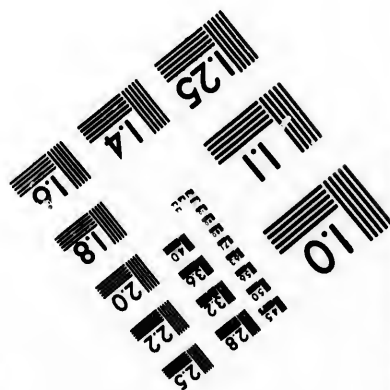
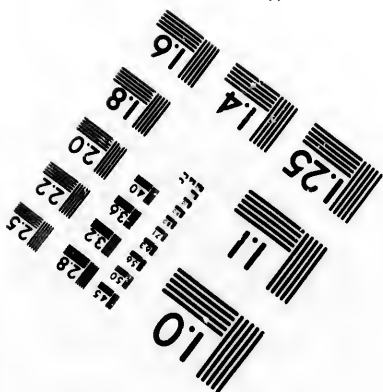
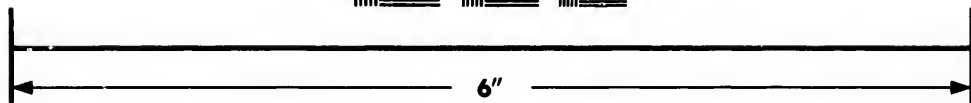
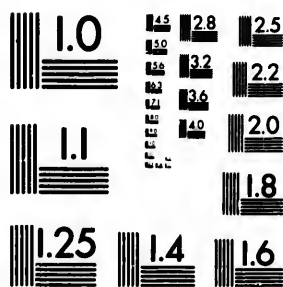


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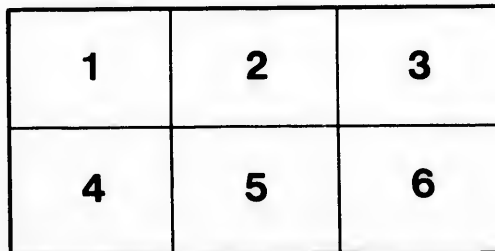
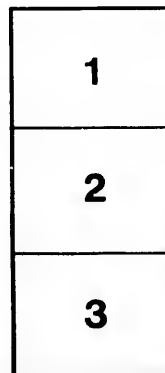
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XXXIII  
REFORM OR RUIN:

TAKE YOUR CHOICE!

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IN WHICH

*The Condu*t of the King,

THE LORD LIEUTENANT, THE PARLIAMENT, THE  
MINISTRY, THE OPPOSITION, THE NOBILITY  
AND GENTRY, THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY  
OF ALL DENOMINATIONS, THE LAWYERS,  
THE MERCHANTS, THE LOWER  
CLASSES, &c. &c.

IS CONSIDERED,

AND

THAT REFORM POINTED OUT,

WHICH

ALONE CAN SAVE THE COUNTRY.

*Bowdler, John*

THE THIRD EDITION.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR JOHN MILLIKEN, NO. 32, CRAFTON-STREET.

1798.

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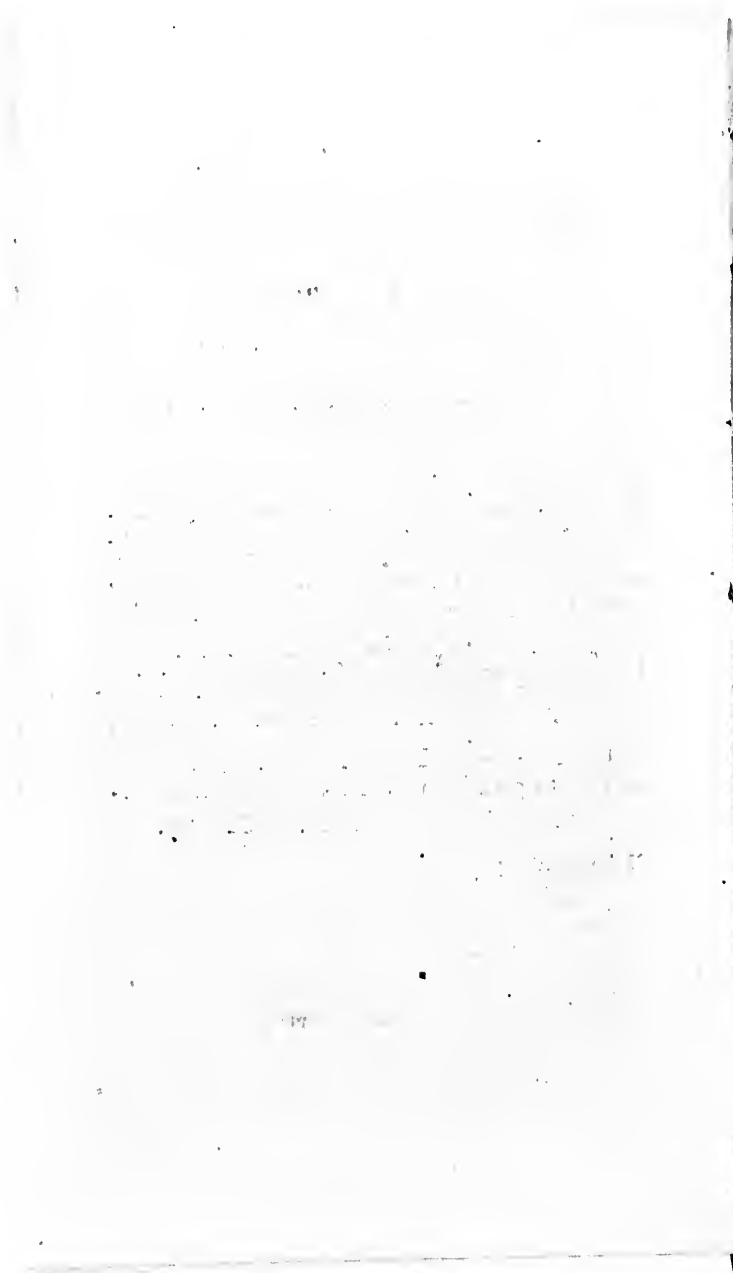
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### ADVERTISEMENT.

A Pamphlet under a similar Title with this has been published in England, and has already run through several Editions. It is most admirably calculated to produce the greatest good in that Kingdom, but is, in many parts, totally inapplicable to this; the Editor, therefore, hopes that he will have rendered an essential service to the public, and at the same time extended the views of the truly Christian Author, if, instead of reprinting it from the London Edition, he has procured a person perfectly adequate to the task to give it an Irish dress, and accommodate it to the circumstances of this Country.

February 16, 1798.





## REFORM OR RUIN:

*TAKE YOUR CHOICE!*

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**I** AM a free-born Irishman, and an independent man. I am attached to my native land beyond any other spot on the earth. I am ready to sacrifice my life for its interests, and to spend the little property I have in securing its happiness. I therefore feel myself warranted to call upon all true Irishmen, to lend, at least, a patient attention to what I have to propose to them. I think for myself, and write as I think; I wish them to read and to judge for themselves.

