

REPLY TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

TO THE IRISH CATHOLIC MEMBERS.

Brother Representatives—After two days expectation of seeing you, and Catholic Ireland addressed by some one with more claims upon your attention, I at length presume to intrude upon it, moved by the deep importance of the occasion.

Does not our duty to our religion—to our country—to ourselves—demand that we should meet to consider of the course to be taken in this emergency, when the prime minister of a realm including Catholic Ireland and millions of Catholics elsewhere, adopts the tone of the rankest and lowest anti-Catholic bigotry, and, in the name of civil and religious freedom, threatens a re-enactment of the penal laws.

Paragraph by paragraph let us consider this letter—the strongest, the most ominous, perhaps the most fateful document that ever issued from a British Minister.

"Insolent and insidious" is the decent and happy phrase that a prime minister of a powerful state does not scruple to apply to the Sovereign of a weak one—no doubt because it is weak!

Lord John Russell next condescends to say that he not only favored our civil rights, but that he actually thought it "even desirable that Catholic instruction should be given to the Irish immigrants." ("Immigrants?" Why so gentle, good, my lord? Is not "Alien's" a better word, and nearer to your heart, if not to your lips?)—"the Irish immigrants, in London, &c., who, without such help would be in heathen ignorance."

"Heathen ignorance!" Good, my lord! how know you what you thus so flippantly assert? In truth you know it not—you could not know it; for in the heart of the very poorest and most destitute "Irish Immigrant" (or alien?) there has been implanted, and there is ever found, a strong, true, deep sense of religion, the true—the only real enlightenment!

"Heathen ignorance!" In your own country, proud and contemptuous lord—in your own rich, and wealthy, and powerful England, is indeed "heathen ignorance," attested by Government commissioners and Parliamentary committees reporting on the mental condition of class after class of your population.

With the richest Church in the world—with an ecclesiastical system closely reticulated over the length and breadth of the land; with all appliances and means to boot, that the resources, the energy, and the pride of England can supply, to foster and strengthen what is called her natural religion—immense districts of the country—manufacturing, mining, and agricultural, are from time to time revealed to us in these reports as inhabited by human beings who know not even of a God; or, if their ears are familiar with his name, they are so "because they have heard it in curses!"

But I must hasten on, I pass with a smile at its childishness, his pettish and idle complaint that the Pope absolutely contravenes her Majesty's spiritual supremacy! What unheard of audacity on the part of his Holiness! What a new discovery by Lord John!

Oh! but he is in pain for "the spiritual independence of the nation, as asserted in even Roman Catholic times?" How kind—how very kind upon his part! and yet methinks Catholic interests might be safely left to the guardianship of a Wiseman, an Ulathorne, a Langdale, a Shrewsbury, an Arundel, a Newman, and other distinguished Catholic ecclesiastics and laymen of England, quite as safely at least as to that of a low Calvinist like my Lord John Russell.

What "proceedings" can he "adopt" in Parliament "in reference to the recent" act of the Pope? What chain can he, in vindication of "the liberty of Protestantism" (!) forge, that shall reach the spiritual domain assailed in vain throughout eighteen centuries by the rulers of this world at the instigation of the prince of the realms below? But the question for us, Catholic members of Parliament, is, *what chain shall we allow him to forge?*

If the lay Catholics of England (less numerous and more scattered than those of Ireland—who are, in truth, the people of Ireland)—if they cannot originate a rallying movement in defence of our religious freedom, the Irish people will show them the way, and call upon and stimulate to zealous activity, and second and support the efforts of the Irish Catholic members to push to all extremes the privileges of a minority in Parliament to obstruct and defeat the new and mongrel persecution!

Oh! people of Ireland; if you had your own Parliament, would a minister dare to threaten your religion? And do you not now at least begin to see that we were right, who told you that without your own Parliament, even the scanty and hard-worn concessions of 1829 would not be left to you in permanence.

If you had your own Parliament, would a minister of the then really united empire (really united because the connection would be the friendship, in addition to that of dynasty and executive government,) would be dare to apply to the religion and religious practices of those who formed one-third of that empire in mere numbers, but much more than one-third in other elements of strength, the indecent, the vulgar, or blasphemous phrase of "mummers of superstition."

"Mummers of superstition!" Hear ye that, you Catholics who would give the control of education into the hands of the English Government! Hear ye that, Catholics, who would allow that Government all liberty to meddle and to intervene in the matters of discipline; but who sneer at, condemn, and seem disposed to rebel against the interference of the authorities of your Church!!

"Mummers of superstition!" "Mummers of superstition!" We will placard the phrase upon

the walls of our cities and our towns. We will tell of it in field and hamlet. We will write it up within our houses. We will engrave it deep upon our own and our children's hearts! We will bear it in lively and ever present remembrance, as a lasting and final memorial of English goodwill and consideration for us and for all that we hold most dear!

