secrecy. From all these things it is abundantly clear that in every part of the world secret societies, of every kind, are condemned as wicked and impious, and we imagine that everywhere, certainly in England, the members of them are *ipso facto* excommunicated, and incapable of absolution, except from Rome; while those who abstain from denouncing to the proper spiritual authority any Catholics whom they may know to be members, are themselves equally excommunicated and equally incapable of absolution. Certainly, these are interesting and important facts, which it deeply concerns all of us to know. And if they were not before known in his diocese, the Archbishop of Malta would have been not commendable, but guilty of a gross dereliction of duty, if he had failed to warn his flock of their danger, and prevent their souls being perverted and ruined by cunning and designing men.

All Letters and Remittances are to be forwarded, free of postage, to the Editor, the Rev. Wm. P. McDonnell, Hamilton.



THE CATHOLIC.

Hamilton, G.D.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1844.

By the arrival of the *Caledonia* at Boston, we have very late and important news from England and Ireland. For the following summary we are indebted to the kindness of Mr. Charles Willmer, of Liverpool, who has sent us his *News Letter* of the 4th inst.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

The absorbing topic for the last three weeks has been the trial of Mr. O'Connell and others, which commenced in Dublin on Monday the 15th ultimo, an outline of which will be found in another column. As yet it is difficult to form any positive idea of what the result will be, but the general feeling is, that the government have made out but a poor case—and that the prosecution will tend rather to advance than crush the cause of Repeal. The speech of the Attorney-General in opening the proceedings, was characterized for nothing particular except the most consummate bigotry and hatred of Repeal and Repealers. The evidence in support of the Crown disclosed nothing that was not previously known to the whole world, whilst the speeches of the Counsellors for the various traversers have been marked by the most sterling eloquence—which will no doubt have their effect upon the jury. One circumstance preceded the commencement of the trial, which has caused no small degree of excitement in Ireland—from one end of the country to the other—and which is regarded by some as tantamount to a repeal of the Catholic emancipation act. It was the successful effort of the crown law officers to exclude from the jury every Roman Catholic. This proved the signal for renewed agitation—and the insult, as it is termed, will not easily be forgotten, and may perhaps cause some discussion in Parliament during the present session.

The proceedings in both houses so far have, of course, been only of a preliminary character.

The Anti-Corn Law League continue their agitation with unabated zeal—indeed we may say with increased vigour. Since we issued our last paper, they have held meetings which have been very numerous attended in most of the leading towns, not only of England, but they have extended the field of their speculations to Scotland. The subscription towards the £100,000 now exceeds £80,000.

IRELAND.

Trial of Mr. O'CONNELL and others.

The trial of Mr. O'Connell and the other traversers commenced on Monday the 15th ult., when James Hamilton, of Ormond Quay, was about to be sworn as the foreman of the jury, Sir Coleman O'Loughlin handed in a challenge to the array on the part of the defendants. This gave rise to a lengthened argument, at the close of which the chief justice said the majority of the court were of opinion that the demurrer should be allowed, and consequently that the challenge to the array could not be sustained. On Tuesday morning the jury was sworn, and the Attorney-General proceeded with his opening speech. He continued his statement up to five o'clock, at which hour he said he could not proceed further, as it was impossible he could finish that day. After a short conversation between the counsel for the crown, the court and the traversers counsel, it was agreed to allow the jury to their own homes, at the same time giving them strict injunctions not to hold communication with any person on the subject. The court adjourned to ten o'clock the following morning, when the Attorney-General resumed his address to the jury, and spoke during the whole period of the sitting of the court. He dwelt principally upon the evident attempts of the traversers and their instruments to undermine the fidelity of the army, and after referring at some length to the Mullaghmast and other “monster meetings,” concluded by impeaching the resolutions which it had been intended to submit to the prohibited meeting at Clontarf. The hon. and learned gentleman exhorted the jury to discharge their onerous duties firmly but moderately—with caution, but without fear. On Thursday, the Lord Chief Justice and his learned brethren took their seats on the bench at 10 o'clock. The first witness examined was Mr. F. B. Hughes, the government reporter, who stated that he had been a reporter for 17 years, and came to Ireland for the first time on the 20th of September last. Attended the meeting at Mullaghmast, on the 1st of October. He described the proceedings at that place, and read from his notes, a description of the banners, fancy dresses, and costume of “O'Connell's Police;” also the dress of scarlet velvet worn by Mr. O'Connell, &c. &c. as well as the national cap adopted on the occasion. The witness went on to read several passages from his notes at great length, at the desire of the court. He further described being at other meetings, and identified the various traversers who were present on those occasions. Mr. Hughes was cross-examined on the part of the defendants, but little of moment elicited.—Henry M. Latham was next called:—He came to Ireland as Mr. Hughes's assistant. The examination of this witness seemed to afford much amusement; but little beyond a corroboration of the previous testimony was obtained.—Charles Ross, also a go-

vernment reporter, was then called; but after a few preliminary questions as to being present at the meeting of Donnybrook, in June last, the Judge said, as the witness was entering into new matter, and as it was already half-past five, he would adjourn the court until the next morning, (Friday,) to meet at ten o'clock precisely. On Friday morning Mr. O'Connell, attired in the bar costume of the Queen's Counsel, entered court shortly before ten, and took his seat in the inner bar. The other traversers were also punctual in attendance. The whole of the day was occupied by the examination of Mr. Ross. Mr. Ross gave evidence of the proceedings at a meeting of the Repeal Association, on the 28th of August, at which Mr. O'Connell, Mr. John O'Connell, and Mr. Ray were present. After reading various portions of Mr. O'Connell's speech, in reference to a plan, which he had introduced at a previous meeting, for remodelling the Irish Parliament, he was asked by Mr. Henn if he had taken full notes of what had occurred? He replied, that he had not a full note of all that occurred. A cross-examination here ensued, and it was at length stated by the witness, that he took full notes of all that he thought material, omitting what was, in his estimation, unimportant. The objection was overruled, and the examination proceeded. The witness read such passages as he had taken down of Mr. O'Connell's speeches at the several meetings of the Repeal Association, at the Roughra, Clifton, and other meetings and dinners. He was then cross-examined at great length by Mr. Henn. He stated that he came to Ireland in July, 1843; that he was a little frightened at first, but his apprehensions soon subsided; that he came as reporter for the *Standard*, and was also employed by the government, and that he had received £400 for his services up to the next session of parliament. On Saturday, the first witness called was John Jackson, who stated, that he was the Irish correspondent of the *Morning Herald* during the last summer and autumn; had attended the association meetings, and transmitted to London his reports. Several note-books were successively handed to the witness, who stated that they were the original accounts which he had transmitted to the *Morning Herald*, and which had been sent back to Dublin for use on those trials. He had, since they arrived in Dublin, had them from Mr. Kemmis to put his initials to them. The witness proceeded to read from these note-books extracts from the speeches of Mr. O'Connell, delivered at various meetings, and he stated which of the traversers attended. The witness went through his reports of all the meetings to the 4th of October, at which, he said, he saw the Rev. Mr. Tierney, with Mr. O'Connell, Mr. John O'Connell, and the other traversers. He continued to say, in reply to Mr. Brewster, that the meetings were generally well attended, sometimes more sometimes less. The cross-examination was then commenced by Mr. Fitzgibbon, who seemed determined to