It is agreed on all hands that our affairs are in a most desperate state; our difficulties and distresses multiply from day to day. War has been long afflicting us from abroad; heart-burnings, and discontents, and insurrections, from within. Numbers of our countrymen have perished by sea and land. The sword has cut off its hundreds, and disease its thousands; millions, and millions of money are daily expending; trade and manufactures languish; public credit was never more deeply shaken than we have lately seen it; Government securities were never at a lower ebb; our national debt encreases; and we begin to feel, what our patriots have often talked to us of, the pressure of taxes. Our very tars, among whom it was our pride to count so many Irishmen, suffered themselves to be deluded for a moment, and made our hearts ache. Some would even make us call in doubt the fidelity of our national troops, and labour to excite our fears, where we ought chiefly to place our reliance. Religious asperities, after a sleep of one hundred years, are once more awakened, and made instruments of ambition.

ambition and design to divide and inflame us against each other, and to renew the miseries which they have so often entailed upon this country. The wicked, the seditious and the deluded provoke, and the law punishes; and between the horrid excesses of the one, and the necessary rigour of the other, a great part of the kingdom is filled with fire and blood. The war, of which hitherto we have only felt the distant effects, appears now to be approaching to our doors, and to the seats of our family comforts and enjoyments. The French bully, and vapour, and threaten, and their emissaries and supporters, who no longer conceal themselves, repeat their threats, and exaggerate their power, and are a thousand times more virulent, and vindictive, and sanguinary than even our ancient and natural enemies—all is alarm, and terror, and dismay, and despondency.

It is indeed true, that we are not without something to put to the other side of the account. We have had many signal successes in the course of the war—we have taken many the islands and colonies from our enemies—we have never seen their fleets without beating them—we have taken the round of them, and all in their turns have vanished before the superior skill and conduct of our Admirals, and the bravery of our seamen; and, what never could have been said on any other occasion, scarce a ship of war of ours has been taken; *and not one foot of British land has been lost in any part of the world!*

It must also be allowed, that our enemies are still in a worse state than we are. There is not under the sun, there never has been under the sun, a more wretched people than the French: their King, their Queen; many of the royal blood; the best of their nobility, of their clergy, of their gentry, of their wealthy and respectable merchants, and even of their honest mechanics, and farmers, and labourers, have shed their blood on the scaffold, or been shot, stabbed, drowned, or poisoned. Numbers of all these descriptions have fled to other countries, destitute and helpless, and of those who remain, a great part have been plundered of their property, and deprived of all the comforts and conveniences of life. Religion, law, order, and good government, are at an end among them. Even they who submit to the present rulers, and swear allegiance to the present power, cannot hope, for a day, to be safe from the general oppression: if they escape either death or banishment; they  
are

are still liable to be plundered and pillaged on every wanton pretext, and to be sacrificed to the necessities of the army, of which their usurpers are afraid, and which must be fed and paid at all events, let who will suffer and be reduced to misery.

In Spain, the case is not much better. Being divided into two parties, one betrayed the other to the French, who compelled them to make war against us, though contrary to their known interests; and the consequence is, that they have been beat most dreadfully; that their dear friends and good allies are become their tyrants, and treat them with such haughtiness and insolence, that, if they dared, they would cut the throats of every Frenchman in their country.

The Dutch are still worse off. Their trade is destroyed; their colonies are in our hands; the French have drained them of their money, their goods, and almost every thing they had; they have an army in the midst of them, and in all their strong towns, dragooning them into all their measures, banishing, imprisoning, and pillaging even those who were at first the most forward and active in giving up the country to them, and forcing them to fit out ships to fight against us, when (although they think themselves obliged to behave like men, let who will be their opponents) they are much more inclined to fight for us. But what are we the better for all this? In spite of the dreadful things that have happened to our enemies; in spite of all the conquests we have made, and all the ships we have taken, what is our state at this hour? We are threatened with invasions; we are divided and weakened by parties and factions; we are sinking into gloom and despair. And yet, the French fleet that was intended to invade us, was dispersed, by the breath of Providence, and the object of the expedition completely defeated. The seditious spirit in the North seems fast to subside; numbers of the deluded have availed themselves of the proclamation, and have returned to their allegiance, and to their usual occupations, and industrious pursuits. Our credit has not only not lost ground of late, but is looking up again; a most plentiful harvest and mild season have reduced the prices of all the necessaries of life, below what they have been long remembered. Travel from one end of the island to the other, and, except in those districts where the arts and misrepresentations of incendiarics

ries are, at the moment, goading the deluded peasants into outrage and violence, you will see every mark of the greatest plenty and prosperity the land has ever enjoyed. The linen markets in the North were never more flourishing, never more crowded with buyers, or distinguished by higher prices. Every where agriculture and tillage are improving, and every field producing more than it ever did before. Yet shut your eyes, and open your ears, and listen to our orators, and our newspaper writers, and our pamphleteers, and we shall hear of nothing but grievances, and oppression, and cruelty, and persecution, and ruin.

Now what is the meaning of all this?—How comes it to pass, after all our wonderful cicapes, after all our glorious victories; in the midst of so much plenty and seeming prosperity; that we not only think ourselves upon the brink of ruin, but perhaps really are so? The answer is plain and short—*We are not reformed.* A thorough Reform would set all right, and restore us to peace and happiness. But what is that Reform that would do this good? To answer this question is my object in writing.—Some think, a Reform in Parliament will alone be sufficient; and that Reform to consist only in Members being chosen in a different manner.—Some are for what they call Catholic emancipation—Some for lessening the power and influence of Government—Some for abolishing Tithes—Some for making an immediate peace with France—Some for establishing a Republic on the French plan. The last would, indeed, be a decisive measure, and do its own work completely; but as for the rest, they are all, to my mind, paltry, partial Reforms, which can do little good, and may do much mischief.

If every man in the kingdom had a vote for a Member of Parliament, what would be the consequence? Why each Member would be chosen by a Mob. And whom would the Mob choose? Why the man that made the loudest speech, and the largest promises.—And who would this be? Why he that, having neither property, nor character to lose, was ready to say any thing to get into the House, in hopes of being paid for breaking every promise he had made.

As to Catholic emancipation, I really do not know what the term means, as it applies to the great body of that description of subjects. I know no distinction between a Roman

man Catholic of my rank in life, and myself, with respect to *our* civil franchises. He votes for a Member in Parliament as I do, and is therefore represented in Parliament as I am. He has the same protection of property, and of person from the same laws, in the enacting of which he has the same share. He can pursue his industry with the same security, and realize the fruits of it for himself and his family by purchase or otherwise, in the same way. In what then is he to be emancipated? Something, indeed, remains yet to be granted, and which a perseverance in loyalty and quiet would, I am persuaded, have obtained before this, by which three or four wealthy individuals might gratify their ambition or their vanity; but what the general body suffers from this point being withheld, or what the granting of it could effect towards a Reform among that description of subjects, is beyond my comprehension to discover.

