

the Union? or did they conceive it their duty under the circumstances to take that course? The people were already exasperated against England on account of the outrages heaped upon them with impunity by the English soldiery, they fretted to find that they were not allowed to discuss freely the question of Union, would it not have been adding fuel to the flame to encourage them to protest against the federal scheme? Might not a new rebellion be the result, and who, then, but the Catholic Bishops and priests would be held responsible for the inevitable destruction of the whole race? Only one course lay open to them. And that one they took up all the more willingly seeing that the honor of Castlereagh, the honor of Pitt, and through him of the British nation was plighted that Catholic Emancipation would be the immediate consequence of Union.

However, notwithstanding all the precautions taken by the Castle to ward off all expression of public opinion prejudicial to the new measure, a few really remarkable cases are on record in which the spirit of the nation escaping the vigilance of the law, entered a vehement and unequivocal protest against this alliance with England. Four-fifths of the barristers, the most respectable and intelligent body of men outside of the clergy, declared against it. Immortal O'Connell speaking for the Catholics of Dublin (and may it not be added for the Catholics of all Ireland?) denounced in scathing terms Pitt's favorite policy and entered a solemn protest against it. "If our opposition," said he, "to this injurious, insulting, and hated measure of Union were to draw upon us the revival of the penal laws, we would boldly meet a proscription and oppression, which would be the testimony of our virtue, and sooner throw ourselves once more on the mercy of our Protestant brethren, than give our assent to the political murder of our country." And that O'Connell's sentiments were those of the Irish people, the petition against the Act by 700,000 of his countrymen contrasted with the pro-union petition signed by scarcely 5,000 people, is the most convincing proof. Evidently then Ireland did not sigh for Union with Great Britain.

Not only, however, did the parliament of Dublin not speak the sentiments of the Green Isle, it did not speak its own convictions. The whole transaction, from beginning to end, shows that