"Oh, but there is a weak and, in all respects, a contemptible attempt to make us think this phrase applied to Puseyism. Nothing can be more contemptibly idle. He does, indeed, assail the Puseyites; but for what? For "leading their flocks, step by step, to the verge of the precipice"—that precipice being *Catholicism*! And the usages he characterises as "mummers of superstition," what are they? Four of them distinctly and essentially Catholic—viz., "the honor paid to saints"—"the claim of infallibility for the Church"—"the recommendation of auricular confession," and "the administration of penance and absolution!"

And in his concluding sentence he distinctly applies the phrase to the practices of the "propounders and framers of innovations," amongst which he has prominently placed the great subject of his letter, the creation of Catholic dioceses in England.

And now what is the tendency of the whole letter? Manifestly, as events are proving, to inflame the lowest and most rancorous bigotry! And last words alone, and those the words of a Prime Minister, should be insufficient, he polluted the standard of his Sovereign by causing it to wave, and abused the powers of his office by ordering salutes to be fired and other signs of State rejoicing to be made on recurrence of an anniversary, the celebration of which involves a foul and utter calumny upon Catholic loyalty and virtue!

Yes—the low, obscene, and brutal profanities of the 5th November had the sanction of, and were in truth participated in by the wise, the enlightened, the liberal, the high-souled British Government! Aye, and by that very set of men in power who but a year ago professed such horror of processions and demonstrations irritating to religious feeling and calculated to breed outrage and riot!

For the present I must end. But where will end the fearful impulse thus given by the Government to the worst passions of our nature? Who shall say that the *Gordon riots may not be re-enacted under such encouragement?* Or if the knowledge that it is as easy to fire a counting-house as a chapel, and that rioters once let loose may not make nice distinctions—if this reflection check the leaders in their noble and independent and liberal public demonstrations, who shall say that the men they have inflamed and maddened may not murder Dr. Wiseman in the streets; and if so, how can Lord John Russell hold himself free of the crime?

Catholics of Ireland! If the iron that we once cast from our limbs have not entered into our souls, should we not bestir ourselves in this emergency of our religion and our liberties? Silence and quiescence will but encourage the carrying out of this active aggression—that persecution that is now but threatened in words. Empty words, indeed, we will make them, if we band together once more in vindication of our rights—in the defence and protection of our altars and our faith. Awake, arise then, and give yourselves once more the good old fight—the battle for civil and religious liberty. And this time, when we conquer, as we surely shall if we stand together as of old, we will not stop until we obtain a firm and last security against all future attempts to filch from us by insidious gifts and devices, the fruits of our struggle, or to snatch them from our hands by the rude grasp of power, at the bidding of the designedly inflamed and maddened bigotry and intolerance of England.

JOHN O'CONNELL.

THE PRESS AND THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY.

(From the Tablet.)

In reviewing the declamation, and occasionally the more serious reflections, made by the Protestant press on the great measure instituted by Pius IX. in England, we cannot but think the present excitement utterly artificial—a clamor which will die out like a Guy Fawkes' bonfire. The article in Wednesday's *Times* indicated a consciousness of this hollowness, when it remarked on the curious manner in which each party had seized on this event as a kind of wind-fall, to be turned to account thoroughly worked for their own special purposes. Exeter Hall instantly sets a thousand tongues preaching about Antichrist and men of sin; the Puseyites re-assert apostolical succession; Lord John Russell and Mr. Disraeli turn the affair to political profit. The *Times* sagely suggest the real principle to be worked is, that the Church of England is not so much *High or Low*, as *Broad*, and takes in very wide diversities of opinion. The *Daily News* tells the public it may very soon expect to hear the Protestant Bishops teaching doctrines quite "low" enough to please Exeter Hall itself. The school of Hoadley and Paley is the natural rebound from that of Pusey and Bennett. It plies, and reasonably enough, that large body of the younger Protestant Clergy, who, in the last six years, during the formation of their mature intellect, have been nurtured in a kind of horror of that latitudinarian school which Hoadley began, and which, at the beginning of the present century, when our own Bishop Milner wrote his great work, "The End of Controversy" had almost absorbed the whole Church of England, as very likely it may do again. The position of those earnest-minded men, as they often truly call themselves, is painful; but the crisis, surely, is near.

These and many other papers now and then speculate on the motives of the Holy See in this step. It was because the Pope was aggrieved by the political

support afforded by England to Italian revolutionists, he wanted to be revenged; it was because he was misinformed about England; because, he thought "England was becoming Catholic," and he would, by a *coup-de-main* of excessive audacity, carry the fortress at once; because, in fine, "Popish emissaries" thirst for the silver and gold of England, and will leave no stone unturned to extend their lucrative influence. Strange misconception! The Catholic Church attends, in the first place, to the *domesticos fidei*. Legal barriers being removed, as all the world knows, why should such an important part of the vineyard as the Catholics of England be denied an Ecclesiastical organisation?