With respect to the power and influence of Government, I never knew a man who, when he was out of office, did not complain of them, and as soon as he got into office, did not exert them, and endeavour to encrease them. If he lessened them in one way, he took care to extend them in another, and much has lately been attempted in that way by our state quacks and mountebanks: I do not pretend to say that abuses may not creep in, wherever there is power; but every body knows that four millions of people cannot be governed without some power: and if the supreme magistrate has not *lawful* power enough to govern them by, either he will not be able to govern them at all, (and then there can be nothing but confusion and mischief) or else he must govern them by unlawful means; and I appeal to any man of common sense, whether it is not better that a king should govern according to fixed and settled laws, which are known to all the nation, than by undue influence, bribery, corruption, and the like.

But say some, "abolish tithes"—I fear this will not answer—I do not expect much towards a reform from wrong and robbery. They who \* understand those things tell us, that the settlement of tithes in these realms hath been by the ancient and undoubted laws of the land. When all the lands of England were the demesne of the kings, and they enfeoffed the Barons for the defence of the kingdom,

reserving

\* Lord Coke.

reserving to themselves the royalties and other rights, one of these Kings †, nearly a thousand years ago, conferred the tithes of all the kingdom upon the church by his royal charter ‡. The same practice was adopted here by our Kings, and great men, and has since been confirmed by law, and so the lands have uniformly descended to our day, and until they came into the hands of the present owners, who must have paid more for the purchase, and required larger rents from their tenants, if they had not been thus charged. Hence, whatever right they may have to the other nine parts of the fee simple, or lease, they have certainly none whatever to the tithes or tenth, which is no more theirs, than the other nine parts are the Clergy's. I cannot, therefore, agree in the idea of robbing one man more than another of what the Law secures to him. It is a rule that may extend to every other species of property. As to the holder or occupier, I am of the same opinion with an honest, cool-headed, reasoning neighbour of mine, who on asking who were to have the tithes when they were taken from the parson, and being told they would be the landlord's, then, said he, "I had rather they should remain as they are; for I can always deal better with the parson, than with the landlord, and even with the proctor, bad as he may be, than with the agent."

As for a Republic on the French plan, Lord defend me and mine from it! I have watched it from its first rise to its present power, and I have seen nothing but murder, and massacre, and robbery, and injustice, and every thing that is execrable in the eyes of God or Man, mark its progress and its establishment. I have seen it setting out upon a system that, if it were to prevail universally, would make a Hell upon Earth. It is a system that holds out the actual possessors of authority, or power, or consequence, or riches, as fair plunder to those who chance to have none of these advantages. But who will not see that this must go on for ever? You, or those who may claim under you, can have no more title to what you have robbed me of, than you allowed me to have; you will therefore be robbed, and plundered,

† Ethelwulf.

‡ This charter is to be seen in the Abbot Ingulf, and in Matthew of Westminster.

plundered, and dispossessed in your turn, and so from age to age men will be cutting each others throat, and pillaging and plundering each other in endless succession. But it will be said, "all this will be set to right with time;—in the meanwhile try the Revolution." But if we are to have our throats cut that our grandchildren may have a chance of enjoying their lives and their property, in the same security in which they have been so long enjoyed under the present system, I have no appetite to try the experiment. I have seen it already tried in France, and I am fully satisfied. I have seen it for seven years, producing confusion, oppression, cruelty, poverty, all sorts of mischief and wickedness, as well to its original supporters as to its opposers, and no good whatever.

But a peace with France; what can be said to this? A very short answer. They will not make peace with you; they will exterminate you, and cut you off from among the nations of the earth. "No," say our great orators and essay writers, "they will fraternize with you." Yes, as Cain fraternized with Abel!—yes, as the French themselves have fraternized with Flanders, to plunder and rob, and confiscate, and drain you by forced loans and contributions, that you may supply the total loss of their own wealth and resources. "They will admit you to their alliance;" yes, as they have admitted Holland, and Spain, and Venice, and the unfortunate Pope, to dispose of your arms, and your fleets, and your resources, to the establishing of their own universal dominion, and not to let you even \* think but as they please.

I trust I have now shewn that none of the above plans will answer our purpose: Let us, then, try to find one that will. But, (that I may not be taken for a quack doctor) before I prescribe the *cure*, let me try to find out the *cause* of our present unhappy state; and in order so to do, let us take a short view of all ranks of people beginning with the highest.

Of the KING, if I knew ever so many bad things, I should be cautious how I mentioned them, because I have no inclination

\* "To consolidate the power of the Republic," says Buonaparte, in his answer to one of the Parisian addresses, "you must henceforth suffer no ideas to prevail in the World but those of the Great Nation."

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nation to be hanged or transported. But, in truth, I know no harm of him; his private life every body says is good, and, I think, his public conduct has been good also. Of this I am sure that this nation owes him more than to any other King that ever sat on the throne; the shortening the duration of our parliament, the emancipation of our Legislature, the freedom and extension of our commerce, the independence of our judges, the communication of the blessings of the British constitution to every class of our fellow subjects, are among the many proofs of his royal disposition to promote the interest and happiness of this land, which demand our warmest gratitude and attachment, in so much that we at least may fairly call him the best of our Kings.

Of his representative in this kingdom I have never heard but one opinion; amiable and conciliating in his manners, regular and strictly proper in his conduct, a fond parent, and affectionate husband, with an humane heart and a sound understanding, he has not only escaped the censure even of our most violent oppositionists, but frequently extorted their praise. To all who love the Constitution, and wish to see it preserved in Church and State, he has most singularly recommended himself. He undertook the Government of the country under circumstances which might well have made the boldest shrink from it; and by a steady, uniform, and resolute conduct, he has hitherto guided us through the storm, with a success of which many despaired.

Having no more desire to see the inside of Newgate than to try the air of Botany Bay, I shall be cautious in what I have to say about the Parliament. Of the present Parliament, indeed, we can as yet say nothing, except that when we look to the taxes for the present year, we see a most marked leaning towards the ease of the lower orders, and that they are the rich who principally bear the additional burdens of the state. With respect to the late Parliament, without allowing it the privilege of all dead persons, to say nothing of it but good, its Journals can shew many salutary regulations for which the nation is indebted to it. It passed many excellent laws, and though there were many strong ones, yet who that will judge impartially for his country will say, that the times did not require them, and that it is not to them we owe all that we at this moment enjoy?

enjoy? This praise the last Parliament deserved, and this I hope the present will also merit. I will, however, beg leave to ask two or three short questions, and let those whom the cap fits wear it.

When the law forbids bribery, can it be right to bribe?

