

An Catholic Restrictions.Letter 1.

Suppose a conscientious man, sitting down to consider, whether he ought to wish for the reinfanchisement of the catholics of Ireland, or whether he ought to wish for their remaining in that state of restraint which their own slavish policy in former times has brought them into; to what points will he naturally direct his mind? He will want, before all things, to know, whether it be true, as Lord Eldon, Mr Peel, and many other men of talent, together with the majority of the Heads of Colleges in the two Universities, and, I presume) a large portion of the Clergy in general, say it seems to them to be, that the withdrawing these restrictions, at this time, would tend to endanger the Constitution of the country; or, whether, as has seemed to Burke, Fox, Pitt, Sheridan, Windham, Grenville, Erskine, and as it now seems to Canning, Plunket, Lansdowne and Wellesley, it is a measure so required in support of that Constitution, that its delay would be ^{dangerous}, and its abandonment fatal.

It is impossible to conceal from ourselves that the great body of men, eminent for genius and practical knowledge, is, and for some time has been, on the side of Emancipation. In what manner ought this to be weighed by a man, who has strength of mind enough to withstand and oppose a majority, even of his nearest friends, in any case where he is unconvinced of the soundness of their opinions? I leave out of the question here the absolute majority to be obtained, if the Kingdom were polled.

2

polled. I do not address myself to those who would have questions of policy decided by the sense or nonsense of the mass of agriculturists or commercialists, fund holders or householders, or any other separate class of men whatsoever, high or low. I address myself to those who perceive that a repugnance to good and salutary measures, in the breasts of an honest majority of the population, ought only so far to influence a statesman, as to deter him from passing any measure that might give pain and uneasiness to that majority, more than commensurate with the good to be obtained - that might so violently agitate them, as to endanger their attachment to Government. Slighter degrees of repugnance, in the mass of mankind, vanish almost at once, when they see their real friends seriously advocate a measure, and advisedly adopt it; and the very remembrance of that repugnance fades away before a new course of happy government. Though an honest man may be unable to shake off all his prejudices and fears, in compliance with the expressed opinion of those Statesmen he looks up to, and trusts to - though he may still grumble out some incoherent sentiments of discontent, and with his "Well, you'll see," and "Well, I wish it may be so - but" - may prognosticate some undefined mischance, yet he will not cherish an old belief of unfitness and inconvenience in the face of new and happy results, nor unrelentingly transfer from year to year his dread of those evils, which he finds never really happen. The great body of my countrymen have not, thank God, that sulky pertinacity which resists evidence, and refuses to be taught; they have not

not so inveterate a perverseness as to wish a good undone,
because they were not the first to discover that it was a good.

When the fatal strainings of the prerogative and encroachments on the Constitution that preceded the expulsion of James the Second, had overcome the forbearance of enlightened men, and compelled them to wish for that severe remedy, did they wait till the numerical majority in the kingdom admitted the sad necessity? History does surely shew the contrary; or, if not, if any man of competent understanding reading and reflexion can persuade himself that the majority were favorable to the expulsion of the Stewarts, yet will he dare to say that an adverse majority, supposed to exist, would have been, or ought to have been deferred to by the ruling men of the times? The measure passed; the kingdom flourishes; and many a man, whose ancestors were then conscientious Jacobites, feels a hearty and steady loyalty to the reigning Family, and is proud of living a freeman, under a constitutional, free, and practically tempered monarchy; nor is that loyalty damped, nor that pride humbled by the consideration of his ancestor's repugnance to the measures which ensured the present blessings.

To return then again to the main question before us, viz. - whether or not the safety of the Constitution requires that a political distinction be made between Catholics and others; and if so, what those distinctions are? Let us attentively and deliberately ask ourselves -

1. What is the nature of the Roman Catholic Religion,

per se,

4
per se, as they say; is it, or is it not, naturally more
propitious to slavery than the other forms of Christianity;
and what effects, of a kind that should influence our
verdicts on this occasion, may be predicated of it on the
minds of its professors?

2. What are we to infer from the actual state of religi-
ous toleration and restraint as now existing in
Christendom, compared with the actual state of liberty,
security of life and property, morality, wealth, and
progressive increase or decrease of good, both moral
and physical, in the respective countries?

3. What is the true force of the argument to be drawn
from the preponderance toward emancipation in the
collected opinions of enlightened men of various
parties?

