

Catholics from offices in cities and corporations.

The 25th Charles II., commonly called "The Test Act," excluded them from all civil and military offices.

The 30th Charles II., prevented them from taking part in the legislation of the country.

An Act of William and Mary prevented the use of the Parliamentary franchise.

The horrors of the penal code were slightly relaxed in 1778, when American agitation and British fear permitted Catholics to hold property on leases for lives, but still the vast majority of the nation was excluded from the franchises, offices, and honors of the State, not on account of any moral or political delinquency, but merely on account of its religion. The whole history of the persecutions which Catholics have endured at the hands of Protestants of every denomination is one of the most curious phases of human perversity that the philosopher can find to study.

The Rev. Dr. Leland, a Protestant minister, writes as follows* on the plantation of Ulster, which James I. and his successor not only devised, but carried into effect:

They obtained commissions of inquiry into defective titles and grants of concealed lands and rents belonging to the Crown, the great benefit of which was to accrue to the projector, whilst the King was contented with an inconsiderable proportion of the concealment, or a small advance of rent.

Discoverers were everywhere busily employed in finding out flaws in men's titles to their estates. The old pipe-rolls were searched to find the original rents with which they had been charged, the patent rolls in the Tower of London were ransacked for the ancient grants, no means of industry or devices of craft were left untried to force the possessors to accept of new grants at an advanced rent. In general men were either conscious of defects in their titles, or alarmed at the trouble and expense of a contest with the Crown, or fearful of the issue of such a contest at a time and in a country where the prerogative was highly strained and strenuously supported by the judges. There are not wanting proofs of the most iniquitous practices of hardened cruelty, of vile perjury, and scandalous subornation, employed to despoil the fair and unoffending proprietor of his inheritance.

Unheard of confiscations were made in the northern parts, upon grounds of plots and conspiracies never proved upon their supposed authors. The original scheme of depopulation was never lost sight of, and a regular series of operations was carried on by special commissions and inquisitions, first under pretence of tenures and then of titles in the Crown, until the original inhabitants were almost completely exterminated. Parliament passed a law vesting the entire land of six counties in the Crown, the property of Irishmen, and the King immediately distributed upwards of 385,000 acres to his followers.* There were three divisions made of the spoils—first, to English and Scotch, who were to plant their portions of territory with English and Scotch tenants; secondly, to servitors in Ireland—that is, to persons employed under the Government, who might take English or Irish tenants at their choice; thirdly, to the natives of those counties, who were to be freeholders. Catholics and persons of Irish descent, who were known by the name of "mere Irish," were altogether excluded from this part of the country.

Such was the Plantation of Ulster, and, to show the spirit in which it was made, we give the following "Articles," extracted from the orders and condition of the Plantation of Ulster:

(7.) "The said undertakers, their heirs and assigns, shall not alien or demise their portions, or any part thereof to the mere Irish, or to such persons as will not take the oath which the said undertakers are bound to take by the said article, and to that end a proviso shall be inserted in the letters patent."

(8.) "The said undertakers shall not alien their portions during five years next after the date of their letters patent, but in this manner, viz, one third part in fee, farm, &c. But after the said five years they shall be at liberty to alien to all persons except the mere Irish." (Harris's "Hibernica," p. 66.)

The documents here cited give but a faint idea of the extreme misery created by this plantation. The administration of the law was quite consistent with the temper of the times, and the Protestant Bishop Burnet does not hesitate to denounce the partiality and injustice that were exhibited.†

* Leland, book iv. chap. 8.

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