When a man is employed in enacting regulations for the preservation of morality and religion, is it consistent to shew the world that he has himself neither morals nor religion?

When a man undertakes to act for others, can it be right to neglect his trust?

When acting for others, ought we to consider their interest or our own?

As for the British Ministry, I allow that they conducted affairs very well till the war began; I allow too, that we have had great successes; but yet I am not convinced that things might not have been managed better, and at less expence. I should, however, be more ready to blame Ministers in both countries, if I was not fully convinced that they have been prevented from doing their best by the opposition in both countries. And now my patience begins to fail me—for what can be more provoking to any man who really loves his country, than to see men pretending to love their country, and to wish to save it, and yet, instead of doing all in their power to help things forward, doing all in their power to hinder every measure proposed; and at last, quitting their post at the very moment, when (as they themselves allow) the country is in the utmost danger possible? This question applies to the Opposition on both sides of the water. But in the conduct of our Opposition there are many things that must add to our indignation. To hear them declaim with as much vehemence as if they were in earnest, against the influence of the British Minister, and the interference of a British Cabinet, and yet maintain, themselves, a constant intercourse with the heads of the opposition in England, the would-be ministers; receive their directions, adopt all their conduct, applaud them for sacrificing the independence of our Parliament by introducing into the English Parliament questions, that concern ourselves exclusively, and leave no doubt, how implicitly they would submit to their controul, were their great object to be secured, and those who are at present in power should

should be turned out to make way for them. They did so when in office with the English Secretary of their own party; they would do so to-morrow should their party come in. But besides this, I do not hesitate to say, that we are indebted to them for most of the miseries with which the disturbed parts of the country have been visited. Let any man read their speeches in Parliament, their speeches at public meetings, and the harangues of those of them that are lawyers in the Courts of Justice, and put together the whole of their conduct, and say, whether without those speeches and harangues, and this conduct, the wretched combination of all that is low and contemptible in the kingdom, could have acquired the consistency, the arrangement, the confidence that now render it so formidable? I say nothing of the hopes, with which their exaggerated representations of the general discontent, their invectives against the Government, the imputation of cruelty and oppression, in which it is impossible for them to believe, their panegyrics upon every thing that is French, and their deprecation of every thing that is British or connected with Great Britain, have inspired our enemies; encouraging them to reject all overtures of peace, and holding out this country as an easy conquest, that only waits for their coming to take possession of it.

From this view of the Government and the Parliament let us turn to the conduct of the Nobility, and Gentry in general, including the officers of the Navy, and Army and the higher classes of law, physic, and commerce. Thank God! you will find among them some excellent people; and in general they are willing to assist the poor, and not to oppress them. But do not luxury, corruption, adultery, gaming, pride, vanity, idleness, extravagance, and dissipation, prevail too generally? Are they diligently employed, as they ought to be, either in the service of their King and Country, or in regulating their own families, or being useful to their neighbours, in those places where their property or their influence lies? What example do they set to the lower orders, of whose excesses, originating from a contempt of religion, they so loudly complain?

Of the Bishops and Clergy of all denominations, I should be very sorry to say any thing that might lessen them in the eyes of the nation; for, if we are to be preserved, it must be by their means.

The

The Bishops of the established church are in general learned and good men; and while we are particularly indebted to the King and his advisers for having set such a man at their head as now fills that important station, we shall find that they all take more pains, and do it more effectually than is generally allowed either by their luke-warm friends or avowed enemies. Yet if St. PAUL were among them, I think he would work harder than any of them, and adopt some stronger measures to bring back to their duty, such Clergymen as have deserted it. For, (sorry I am to say it) though you will find many among the lower Clergy who do their duty, and take care of their flocks; you will find too many, also, who neglect both, and spend their time in public places, in dancing, or card playing, or dangling at the Court, or elsewhere, in hopes of preferment. If such believe in a Day of Reckoning, I can only say, they have a sort of courage which I have not.

As to the Bishops and Clergy of the Roman Catholic persuasion, I am told that amongst them there are many learned and exemplary men. But are they all of that independent mind that will serve them to speak candidly and roundly to those on whom they depend for their subsistence? Do none of them conform themselves to the manners of the class of people with whom they chiefly converse, and accompany them to the Ale-house or the Dram-shop? Are they forward or zealous in inculcating that loyalty and submission to legal Government, which they tell us they learn from their religious principles? And are they as attentive to the morals of their flock, and to the spirit of religion, as they are to outward rites and observances, and the distinctions that unhappily separate us?

To the dissenting Clergy I would apply all that I have said of the Roman Catholics, substituting to the last question this plain one: Do they make religion and morals more the subject of their exhortations than politics? Have they nothing to answer for the innovating spirit that has filled the world with crimes?

Among the lawyers, merchants, traders, farmers, and others engaged in business, we find many honest, generous, and charitable men; but we also find among them many

many dishonest, profligate, and covetous characters. The very best of them are, I fear, as much engrossed by worldly business, and worldly cares, and worldly amusements, as if they were to live here for ever. How little of their time or their attention do they take from those pursuits to devote to religion, or to their improvement in virtue and morals?

Lastly, look at the Lower Classes. How willingly would I draw a veil over some part of the picture which they present? Great allowances ought to be made for their little instruction and scanty advantages; and it must be confessed that, until of late, they were generally acquiring habits of industry, and making daily advances in morality and good order. Nay, even at this moment, when the spirit of licentiousness and anarchy has so extensively possessed them, and driven such numbers of them into every species of outrage and violence, I think them to be, in their general description, peaceable, well disposed, amenable to law, with a turn for religion, and a desire of instruction. But when I admit all this, let us look to the public streets, let us look to the places of idle and profligate resort, let us look to the inside of their own dwellings, let us look to our prisons, and our courts of justice, what drunkenness, what blasphemy, what riot and disorder, what murders, and burnings, and rapine, what subornation and perjury, assault our ears and our eyes? Even taking things in the most favourable light, are they all as honest, sober, and industrious, as we could wish them to be? Do they spend all they earn in feeding and clothing themselves, and their wives and families? And do they earn all they can? Are the Sundays spent at Church, or at Chapel, or at the Alehouse and Whiskey-shop? Abroad, in bad company, or at home with their families? Do they instruct their children themselves; or accept, with hearty thanks, those instructions which are provided for them by the bounty of their neighbours?

Having now turned our eyes on the various classes of which this nation is composed, can we be at a loss to know what that Reform is, which our case requires?—Surely, No. It is as plain, as plain can be, that the Reform we want, and the only Reform which can save us, (but which certainly will save us, if adopted in time) is

**A THOROUGH REFORM OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES AMONG ALL RANKS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM.**

Let the King and Queen continue to set an example of piety, regularity, sobriety, and conjugal fidelity, to their children, their servants, and all their subjects. Let them drive from their Councils, and their Court, all adulterers and adulteresses; all gamblers; all, in short, whose characters are notoriously *bad*, of either sex, and of every rank.