An Englishman

If we look into the Creeds, the Catechisms and other authoritative instructions emanating from the church of Rome, we shall find there inculcated all the undoubted moral maxims of the Gospels: we shall find there the same speculative dogmas as the Church of England warrants - the same declarations respecting the paramount importance of believing in the doctrines of original sin, redemption, &c.; in the Trinity, in the necessity of baptism, and the Lord's supper. In discipline, we shall find them, like ourselves, purely Episcopalian - holding the authority and sanctity of ordination, &c. as derived from the Apostles, in an uninterrupted succession, by the imposition of hands, from the foundation of Christianity (through the Church of Rome) to the present times - the right to tithes - to chastise spiritual offenders by excommunication - in short, without adverting here to the various minor points of rites and ceremonies, in which the two churches agree, or disagree, it may be sufficient to observe, that we shall find the general spirit of their discipline and ordinances compatible with, and similar to, our own.

Are we averse to acknowledge this similarity? Is there a faintness, a hesitation in our perception and belief of it? That faintness, be assured, arises, not from the conformity being slight, but from our ideas on

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6

these subjects having faded - from an habitual inadvertency, arising from the trifling interest they excite in the present day - from the little care or concern we now take in Popery and its doctrines, except when its points of dissimilarity and strangeness stimulate us to observation - from the impossibility of practically imposing on ourselves the belief that there is any danger of our children turning Papists; any more necessity for studying and discriminating their tenets, than those of the followers of the grand Lama.

Now, but from this fundamental similarity, can be explained the plans and wishes of the many learned and estimable Bishops and Fathers of our church, who, at different times since the subsiding of the violent animosities engendered by the Reformation, have earnestly and bona fide sought for some re-union - some scheme of accommodation with the church of Rome: - Could these wishes have been directed, by good and intelligent men, towards a church whose doctrines were per se in opposition to their own?

Oh! that men would discern, and mark, how little necessary connexion there is between the written, ~~and~~, avowed principles of an Establishment, and the practical results that are in fact to be expected from it. If, by a large induction from the habitual practices of a body of men, in any case, we find them cordial in good, & pregnant with no danger to ourselves, we may

may safely join in fellowship with them, though their written principles might be grammatically construed into the very dissolution of society; and on the other hand, the fears arising in any case of the contrary induction,—the induction of danger from a set of men— are vainly argued against, and foolishly attempted to be set aside by any appeal to their papers, their parchments, their formulas of belief, merely on the ground that these formulas are construable to nothing but good.

If the Neapolitan be a sensual, sunk, degraded people, I would not trust my son to be educated among them a bit the more, because their written, professed, and accredited rule of conduct, is the tenor of the gospel; nor would I a bit less trust him among the inhabitants of Geneva, if I found them to be ~~a~~ faithful, frank, & really obedient to the moral rules imposed by God and man, because some Doctor of Divinity, in my neighbouring town, may have proved to me, that the principles of Calvin take away the idea of goodness from the idea of God, and all motives to goodness from men.

An Englishman

On Catholic Restrictions

Letter 3.

For the purposes of fellowship in society and government, a man is to be judged of, not by his belief, as derived from the logic of the formulas he swears to, and even believingly, i.e. conscientiously swears to; but by the code of practical belief, to be discovered in his systematic habits and actions. 'Tis grievous, no doubt, that men should be entangled in verbal inconsistencies; but 'tis too frequently the case—such is our nature; so beyond our clear ken are some

some subjects ; so darkly do we see, as through a glass — Words are not always to be interpreted formally, but considered as an imperfect outward type of an earnest and fervent desire of shewing submission to the will of God. I am not palliating equivocations, nor making light of oaths. When the words of oaths and declarations are left in use after the belief in the thing itself directly signified under them is neither expected nor required, I admit that a heavy responsibility lies somewhere, for the blunting of conscience, which must be the consequence — for every deviation from clear rectitude, that may be traced to this source: and depend upon it, these deviations are not imaginary — depend upon it, the habitue of going through the forms of living will lower the standard of morality — But in every case the proposition this letter sets out with is true; ~~that~~ whether formulas be adhered to with an enlightened concurrence of belief in their direct meaning; or whether with an obscure, yet conscientious belief, contrary to, and thwarting what may be called the practical belief, as demonstrated by the tenor of life and conversation; or whether they be adhered to, in spite of an absolute absence of belief — none being required or thought of — in all cases it holds true, that for the purposes of fellowship men are to be judged by their actions. By their fruits ye shall know them. All arguments drawn from what a man ought to do, according to his recorded principles, when we see, day after day, and year after year, that he does not do so, however formal, are but specious and illusory; and are unworthy to be insisted upon by a statesman. These paper pellets ought to be confined to the schools.

giving no undue weight then in any case to the arguments in favour of the Papists drawn from the general conformity of their doctrine and discipline to those of our own Church, and none at all if the practice of Catholics shows them to be in any treacherous opposition to the English constitution - to be unfairly hostile - to be dangerous to it, I proceed to consider the chief points in which the Church of Rome differs from that of England. These are the following

