

PROTESTANTS AND REPEAL.

Some very dishonest bigot and anti-Repealer tells us in the *Constitution*, that he remembers the year 1798, and the efforts that were then made to get the Protestants to enrol themselves in the ranks of the "Patriots." This is exactly the converse of truth. He tells us, also, "numbers of the Protestants and Presbyterians, in the North especially, joined the United Irishmen in their wild attempts to tear England and Ireland asunder." These statements, we think, are wilfully false; for even the *Constitution* is not so grossly ignorant of facts, and of the history of the period, as not to know that the Protestants and the Presbyterians were originally the United Irishmen and the "Patriots," and that it was they who embodied the society of United Irishmen, and who tried every expedient to work on the passions of the Irish Catholics to induce them to join in the objects of that society.

These Protestants and Presbyterians, the leaders and organisers of the society of United Irishmen, had for their object the separation of the two countries. The present Repeal agitation is of a far different character. The great leader of that agitation, himself a Catholic, has been ever adverse to secret associations such as that of the United Irishmen was. He has achieved the liberation of his countrymen by open organization, and moral force, as contra-distinguished from physical.

The Repealers have for their object not the tearing asunder of the two countries, which was the object of the United Irishmen, but just and efficient legislation by means of separate parliaments. They seek nothing new, irrational, or impracticable. They merely wish to have the two countries placed in the same relative situation towards each other in which they were forty-two years ago. The United Irishmen, and let not the *Constitution* again forget that they were Presbyterians and Protestants, sought a separation, but the patriots of the present day, or Repealers, seek no such object. The Repealers are, at least a vast majority are, no doubt, Catholics, but there are, also, very many Protestant Repealers, honest men who prefer country to faction, and principle to self.

We may as well apprise the *Constitution*, if really it be ignorant in the matter, that it was not the Catholics who exhibited bigotry and intolerance, such as 'shocked and disgusted,' it falsely asserts, "the Protestants who had united with them." The contrary was the fact. The United Irishmen, and they were, it is true, chiefly of the North of Ireland, defeated their own objects by their untimely exhibition of bigotry and intolerance. They had induced Catholics to join them, by holding out the hope of freedom of conscience and entire emancipation. But, towards the close, the declaration of Munroe and others, that they were to fight for a "Protestant and Presbyterian government," completely dispelled the illusion of the Catholics. The latter saw that the object was still ascendancy, and they naturally and properly fell back. The object of the United Irishmen may be justly said to have failed in consequence.

Religious ascendancy is now in a great measure gone; the Repealers seek a more legitimate object than the United Irishmen; and the *Constitution* may be assured that Protestants and Presbyterians will soon join the cause of the Repealers. The poverty of the country in which they too must share, Peel and his tariff, with his corn law, not only as it is, but still more as it will be, must soon make ardent, perhaps violent Repealers of them all.—*Mayo Ægis*.

ENGLAND—IF CATHOLIC.

To the Editor of the Orthodox Journal.
Concluded.

But there are other considerations which require some remarks. As there is a natural—divine expansion inherent in the Catholic religion, which always acts upon the soul and feelings of her children, when under no restraint: so when these restraints are removed: she then becomes, in the words of the prophet, "A tree great and strong, so that the height thereof reaches unto heaven, and the sight thereof is even to the ends of all the earth. Its leaves are most beautiful, and its fruit exceeding much, and in the branches thereof the fowls of the air have their abode."* Would not England then become this "great and strong tree," if the fetters by which we are still bound were broken asunder? Thus in the primitive church, when after three hundred years of persecution, God in his mercy raised up a "horn of salvation" that struck the proud one and wounded the dragon, what a mighty expansion took place!—what a flood of light and of glory broke forth upon the world as the sun, when first created, dissipated by his beams the darkness of chaos! And now if in these *our* days, when we are but just beginning to breathe a little from being relieved of a part of that burthen which hath hitherto oppressed us, such a wonderful expansion of heavenly power and beauty hath been displayed, oh! what would be the glorious effect if our burthens and sorrow were *entirely* removed? For although even yet the fire of religious controversy burns fiercely in the breasts of many; although in almost every town and village "lectures" are *still* announced against us, and our doctrines denounced as idolatrous, unscriptural, or unreasonable, yet, what has been the result of such proceedings? Has the heart of England been turned against us? Has the saggot been brought forth—have the priests of the Lord been butchered as of old before an infuriated mob? Have the penal laws been re-enacted—have we been obliged to hide ourselves in the dens and caverns of the earth? Or have we had occasion to lament over the members that have deserted our camp, and gone over to that of our enemies? No, on the contrary: the very means that have been taken to humble us, and to uproot our foundations from the earth, have only served for our greater glory and exaltation? If, then, in spite of all the prejudices still existing against us, and all the exertions still used to trample us to the very dust, we have risen up and flourished like the very palm tree, would not our branches reach even unto the

* Daniel, iv. 8, 9.