Let them avoid even *innocent* amusements, if liable to produce immorality among others, which, alas! is too often the case.

“ Oh hard condition, twin-born with Grearneys !  
 “ What infinite heart's-ease must KINGS neglect,  
 “ That private men enjoy !”

I can take my Sunday evening's walk, chat with my neighbours, and view the beauties of nature, and no harm done. But if my gracious Sovereign could see but a small part of the confusion; idleness; drunkenness; disregard of the Sabbath, and other incalculable ill effects which are produced not only in Windsor, Eton, and the whole neighbourhood, but even in his capital itself, by his merely appearing on Windsor Terrace; how gladly would he give up for the good of his people, that heart-felt satisfaction, which he has so often felt, from—“ Reading his history in a nation's eyes !”

Let his Majesty's deputy in this Kingdom observe the same rules. Let him recollect that, as he represents the power, he should also represent the virtues of his Sovereign; that he is equally obliged to be watchful over his conduct, so as to give no countenance to the contempt of religion, the neglect of its ordinances, the violation of its Sabbaths, the desertion of its temples for which all classes of people are; I am afraid, but too universally distinguishable. Let him recollect, that he also is a spectacle of the people, and that his conduct is a cause either of offence and degeneracy, or of edification and improvement to the nation over which he presides. And if ever these threats should meet his eyes, let him be assured that these ex-

hortations

hortations are not meant for reproof, as if he failed, but as incitements to redoubled attention to these important points, towards which, in the high ranks of female society, as such an example is, alas! but too necessary, so is he effectually assisted by his virtuous and amiable consort.

Let every member of parliament, whether peer or commoner, reflect on the awful trust committed to his care, and attend diligently to the execution of it; not merely when a political dispute arises, but constant and uniformly. Let no act receive its fiat, without a strict scrutiny into its merits. Let them revise, curtail, and methodise the whole code of statute law, whose bulk and confusion is such, that I fear we may almost say

—“ Mole ruit suâ !”

If but a small part of that time, and those talents, which are wasted in long-winded harangues, and bitter disputations, were thus applied, our laws would acquire clearness, precision, and vigour. The number, the length, and the expence of our suits, would no more be the reproach of our nation. Imagination itself can hardly embrace the variety and the magnitude of the national benefits, which would be thereby produced.

Let those to whom the administration of the executive government is committed, learn by dear-bought and fatal experience, that their own arm cannot save them; and that human laws and human power can avail nothing, without sound principles and pure morals; and let them, therefore, without delay, bend the whole force of their talents to the reformation of these.

As for those who, from motives of personal ambition, advancement or gain; from private pique, or party prejudice, or any other sinister design, are ready to sacrifice the public good, to their private views, it is vain to waste words on them,—their consciences must be seared with a hot iron.

To those, on whom Providence has bestowed rank, or honour, or wealth, or any other useful talent, and who have not quite forgot who is the Giver of all good gifts, I next address myself; earnestly entreating them to withdraw their minds, for one moment, from all other pursuits, and to consider their own situation, and that of their country and of the surrounding nations. Where are now the rank, the honours, and the wealth of France, of Flanders, of  
Holland,

Holland and of Italy? And where must those of Britain shortly be, if their possessors will neither take warning from the fate of others, nor from the judgments of Heaven, just ready to fall on their own heads? It is yet in their power to save their country and their own souls; but not a moment must be lost. Let them instantly quit the dice-box, the turf, and the tavern, every wicked, and every trifling employment, and repair each to his proper station. Let them reform, first themselves, their expences, their wives and children, their servants and dependents; and then exert all their influence, as landlords, as magistrates, as friends, and as neighbours; encouraging and protecting the sober and industrious, discouraging and punishing, with candour, but with vigour the lawless and profligate. Few of those to whom I am now speaking, are aware how much mischief they occasion, merely by being in a *wrong place*; or how much good they *must* do, if they would only stay where their lot has fallen. It was the observation of a man of much good sense and experience,—“That, if every gentleman would reside on his estate, and every clergyman on his living, we should need no other reformation.” Let those then who fly to towns and cities, to public places, or foreign countries, in search of paltry amusements, or under a false pretext, or at best a mistaken notion, of repairing their shattered fortunes, no longer think themselves *Guileless*.—Numberless are the ways in which their Country is injured by their absence: If resident at their family seats, their example, their influence, their fortune,—every talent they possess, dispenses blessings on all around them: In any other place, they almost unavoidably do mischief, by adding to the number of those, whom the vices of cities inevitably corrupt.

But if purer motives cannot prevail, let pride plead the cause of patriotism. In a country like ours and Great Britain, a country gentleman is the first of all characters; and truly when we view him seated in the mansion of his ancestors, surrounded by his family, his relations, his servants, his workmen, his tenants and his neighbours, all in their due proportion, partaking of his hospitality, benevolence and protection, where shall we find a more enviable object? But merely *shift the scene*, and place him in the capital, often in an inconvenient and incommodious house, or paltry lodgings; where now are his honours, his influence,



his respectability! all vanished and lost in the crowd. He becomes at once a mere cypher without use or value; spending his days in a club-room, and his evenings in the tavern or at the card-table; and that income, which before promised him and others so much solid and substantial comfort, will barely supply what are deemed the necessary ornaments and amusements of life. Meantime, his servants are tainted with the vices of the town, and infected with the dangerous spirit of the day; and it is well if his wife and daughter are preserved uninjured; their health certainly is not. Till bathing, or the wells are ordered, and he is sent with all his incumbrances to England or to the sea, to accumulate expences. His mansion-house is deserted in the summer as well as the winter, and changed for a narrow lodging; habits of indolence and dissipation are insensibly acquired, perhaps habits of a worse kind, if a worse can be; and he who was the support and ornament of a considerable district, the fond parent, the indulgent landlord, the hospitable neighbour, the liberal benefactor, the respected magistrate, sinks into useless insignificance and contempt.

Abandoned by their owners, our villages might still have some hopes left, if they were not also abandoned by their PASTORS; by those, whose *bounden duty* it is to take care of them, and whose breach of duty has this aggravation, that not by *descent* (as in the former case) but by *their own solemn acceptance*, this duty attaches. Far be it from me to speak disrespectfully of the Clergy! I reverence their sacred office: I look up to them, as the most pious, the most learned, and the most useful class of all. As individuals, they must of course vary, and while some are ably and diligently performing their duty, others, alas! notoriously neglect their's.