1. Transubstantiation; which, as is well known, denotes a more explicit and direct conversion of the consecrated bread and wine into the actual body of Jesus Christ than can be implied by the expression "Body of our Lord Jesus Christ which is verily and indeed taken by the faithful in the Lord's supper," or any other expression in the Ritual, Homilies &c of the Church of England.
2. Image worship; which is Idolatrous or not, according as the word Idolatry be defined.
3. The doctrine of Purgatory; or state of temporal and redeemable punishment for intermediate sinners; between ^{supreme}

(A note)

* The strongest expression I have remarked in the Homilies is the following "Thus much we must be sure to hold, that in the supper of the Lord, there is no vain ceremony, no bare sign, no untrue figure of a thing absent"

supreme misery and supreme bliss.

4th. Invocation of Saints and of the Virgin Mary.

5. Efficacy of Prayers for the Dead

The three last dogmas are connected with the Roman Catholic interpretation of those clauses in the Apostle's creed, which teach us to believe in the communion of saints, and in the descent into Hell. The church of England holds them "vain" and "fond" and to be "rather repugnant to scripture than otherwise". What Her own interpretation of the clauses is, I am not competent to say. Her most approved Expositor of the Creed evades a direct answer to the question of what is meant by "Communion of saints" and "He descended into Hell": but we have no right to transfer to Her the blame due to Bishop Pearson for this equivocation. Her only fault or inadversity in this case is, the not placing somewhere conspicuously in her ritual the interpretation of all such expressions, whose meaning is not excited, in the present day, by the words themselves, & which Her members have to declare their "stodfast" belief in.

6th. The five Sacraments of Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage, Penitence and Extreme Unction.

The Church of England considers as superstitions the exalting these Ordinances to the rank of Sacraments; but she holds the sacred importance of them equally with the church of Rome; excepting anointing the sick with oil; which though practiced by the Apostles, as appears from the New Testament, she does not consider as obligatory on Christians in general.

7th. Particular confession and absolution; which, whether it

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be reprobated or not, as a general usage, by any of the 11 constitutional articles of the Church of England, I am not at this moment prepared to say; but which, as positively enjoined by Her, is, I am well aware, confined to the particular case of Visitation of the Sick.

8th. Supremacy of the Pope

9th. Indulgences and Dispensations

10th. Infallibility.

It is only the four last articles that require anything further to be said. We are not inquiring into the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the Romish faith, but whether there be anything in it that prima facie should induce us to wish its professors under penal restraints. Now let any man fairly ask himself this question — Of a set of Protestants should spring up among us, whose manners and practices were innocuous, and whose doctrines were in other respects unimpeachable, but who should profess a belief in Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Efficacy of prayers for the dead, Reliques, Images &c, should we wish the Legislature to exclude them from the full benefit of the Constitution — should we wish penal laws to be enacted against them, incapacitating them from holding such and such situations — should we not wish that the wording of certain disqualifying laws might be so altered, as not, on account of the word Transubstantiation, to include these peaceable and unsuspected subjects among the Roman Catholics? There is not a tolerant man in England but would give his vote in favour of the emancipation of my supposed new sect of harmless Protestants, except so far as some of the most timid, and most haunted with the idea of dangers from Papists, might be afraid of its being made a precedent for extending the same grace to the latter. That is, no tolerant man really thinks it a fitting cause for excluding Catholics, that they believe in transubstantiation

transubstantiation and purgatory - that they pray before crosses, pictures and images - that they set great store by relics; holding them to be a sovereign nostrum in various cases of sickness; of peril and misfortune - that they esteem the entrance into holy orders and into the holy bonds of marriage, together with two or three other sacred prayers in life to be of the nature of a sacrament.

Letter IV.

I come now to consider the supremacy of the Pope; and here I at once allow that in this doctrine is involved a certain degree of possible and contingent inconvenience, that does justify us in bearing spleened at the folly of people, who cannot be content to regulate their own spiritual affairs at home among themselves, but must needs refer them to a foreigner; and to increase the absurdity, that foreigner a temporal Prince! To deny the inconvenience of this would be as unfair as it is to affirm that the strict spiritual submision of a people to the Pope is inconsistent with strict temporal submision to the laws and appointments of their king & country. For utter ignorance or disregard of history - the history of Switzerland; of Saxony of Prussia, for example, may so blind an honest protestant as to conceal from him that arguments in support of this negative assertion, however ingenious and sincere, are perfectly nugatory, - being in the face of facts - so an ignorant person might even bona fide even believe and argue that no true catholic Prince could ever lead catholic soldiers to fight against the Pope - that no true protestant King of England would ever intrust Irish catholics with commands in the army and navy etc; but the contingent inconvenience of owing supremacy to a foreign Prince is positive and palpable; & though history and experience may force us to modify our opinions as to the degree of it, they can never demonstrate the idea to be absurd.