We are bound to say this plain, common-sense, and true view has been taken by many journals, and among them by several provincial newspapers, which have contrasted favorably with the fanatical and often utterly hypocritical fury of those in the metropolis. One paper quaintly says that if the Bishop of Hexham behaves like a gentleman, he will, no doubt, be treated as such in that ancient good town. Another, whilst admitting the absurdity of denying to the Catholics the right to have their own Ecclesiastical government, rather congratulates itself on the increased zeal and charity it anticipates on the part of the Protestant Bishops. It seems the Catholics are like poor and hungry invaders, dangerous to the rich and lazy. The *Daily News* lately talked of the hordes of Irish Catholics deluging England each harvest; *Punch* satirises the Right Rev. Dominic Barefoot, in lodgings somewhat near the river, forgetting, apparently, the Apostolic poverty which has been the glory of the Catholic Church, though hardly of its rivals. We observe in the *Liverpool Times* a sensible article rebuking its London namesake for the folly of talking about reviving the penalty of *premunire*. The English nation cannot revert to the principle of persecution. Even one great measure, like the repeal of the corn laws, is irrevocable. Whether sudden or gradual, political steps cannot be recalled; but the latter, to which class the principle of toleration belongs, of course, cannot be annulled without a complete revolution.

The Puseyite journals require little comment. They speak, as may be expected, somewhat tamely, Lord John Russell and Dr. Blomfield having struck them in every sentence aimed at us. They register their protest; they renew the early salvos of the *Tracts for the Times*; but that is all. The party is completely dispirited.

The great outlying mass of infidelity, represented by such papers as the *Weekly Despatch*, look on the whole business very coolly. Their idea is that all half-and-half theories, all notion of Popery without the Pope, is to be got rid of once for all; that Catholicity, a consistent system, will take the place of the other imperfect forms of faith, all alike loathed and despised by the growing revolutionary party; and that when all faith shall have gathered into the citadel of Catholicity, then will be the time for a final battle between faith and no-faith. The Reformation, they think, was a false start in the race of "progress." There is in their view a great deal of truth. The final battle will come at last, when the powers of evil will set their faces against God, for a last conflict with His Church, and in that conflict, very sure are we, nothing but that body which is really and unmistakably, and has ever been known to be, the true Catholic Church, absolutely and integrally one, will ever come off victorious. A great thinker, Edmund Burke, laughs to scorn those who imagine that any Christian sect can stand if the Catholic Church goes. His words at this moment deserve attention. The battle with infidelity is ours, and, as we have shown, by the confessions of infidelity itself.

THE BURIAL OF RICHARD SHIEL.

The Whigs, after using Shiel on crack occasions, until he is well nigh used up; after curiously studying and dissecting his rhetorical flourishes, until they have every trick of his eloquence by rote, are heartily weary of his roccoco style, and, (pinning for something still more piquant and startling,) have thrust him away into a remote corner, to ponder at leisure on the wisdom, to say nothing of the chivalry, of an "alien in blood, in country, and in religion," selling himself, body and soul, to the hereditary oppressors of his race.

His exile from the Councils he bartered so much to gain admission to, is gilded over with true Whiggish plausibility. Greatness is thrust upon him in the shape of one of the frivolously important appointments, ordinarily reserved by statesmen for the decayed and imbecile of the aristocracy.

He is an English Ambassador, but his is the species of embassy that is notorious as a refuge for the bores of high places. A strange and sad finish this, for one of the most gifted and brilliant Irishmen of his age—"the young enthusiastic barrister, poet, orator, and agitator"—whom our fathers worshipped, and "whose fiery spirit fused into one silver flow of brilliant eloquence so many pure elements of democratic power."

"The man that is an apostate," says the inspired writer, "is an unprofitable man. He talketh with a perverse mouth." Shiel is a remarkable illustration of this proverb. With all his brilliant genius, and varied accomplishments, he was less useful to the Whigs than the dullest plodder of the House of Commons. The plodder might be in earnest, might put some heart into his advocacy, but no one, for a moment, could mistake Shiel.

In St. Stephen's he was the mere Artist—a dilettante orator, who poured out eloquent phrases of vague liberalism without conscience, conviction, or purpose, other than to win applause by his exquisite skill in grouping and coloring words—and to earn his hire.