It has too long been the false and shallow policy of irreligious and worldly-minded men, to deprive the clergy of the exercise of those rights, which they receive not from man, and which man, therefore, cannot take from them. It seems almost forgotten, in these days of novelty, when every thing ancient and venerable is despised, that Christians are a *regular society*, formed by CHRIST himself, under rulers and officers appointed by him, with authority to appoint others to succeed them; and thus our present Bishops and Clergy derive their authority by regular succession from

HIM

[ 44 ]

He to whom all power was given, and who, if he had seen fit, could have invested them with temporal authority also. But this he did not; on the contrary, He and his Apostles every where, in the most explicit terms, enjoins all Christians to submit like others to their lawful Governours. In *temporal* matters, therefore, our Bishops and Clergy possess only such powers as are given them by the laws of this land; but, in all *spiritual* concerns, they derive their authority from Him by whom Kings reign, and are bound to exert it for the benefit of that body over whom they are appointed.

With all possible deference, I submit to the consideration of our Governours, both in Church and State, whether any society can long flourish or even exist, without regulation and reform? And whether the Church of Ireland can form an exception to this rule? I earnestly entreat them to consider the present state of religion and morals in this kingdom; to consider how impossible it is for *human laws* to coerce a people, who have lost all sense of the *divine law*; who are no longer restrained by the dictates of conscience; and who, consequently, abstain from no crimes, but such as are prohibited by the law of the land, and from those, only when the danger of punishment is so apparent, as to overcome the force of corrupt passions and pampered appetites! Whatever may be the result of such an enquiry, it surely must be admitted, that the enforcing the *residence* of our parochial Clergy is indispensably requisite; and that the times call for uncommon exertion in all, especially in those who have the care of our principles and our morals. Never did the powers of darkness exert themselves more, or with more success. Do other powers exert themselves as much to counteract them? Treason, sedition, and mutiny, have appeared, and new laws have been made to prevent their growth, and we all *feel*, and most of us *acknowledge*, that this was right and fit. But do not adultery, gaming, Sabbath-breaking, neglect of public worship, and above all, lukewarmness and indifference about Religion itself, prevail, to a degree unknown in any former age? To a degree, which seems to portend the eradicating Christianity in this quarter of the world? And where are the laws against these? Shall I be told that there are such already in our statute books? The same was said as to the laws against treason and sedition; but by whom was it said? Was it by those

those who wished to prevent such crimes? Or those who by their writings and speeches had encouraged them?

In the name, therefore, of that GOD who made us; of that SAVIOUR, who died to redeem us; of that BLESSED SPIRIT, who is ever ready to assist our weak but *sincere* endeavours; I call on every Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, who has devoted himself to the service of God in the Church of Ireland, to lay aside every avocation, and instantly to exert his utmost powers, in the preservation of our holy Religion. So shall he save many souls from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

The same exhortation I would address to the Clergy of all denominations. I would exhort the dissenting Clergyman to reflect whether it is from the avowed subverters of all Religion, from Free-thinkers and Atheists, that he is to expect that form of Church government to which he is so zealously attached? Or if he promotes his own cause, or the cause of his Religion, by countenancing his hearers in their partiality to French principles, and their expectations of a force to subvert the present order of things. I would exhort the Roman Catholic Clergyman to reflect what chance he can have, not only to obtain the place held by the established Clergy, but even to be left in his present situation, or in a way to discharge the duty he owes to his flock, should those of his profession, who have united themselves with the malcontents of the North, succeed in their schemes of changing the present Government for a French Republic. The example of the seat of his religion, and of its venerable head, will afford him an infallible rule by which to judge. It calls upon him by all that is dear to him in his religion, and by the immortal interests of those, over whom he has been appointed the spiritual Director, to redouble his pastoral exertions; to make a common cause with all the Ministers of the Gospel, and instead of prejudicing his hearers against their Protestant brethren, or raising a spiritual wall of separation between them, now that the legal wall has been broken down, to inculcate a spirit of mutual love and benevolence; and to have no antipathies but against the advocates of immorality and licentiousness, and no enemies but the enemies of Christ.

If any lawyers, merchants or others, who are engaged in worldly business, can spare time and thought for one serious reflection, let that reflection be, "how their account will

will stand at the Day of Judgment?" How they will then answer for having joined "night to day and Sunday to the week," in adding shilling to shilling, and guinea to guinea, instead of pursuing their lawful calling, and devoting to the service of God, that small portion of their time and thoughts which he claims, and which claim, if they have a just sense either of their temporal or eternal interests, they will never more recit.

I now wish to address myself to all the inhabitants of this island, but chiefly to those of the *lower class*, as it is called;—to those, who have neither rank or riches, but must earn their daily bread by their daily labour. You, my fellow-countrymen, whether you know it or not, have souls to be saved, and must live for ever in another world, and be there rewarded or punished, as you have behaved well or ill in this life. Even here, if you behave ill, you will suffer for it: and if you behave well, God and men will assist you. If you are idle, do not you want bread? If you are drunken, do not your wives and children suffer? If you are dishonest, do not you lose your characters? If you are honest, and contented, and diligent, do you not find you are happy? By being *happy*, I don't mean that you have every thing you want, or that you have no sickness or sorrow!—that is such happiness as does not fall to the lot of any body in this world. Whatever you may think, the King upon his throne has more cares and vexations than you have. Many and many a night, when you are found asleep, he and his Ministers are hard at work, for you and me, and all of us: And the case is the same with the great and learned. Some of them, indeed, like some of you, neglect their business, and waste their time in idleness and vice; but others work as hard or harder than you, and their work is of a worse sort. Your's *preserves* your health, while their's *destroys* their health, and shortens their lives. God has so ordered it, that, in this life no man shall be *completely* happy; but, most men, let their situation be what it will, may be *tolerably* happy, if it be not their own fault; and every man may be *completely happy for ever* in another world; and the same means which will make him happy in another world, commonly make him comfortable in this.

Let us, then, inquire what those means are: They may be expressed in two short words—

BE GOOD!

God,

God, who made all things, has so made them, that it is impossible for a bad man to be happy. He has given us laws, and promised to reward us if we obey them, and to punish us if we do not. He commands us to love and fear him; to pray to him; to believe in Jesus Christ his Son; to honour and obey the King, and all who are in authority under him; to submit to our masters, and all lawful governors. To respect God's ministers, his Sabbath, and his church. To pay all their dues, whether tithes, taxes, custom, or other things. To obey the laws of the country in which we live. To do to others as we would have them do to us. To love our neighbours, and assist them as often as it is in our power. To be honest, sober, modest, and decent. To work diligently, in order to get our living. To bear patiently such misfortunes as befall us. To be thankful for such good things as we enjoy; for our health, and strength, and daily bread, and many other blessings which we are too apt not to consider as we ought. They are all the gifts of God, and ought to be received as such.

