

Catholic Emancipation.



ANIEL O'CONNELL'S great achievement was the procuring of Emancipation for the Roman Catholics of Ireland. According to O'Connell's reasoning, emancipation meant the equality of Catholics and Protestants. It was a long uphill fight, but the more difficult the fighting, the greater the victory.

The first move of O'Connell was the formation of the famous Catholic Association in 1823. Its first object was to promote concord among all classes of Irishmen; coupled to this praiseworthy object were: the encouragement of a liberal education on the basis of religion; the taking of a religious census; the building of Catholic churches, and the establishment of cemeteries; the promotion and encouragement of science and agriculture, Irish manufactures and commerce; lastly the defense of Catholic interests in the press. Series of petitions were to be circulated amongst the members, which would make known the demands of the Irish people to the British parliament.

The organization prospered. Protestants joined in large numbers. Bishops and priests took a hand in the struggle. The immense association alarmed the English parliament, and it was branded as *unlawful* in 1825; but, not to be outwitted, O'Connell himself dissolved the society. However the association had accomplished its aim. England was at last awakened to the danger threatening in Ireland.

In 1825, the House of Commons had passed an Act of Emancipation but when it came to the Upper House it was thrown out. In 1828 Lord John Russell repealed the Test and Corporation Acts, in as far as it required members to receive communion in the Church of England. In consequence of this, men of any and every religion, except Roman Catholics, were permitted to sit in parliament; the latter were still barred by the oath against Transubstantiation.

At this time, a seat in the County of Clare became vacant. O'Connell was nominated to contest it against an opponent who was favorable to the English. Calling all his wonderful oratorical resources into play and using his great influence over the Irish populace, the renowned patriot was elected by a tremendous majority—the first Catholic to be elected to the English Parliament since the violation of the Treaty of Limerick. In Ireland