

General Intelligence.

GREAT CATHOLIC MEETING AT THE MANSION HOUSE—RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION—THE SOUTH DUBLIN WORKHOUSE.

(Continued)

MR. J. O'CONNELL came forward to propose the next resolution, and was received with loud and protracted bursts of applause. He said—My Lord Mayor and gentlemen, I come forward with great delight to move a vote of thanks to our Catholic fellow-citizens, who have had the arduous duty in the South Dublin Poor Law Union of resisting the shameful encroachment on the religious rights of Catholics by the bigoted, wretched and paltry faction who there predominate.—(Cheers.) It is too bad that, in the seventeenth year after we thought that the sad necessity of meeting as a separate body of Christians had been obviated, and that thenceforward all creeds and sects of Irishmen could combine together for the good of Ireland, we should find ourselves compelled to assemble together, as a separate body of Christians, to protest against the persecution that has been basely attempted against our religion. (Hear, hear.) But I tell you if we did not thus assemble together—if we allowed this paltry attempt to pass without resisting it, they would go on by degrees—from small things they would go on to greater, until they would rivet on the limbs of the Catholics of Ireland those chains which, no thanks to them, have been struck off. Well now, once for all, we tell them that it won't do; we won't stand it; we must have religious liberty. (Loud and continued cheering.) We are advocates of religious liberty for every class and creed, and sect—we would give our lives to secure freedom of conscience for the general people of Ireland—we would not sanction the persecution of Protestants or Methodists; and we won't allow those who profess the Roman Catholic religion to be persecuted or trampled upon.—(Cheers.) I confess that in dealing with this subject I look beyond the immediate cause of our assembling together—I look to the effect it will have on the French and Prussian Governments, and I trust that it will tend to put a stop to the persecution of the Roman Catholic religion in those countries. (Cheers.) After three hundred years of persecution which our people gallantly withstood, they are exposed to an attack in the form of a system of Education, and that even while Protestant writers themselves assert that the Prussian and French system of education is redolent of immorality, of corruption, and indifferentism

to all religion. We therefore will not allow it in this country. The Government may choose, if they like, to go to war with the people of Ireland—to force an infidel state education down their throats; but if they choose to go to war we are ready to accept the challenge. (Loud cheering.) The Catholic religion for which our forefathers bled—for which they suffered tyranny, persecution, and death—that religion we received pure from them, and that religion we will, with the blessing of God, hand down to our posterity unsullied and undefiled. (Cheers.) Neither Prussian education nor French education—that education which corrupts alike both political and religious principle—that education inculcating slavishness to the political powers, and indifference to the ecclesiastical authorities, will be sanctioned in this country. This we will resist for the rich and for the poor, for the adult and the infant. Are we Christians and shall we permit our religion to be outraged in the person of those little children who claim our protection? The Catholic schoolmistress whom they loved and whom, as it was proved in evidence they clung about, grieved at finding that they were to be removed from her, has been expelled by the Poor Law Commissioners. Was there any offence on her part? There was an attempt indeed to show that she had proved herself unfit for her situation—a commissioner was sent down, with an honorable before his name, and he held an investigation in which he utterly disregarded the principles of fair play, allowing her to make admissions which were afterwards used against her without giving the usual warning. But the real offence was, that she was obnoxious to the bigoted members of that board, because the Catholic children loved and respected her. (Hear, hear.) The Protestant ex-officios—men not worthy of the name of Protestant, for they are utterly opposed to that religious freedom which Protestants claim—came down to the meeting of the South Union to control the representatives of the people. And these men persevered in their persecution of this poor widow and of the poor children under her charge until at last they succeeded in driving this helpless widow out into the streets, depriving her of the means of support, and depriving the Catholic children of the school-mistress whom they loved and respected. (Cheers.) The strongest protest must be made against this. If our lives were on the issue, such persecutions must be put an end to—if the peace of the country were at issue we will not submit to it. (Continued cheering.) We claim to be free—(Hear, hear)—we claim no ascendancy, but we claim equality, and equality we must have. (Cheers.) Feeling thus let us