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GREAT CATHOLIC LAYMEN.

DANIEL O'CONNELL.



"A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man."

RECENT writer in these columns has reviewed the life of Garcia Moreno, and has told the great things accomplished for Church and State by the Liberator of Ecuador. The aim of the present article is to recall, in a manner necessarily brief and imperfect, the deeds of another Catholic hero, whom not one nation alone, but all nations, salute with that grandly distinctive title—*the Liberator*.

Daniel O'Connell was born in 1775, near the little village of Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry. He came of a good old Celtic family, whose members were ever noted for their fierce hatred of the Saxon and their desperate valor in the time of national struggle. His father was not wealthy, yet he possessed sufficient means to support the dignity of his family, and to afford a continental education to his three sons. Daniel received the rudiments of learning from an aged priest, but, removed at an early age from the care of his beloved tutor, he was sent to Louvain, and finally to St. Omers, where, under the guidance of the Jesuits, he acquired those vast treasures of knowledge and that logical training of mind, that afterwards proved of such immense service to the cause of Ireland. Having completed his studies, he returned to his native land and commenced immediately the study of law. He was admitted to the Irish Bar in 1798, just at the moment when the uprising of the United Irishmen threw the country into the throes of war. This revolt of an unarmed peasantry was crushed with the

ruthless barbarity that has always characterized the dealings of England with her unfortunate sister isle. Ireland, bathed in the blood of her heroes, was again prostrate at the feet of her conquerors. Then followed, perhaps the darkest period in the history of the land, and Pitt profited by the hopeless apathy into which their misfortunes had cast the people, to further his scheme for the Legislative Union of England and Ireland. Grattan, Curran, Plunkett, and other noble patriots of their stamp, raised their eloquent voices against this iniquitous scheme, and it was, likewise, to protest against this plan of the English minister that O'Connell first publicly espoused the cause of Erin. At a meeting of Catholics held in the Royal Exchange, Dublin, in 1800, the young barrister arose to address the assembly, and despite the intimidating presence of the infamous Major Sirr, and a body of his brutal soldiers, he voiced his feelings in no uncertain language. "I would rather see the whole Penal Code re enacted," he cried, "than consent to the legislative extinction of Ireland." But the venal crowd that *misrepresented* the population in the Parliament on College Green, were dazzled by the glitter of English gold and for filthy lucre bartered away their independence and their liberties. The Act of Union became law in 1801. The people, despairing of the redress of their grievances, relapsed into their former lassitude and indifference, notwithstanding the efforts of a few noble spirits, (and among them O'Connell,) to keep alive the flame of patriotism. In 1805, the Catholic Committee was formed, but it was fully