Now I would ask any fair man, if there is any thing hard or unreasonable in all this? Or whether he is not convinced that, if we would obey these laws, we should be much happier than we are? For, sorry I am to say it, we do not obey them as we ought. Instead of praying to him every night and morning, some, I fear, never pray at all; instead of obeying the King, and his Magistrates and Officers, how many have been guilty lately of insulting him and them! How many have joined in riotous mobs, and seditious clubs and meetings! How many have suffered themselves to be deluded into unlawful and impious oaths, preposterously pledging themselves to God, upon the Holy Gospel of his Son, to commit robbery, murder, every crime that is most heinous in his sight, or that can expose us most certainly to his wrath, and to eternal damnation, and thinking themselves bound by such oaths? How many have been the dupes of a set of wretches, who are going about, as St. Peter represents the Devil, seeking whom they may devour; deceiving the simple and the ignorant by false representations, feeding them with hopes which they can never make good, making them renounce all their present comforts and enjoyments, and all their industrious pursuits, and expose their wives and their children to be left without house

house or home, or support, for a wild-goose-chace after something, which some persons, whom they do not so much as know, desire some persons to tell them they are to get from the French, when they are to come over on floating islands, and blow the British fleet, that now ride in triumph through the whole world, out of the seas? In short, how many have thrown off all religion, all fear of God, frequenting neither Church, Mass, nor Meeting; or if they go to the Chapel or the Meeting House, going there only to enter into wicked and savage combinations, and to settle plans for robbing, and plundering, and murdering, as soon as the night comes on; or for training themselves to arms that they may be the better prepared to spill the blood of their clergy, their landlords, their neighbours, and former acquaintances and friends?

Even amongst those who are not thus changed into savages, and cut-throats, and house-breakers, how many are there who shew every kind of disrespect to God's Ministers and Ordinances? who scarcely ever go to the house of prayer? who spend God's Day in doing more business than on any other day in the week, or in jaunting about, or in getting drunk, though it is expressly ordered, that neither we, nor our servants, nor our cattle, shall work on that day, and that we shall keep it *holy*? Instead of paying to all their dues, how many try to cheat the established clergy of their tithes, and their priests of their little pittance they claim for their support, and the King of his taxes, and buy smuggled goods wherever they can meet with them? By these and many such things, they offend against the laws of God, and the laws of the land. Who is there that always does as he would be done by? that never speaks ill of his neighbour? that never tries to deceive or defraud, or over-reach another? How common are drunkenness, lewdness, gambling, and above all, profane cursing and swearing, and the most shocking oaths, which give no pleasure to any man, and are so abominable before God? How many never thank God for any thing, are never contented, but grumble and complain, even when nothing ails them, and they are not in want? and what makes all the more unpardonable is, that we can none of us pretend that we are uninstructed, or deprived of the means of knowing our duty. We have established among us the most pure and perfect form of christianity, and that which approaches the nearest to the primitive

primitive times of the Apostles, that any Christian people ever enjoyed. No description amongst us are without sufficient Christian instruction to convey to them a thorough knowledge of the precepts of the Gospel. The Bible is in the hands of most people; it is explained to all; and if we would read it, or attend to the explanation, we could not fail to know our duty: but the truth is, most of us *know* our duty, but will not *do* it.

Is it any wonder then, that God should punish us for all this? He has given us such good things as few other nations ever had. We have the free exercise of our Religion, through all denominations; our persons and our property are also free. As long as we transgress not the laws, we can go where we will, and do what we will; and so long as we do not injure others, nobody can injure us without being punishable for it. We live in a land of plenty, and the poorest person in it, that is sober and frugal, can eat a more wholesome and nourishing food, and can live in a more warm and comfortable habitation than those of a much higher rank in most other countries. Great pains have been taken to make the people think otherwise. But I will appeal to every candid man, who has visited the other countries of Europe, if he has ever seen one, where the labourer, if he be industrious, and does not spend his money on spirituous liquors, or in some other loose way, lives more comfortably. There is not a cottier in the kingdom who has not his cow's grass, and his potatoe garden, at a rent perfectly proportioned to the wages he receives. He can have his flax ground, for the industry of his wife, at a rate equally proportionate to the value of the manufacture when he sells it, and with that and his hog, which is seen in every cottage, he can clothe his family better and more warmly than any other man of his class, even in England. The wages of the common labourer are also more equal to his support than in that country, notwithstanding all that is said to make him think otherwise. If he buys as many of the necessaries of life for his sixpence \* as the English labourer can buy for his shilling, then may not his wages be said to be as high as the wages in England? But who does

\* In most of the countries, and in all the cities and great towns, the hire of labour is now as high as in England. Then what is the inference?

does not know that this is the case? Is not the price of bread, of meat, of firing, of clothing, of every thing that the poor man requires for his sustenance and comfort known to be twice as dear in England as it is here? The same may be said of the lower manufacturers, as of the labourers; and if their condition be better, than that of the same class of people in England, how must it be when compared with the black rye-bread, the chestnuts, the garlick, the onions, the wooden shoes of the French, who, they are told, are to come and better their condition?

It is not that I do not wish that they could live still more comfortably than they do. I should be happy to see the day when every man in the kingdom could have his fowl or his joint of meat in his pot of a Sunday, as the good Harry the Fourth of France used to wish for his people, but which those who murdered his descendant have taken care should never be their lot. What I want is this; that they should not listen to every idle, designing fellow, who would persuade them that they are more poor and miserable than persons of their class in other countries, and make them quit their industry to engage in desperate schemes that can only end in bringing themselves and their wives and children to shame and beggary. I wish them to have much more wages than they now get, and they would deserve them, if they would only be a little more industrious, if they would make a conscience of earning them as they ought, if they worked as hard by the *day*, as they do by the *great* or the *job*, and if they carried all their money to their wives, instead of spending so much of it in the ale-house and dram-shop.

The conclusion of the whole is this: God has blessed this country beyond most others: We have the best religion, the best form of government, and the most plentiful land of any people upon earth: But we have made such a bad use of those blessings that we are in great danger of losing them. We neglect God, his Service, and his Day. We call ourselves *Christians*, but we hardly know what the word means. Few consider, that every man, who says he is a Christian, says as follows:—"I am the Soldier and Servant of Jesus Christ. I have renounced all sin and wickedness, and all the vanities of this world. I have owned that I am a sinner, and that I can only be saved by the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ; and in order to receive the benefits



nefits of these, I must repent of my sins : I must believe in Jesus Christ, and I must do what he has commanded. His commands are contained in the Gospel ; I must, therefore, read *that*, in order to learn my duty ; and, when I have learned it, I must do it faithfully and diligently."

Oh ! my Countrymen ! if we would do this, we should be safe, and happy, and prosperous ! God would make a hedge about us, and about all we have, and would defend us from all our enemies ! We should no longer be divided and weakened by parties and oppositions ; for we should all fear God, and honour the King, and love one another ; and who would dare to invade us ? Why are we, then, so blind to our interest, to reject peace and prosperity, when we might so easily obtain them ? If you love your country, if you love your wives or your children, if you love *yourselves* — reform your conduct before it be too late ! The judgments of God are in the world ; they have fallen upon France, upon Flanders, upon Holland ! they are ready to fall upon us. If we will not take warning from all that has passed, and is now passing, almost at our doors, we have no excuse, and therefore no room to hope that we shall escape. But even if we could, what would it avail ? The day of judgment *must come* ; when every one who has not repented and reformed, will be condemned to suffer the torments of Hell for ever ! what those torments are, we know not ; and God grant we never may ! but if there be any truth in the word of God itself, they are far greater, and more dreadful, than any thing man ever felt, or can conceive.