And so all parties in England rated him. When he spoke, used-up statesmen, fastidious cri-

tics, all the habitues of the House flocked to hear him. They loved to have their ears tickled by his brilliant polished sentences. It was a new intellectual sensation, to watch his studied passion, his prepared excitement—to mark every responsive feature glow and expand, and every plastic limb writhe under the paroxysm of artist inspiration, whilst his strange screaming voice, with, now and then, a ringing sob in agony, or a single thrilling tone of deep emotion, booming a bass accompaniment to its shrill passion, harmonized wildly with the convulsive workings of his frame.

Since the triumphs of Edmund Kean, to whom his resemblance has been often noticed, such perfect artistic power of simulating passion has, probably, not been seen in England. Men went to gaze on and listen to him, as they go to the opera to hear Grisi pour forth her passionate song, or to marvel at the chaste beauty to Taglioni's classic movements—his speeches, like their exhibitions, were a study to the intellect, and a pleasure to the imagination; but the poorest thinker amongst his listeners rarely dreamt of being influenced to more than admiring wonder by his brilliant displays—for their hollowness was as thoroughly appreciated as their artistic beauty.

And yet, Heaven and his Country know that this feverish, excitable Actor had once been a frank, true, honest man—swayed by generous passions and spontaneous impulses—one whose noble, earnest speech—sometimes rising in zealous anger, sometimes murmuring in glowing hope—became a national chaunt, an inspired song.

Whilst he followed the holy impulses of the Patriot, the irrepressible enthusiasm of his poetic nature had led men's souls captive. He fired their passions—subdued all that was petty and grovelling in their instincts, and raised their ambition to a level with his own genius. Shiel lifted agitation out of the repulsive trickery of lawyer craft spiritualized and idealised the struggle for Emancipation, and breathed the poetry of his own nature into its most monotonous details.

It was a glorious sight, to see the enthusiastic and indignant orator, revelling in the wild sense of power, as he bearded the British Government in these days of hope and belief, before his virtue and his genius had withered under the touch of the tempter. Listen how his exulting sympathy with Tone breaks daringly forth from the cautious language O'Connell restricted him to:—

"Wolfe Tone says that the French troops were so near the Irish coast that he could have pitched a biscuit on shore. . . . How must his heart have beaten when he beheld that great armament, with its vast sails dilated in some sort by his own aspiring spirit, steering its course to the island where his cradle was rocked, where the bones of his fathers were deposited, on whose green fields his eyes had first rested, and on whose lofty peaks, against which the Atlantic breaks in thunder, he felt assured that his triumphant standard would be unfurled."

For this speech a prosecution was instituted against him, and was only abandoned from a change of Ministry.

Curious antecedents these, for a British Ambassador!

The narrow and tortuous policy—the mean and paltry shifts of diplomacy—will suit Shiel's temperament as little as the coarse drudgery, and unscrupulous career of a partisan. In Florence he may be ornamental, but we do not grudge the English Cabinet his usefulness. The man who, charmed with "Punch" at the fair bought him, and found, when he brought him home, he could not make him dance, did not commit a graver mistake than the Whigs, when they transplanted the impressionable Celt from the scenes and passion that gave food to his enthusiasm and inspiration to his genius, and set him to study as elements of a new fame, the tactics of a corrupt foreign faction.

And then, the vile uses they put him to. He, the Catholic Agitator, who had won all his political fame in the battle for religious freedom, and his forensic fame by his withering denunciation of Jury Packing, to be gibbeted at all time as one of the Ministry that, by excluding every Catholic from their juries, banished O'Brien, Mitchell, Meagher, all that was best and bravest from his unhappy country.

But we shall not trust ourselves to utter the feelings of contempt and indignation with which the popular mind regards his base compliance with Catholic degradation. Shiel is only the most illustrious example in our days of the political corruption which the British Government has engendered by her dazzling bribes, her insidious flatteries, and her luxurious voluptuousness, in the Catholic heart of Ireland.

Shiel is well away from English Councils. In Florence, the old poet spirit will find nurture. He may even learn to regret his criminal ambition; what he did for Ireland in his early days will return vividly to his memory, and help perchance, to console him for his later treacheries—but no! the curse and terrible retribution of sin!—all that nurtures the higher and more spiritual parts of our nature, gives more exquisite sensibility to the conscience.

The very walls of Florence will prate to Shiel of Dante. He, who, like our true, unstained poet orator, Meagher, was, for some bold patriotism of youth, cast forth to banishment, and doomed thenceforth to a life of woe and wandering. Like Meagher, this Dante tried to enforce his principles with arms in his hands, but it would not do. In exile he lived;—in exile he lies buried, with this inscription:—"Here am I, Dante, laid, shut out from my native shores."

Proud young heart! whose passionate devotion to Ireland no thought of self, no mean ambition, ever sullied—though you, too, pine in distant exile; and your days of banishment be heavy and hard to bear, they are not so bitter as the gilded exile of the English pensioner, who bought his hollow honors by