heavens—to the ends of all the earth, were those prejudices entirely removed, and those exertions directed towards "building up the walls of Jerusalem, and repairing the places that have been made desolate from of old"? Then would the church once more become a "tree great & strong: and if its roots were old in the earth, and its stock were dead in the dust; yet, at the scent of waters, it would spring up and bring forth leaves as when it was first planted."*

But how would Catholic principles and government operate on the *state*—on the social order of things? The effect may be expressed in the words that we read inscribed on the great obelisk of the Vatican;—"Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat, Christus ab omni malo plebem suam defendit." "Of all religions," says De Halter, "the Catholic is without question the most proper to maintain an union of heart and mind, and to preserve the internal tranquility of states; not only because the form of the church is monarchical, and therefore analagous to that of kingdoms, but because it is founded on obedience to legitimate authority,—on respect, and not on contempt for fathers and mothers; on the denial—not on the idolizing of self; on the reciprocal sacrifice of one for another, which is the bond of all society, and not on egotism, which is its solvent and destruction—on the bond of an immense community, united by the same faith and the same law, and not on a principle of hatred, of isolation, and of dispersion; in fine, because in its morality, and in its worship, it teaches, nourishes, and vivifies, without ceasing, respect for the maxims and traditions of fathers and superiors; veneration for all that is ancient, universal, perpetual; and repugnance against all fundamental innovations."† Now as we can prove ‡ that all these points were observed in Catholic times, that state flourished in proportion as they adhered to Catholic principles of government, and that, moreover, *Protestant* principles have given birth to dissensions and rebellions in many kingdoms, § may we not justly conclude that the same beautiful order would return if the same principles were adopted—if England became Catholic? What a powerful influence did not the church exert in the middle ages? She then awakened attentions to and agitated all, the great questions which interest man! She busied herself with all the great problems of his nature; with all he had to hope or to fear for futurity. Hence her influence upon modern civilization has been so powerful, more powerful, perhaps, than its most violent adversaries or its most zealous defenders have supposed. They, eager to advance or abase her, have only regarded the church in a contentious point of view; and thus, with that contracted spirit which controversy engenders, how could they do her justice or grasp the full scope of her sway? ¶

* Job, xiv. 8.

† *Restaurat. de la Science*, tom. iii. c. 1.

‡ As Mr. Digby has done in his delightful "Ages of Faith."

§ What disorders did not the Anabaptists produce in Munster—John Knox in Scotland,—the Huguenots in France—the Protestants in England? See Dr. Milner's Letter to a Prebendary. Lect. iv.

Hence the church appears as an organized and independent society, interposed between the masters of the world, the sovereigns, the possessors of temporal power, and the people; serving as a connecting link between them, and exercising its influence over all."*

Again, another Protestant writes; "These were bright and glorious days, wherein Europe formed but one Christian land—when one Christianity dwelt throughout the civilized parts of the world, and one common interest bound together the most remote provinces of this wide spiritual empire. Without great worldly possessions, one spiritual head directed and united the great political powers. . . . Princes referred their disputes to the father of Christianity, and joyfully cast their crowns and dignities at his feet. How salutary, how conformable to the inward feeling of men was this government, is sufficiently evident from the powerful expansion of men's powers, the harmonious development of every talent, the wonderful height to which individuals arrived in all the departments of knowledge and of art, and, above all, the prosperous commerce that was carried on—in spiritual as well as temporal matters—from the confines of Europe to the remotest shores of India." †

If then, so many and so great blessings would be poured down upon England if she became Catholic—blessings which I have just glanced at—Oh! who will not sigh and pray for that blessed day when the Almighty shall at length hear the groans and supplications of his people? As yet, we are in bondage in many places: our holy mother still appears desolate and void of all beauty, even in those parts where of old her glorious name was heard on every tongue." ‡ And though, in other parts of God's vineyard, religion is lifting up her head from the dust wherein she hath been so long trampled upon, and numbers are returning with joy and gladness to the faith of our fathers, yet the truth must not be concealed, *that we are as yet but a section*. We are only now escaping "from the snare of the hunter," and but plucking our disordered feathers in the sun, preparatory it may be for a noble and glorious flight, when our beauty and our ancient strength shall have returned. The chains that once bound still gall us: the waves that once rose with such madness against our little bark, still gather in hoarse murmurs around her path; but yet we fear not, for there is on board a heavenly Pilot who can rebuke the winds and the waves, and hush them into gentle slumber. Our congregations, generally speaking, are poor—poor like our Blessed

* Guizot's "General History of Civilization in Europe." Lec. v. p. 131. Oxford Edition.

† The "Christendom" of Novalis.—See the *Catholic Magazine* for April, 1842.

‡ This is particularly the case in the Eastern District, to which I allude. Many important and flourishing towns have no prior nor chapel; even those places that have a chapel, such as Lynn, in Norfolk, &c., scarcely deserve to be mentioned as missions. And yet these are the very places where religion once flourished in all her majesty. But now even the stones of her crumbling monasteries, churches and convents, must weep to see the desolation around them.