Look down, O God of all Mercy, on this Land ! Open our eyes, that we may see thy judgments hanging over our heads and ready to fall on us ! Give us a just sense of our guilt, and grace to amend our lives ; and let our timely repentance make us fit objects of thy mercy, and prevent the destruction of our nation.

Bless thy servant our King, with long life and peace. Give true wisdom to all those who have any share in the government of our Country ; that they may see and know, that neither our own arm, nor our own devices can save us, and may learn to look up to thee, O God of Hosts, for thine Almighty aid.

Give a double portion of thy spirit to the Bishops and Pastors of thy Church ; that they may devote themselves entirely to thy Service ; boldly rebuke vice ; and by their diligence

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diligence and zeal, by the soundness of their doctrine and holiness of their lives, may turn the hearts of this nation, from the lusts of the flesh, the vanities of life, and the desire of earthly gain, to the knowledge and love of thee and of the Gospel of thy Son.

Grant that those, to whom thou hast committed wealth, or power, or learning, or any useful talents, may ever remember from whom they received them, and employ them for the good of all; that so they may give in their account with joy at the last day.

And, finally, we beseech thee, to make us humble and peaceable, sober and diligent, just and merciful; pious towards thee our God; loyal to our King, obedient to our Governors, respectful to our superiors, and kind and affectionate to all men: That, being protected by thy Almighty Power, we may pass our time here in peace and comfort; and be made partakers hereafter, of eternal happiness; through the merits and intercession of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—And let every true Irishman say,

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## P O S T S C R I P T.

SHOULD any one, who has a share in the Legislature or Government of this Land, peruse these pages; let him reflect seriously how he can answer to God and his Country, for sitting tamely by, without attempting to repress those gross crimes, which if suffered to continue, must bring us to destruction. If he wants *Resolution*, he is unfit for his station. Let him not fear the scoffs of a few impious wretches; but uniting with other serious and active men, and avoiding all heat and enthusiasm on the one hand, and all lukewarmness and timidity on the other; let them consider what are the reigning vices, and at least attempt to *check* them.

Adultery rages; and, whilst our law gives large damages to the injured *man*, no atonement whatever is made to our injured *God*! nay, both he, and his law, are insulted; for the adulterer and adulterers are let go free, and are even allowed to enter into unholy wedlock. By the Jewish law (which was the law of God), they were both to die. Under the pure Christian dispensation, shall they not only escape, but be put on a level with the virtuous? Surely the woman, at least, ought to be marked with some personal infamy, and in no case be permitted to marry again.

Gaming, though not perhaps so direct an insult to God, is no less pernicious in its effects. It seems to defy the existing laws, and therefore calls for new ones.

“Because of swearing, the land mourneth.”—Swear not “at all.”—Above all things, my brethren, swear not.—Such are the strong expressions of our sacred code. How then can we hope to be excused or pardoned, when we multiply oaths by every new law, till they are become almost words of course, and have lost all that reverence which was formerly annexed to them, and without which, they can only increase our condemnation!

A Custom-house oath is already proverbial, and a tax oath is in great danger of becoming so. Were no oath administered, but in a public court, by the Judge himself, and with the utmost possible solemnity, it would impress both

both the witness and the audience with a just sense of its awful nature. In all other cases, the signing a declaration of the truth of the evidence given, and the justness of the punishment to be incurred if it prove false, would be more decent, and at least as effectual, as the oath now administered.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it HOLY.”—  
 “In it thou shalt not do *any work*: thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle.”—“Whoever doth any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death;”—such is *God's law*; but what is *our practice*? Look at our streets and roads, and see them crowded, not merely with the carriages of the great, but with stages full of travellers, and waggons loaded with goods. Surely when we are distressed for new taxes, a heavy Sunday toll might be laid throughout the island, to check at least, if we will not prohibit, the gross profanation of the Lord's day, that fertile source of immorality. And if no public houses, except inns on great roads, were suffered to be open on Sundays, it would prevent some murders, many robberies, and infinite mischief.

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IF any person should be inclined to think the present state of things in this country not such as to warrant the anxiety and alarm expressed in the preceding pages; let him read attentively the following extracts from the writings of two of the ablest men of the age; and having so done, let him consider the events which have since happened, and the alteration which has since taken place, in our national principles and morals; and then say—what *their* sentiments would *now* be?

“Seldom any state is ruined, but there are evident signals and presages of it. In general, without the spirit of prophecy, it is no difficult matter to perceive when cities and kingdoms are tending towards their final period and dissolution. There are as certain tokens and symptoms of a consumption and decay in the body politic, as in the body natural. I would not presage ill to my country; but, when we consider the many heinous and presumptuous sins of this nation; the licentiousness, and violation of all order and discipline; the daring insolence of robbers and smugglers, in open defiance of all law and justice; the factions

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and divisions; the venality and corruption; the avarice and profusion of all ranks and degrees among us; the total want of public spirit, and ardent passion for private ends and interests; the luxury and gaming and dissoluteness in high life, and the laziness and drunkenness and debauchery in low life; and above all, that barefaced ridicule of all virtue and decency; and the scandalous neglect, and I wish I could not say, contempt of all public worship and religion:—When we consider these things, these signs of the times, the stoutest and most sanguine of us all must tremble at the natural and probable consequences of them. God give us Grace, that we may know at least, in this our day, the things which belong to our peace, before they are hid from our eyes. Never may such blindness happen to us as befell the Jews; but may we seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near; and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon us, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”—*Bishop Newton, on the Prophecies, Vol. II. p. 239.*

“If you behold a nation distinguished by irreligion and contempt of things sacred; by licentiousness, faction, luxury, dissipation, and effeminacy; be assured that, without a reformation, and a return to first principles, the conquest of that nation by some other is becoming more and more feasible every day; the same vices, which provoke divine vengeance, preparing the way for its execution. Such were the characteristics of the antient people of God, in the times preceding their several captivities. Such was the case when the old Assyrian empire perished with Sardanapalus; when Babylon was surprized by Cyrus; when Darius was overthrown by Alexander; when Greece fell under the dominion of the Romans; when these last were overwhelmed by the Northern nations, and when Constantinople was taken by the Turks. Every man who has the prosperity of his country at heart, should very seriously consider, how far these tokens are to be found upon ourselves; and what can be done to prevent the farther spreading of the infection; and to eradicate the seeds of the disorder.”—*Bishop Horne's Sixteen Sermons, page 162.*

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