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When one reflects on the mass of entangled argument that might be thrown aside as useless, if the catholics would but give up this point; when one reflects how utterly insignificant, how harmless with respect to political consequences, are all their other peculiar tenets; how utterly impossible it would be, if this one doctrine were done away, to engage a Statesman to approve of the continuation of the restrictions, or to oppose their repeal, except from deference to the prejudices of others, one cannot but wish, with a sigh, that the Pope, among his other dispensing powers, had that of dispensing with his own supremacy.

If he would but set up a separate and independent pope for each separate state, the objections to supremacy would vanish; and whether that supremacy were embodied in a committee, or in an individual, or in a word, in a tyope, in a sign hung up in a titular Bishop's palace, in a parchment, or any way else, provided that its holyness were bodily in the country, & could not, like the Pope in Rome, become an enemy to it, without, at the same time becoming a rebel or an inevitable nuisance, there would be no ground of alarm.

— Then we should see the good people of Ireland guided just as they are now — by their faithful priests; & should not hear the protestants throwing in their teeth that they were under the direction of trlichist. Then we should find them celebrating the mysteries, practicing the munneries, & believing in the superstitions of their church; and the protestants looking on with as little wish to chastise them, by disqualifications, as they now have to chastise the Swedenborgians, or Johanna-Southcotians, or Shilotists. Then we should see the catholics zealous for the prosperity & spread of their opinions, and at the same time the Protestants

14 protestants taking it in good part as they now take the honest zeal of the methodists or quakers.

If the Pope, from the nature of his functions, were incapacitated from interfering in temporal affairs, supremacy would be as harmless as Image-worship; but suppose He should in the revolution of affairs become a mighty potestate, &, as such, quarrel with Great Britain - would it not be a pity to see the subjects of the King of England in spiritual thralldom to a man they were fighting against? It must have been pitiable to see the staunch catholics under Charles the 5th of Spain fighting against their spiritual head, invading his sanctuaries, & forcing him from his last retreat. If, for example, I considered it certain that in the next century, the Pope would be king of France, I should think it almost certain that England would next century be at war with the Pope. I should indeed think it almost certain that the Irish soldiers would in that case defend his King and Country as heartily & Loyally as any Spanish or French soldier has done in the like dilemma, & with as little regard to the Bulls of his Holiness: and I should also hope that in case of any real state dangers, interests, habits and actions of the catholics, Jesuitical and treasonable intrigues should again arise, as in the time of Queen Elisabeth; tis not too much to expect that the Legislature might possibly show some portion of the prudence and manliness of her times, in thwarting them at least sufficient for the passing of penal laws suited to the case - that the orders we now rescind, because the color of the south end of a certain edifice is changed from black to white, we should not have the imbecility to hesitate reestablishing, if it should change back from white to black. Really from what one hears of the distant & possible dangers from popery, one would imagine that it was proposed to enter into a solemn League and covenant never

never in future times to enact any measure against any people in this country calling themselves Catholics, better conduct what it will. As much as to say if you change the state of the law from restriction to non-restriction now the Papists are good subjects, & do it on that very ground, of course you must never change it back again from non-restriction to restriction if they should hereafter become bad subjects - because it would be inexpedient to fit the laws to the times after this year.

If these hypotheses could be admitted - that is, if it were sure that the Pope would become a great King, and the catholics factions, & the English bewitched, & incapable of passing laws for their own protection against Jesuitism & intrigues, I for one would certainly oppose the emancipation of the catholics at the present day. But in fact to speak seriously tis impossible to look History fairly in the face and discover that Supremacy has not for many centuries had the power of moving freemen from any of their generous purposes or of prevailing on Princes and National councils to yield up one iota of their absolute controlling authority. Though Popes and Kings have connived at each other in furtherance of despotic purposes, & partisans have often fanned their natural violence upon zeal for religion & submission to Rome yet for many centuries Supremacy has ^{not} ~~had~~^{* not *} the power of moving freemen from any of their generous purposes, or of prevailing on Princes & National Councils to yield up one iota of their absolute controlling authority. See the histories of Spain France Switzerland England, Scotland, Germany.

* never since the court of Rome fully disclosed the cloven foot of despotic & insatiable ambition.

Why will not the Catholics give up the supremacy of the Pope? Because their church is infallible; and cannot unsay a thing. For this infallibility is the only other doctrine that would be touched by such a renunciation. And must infallibility go, if supremacy goes? Not a whit. Why should it? Let them still say the Church is infallible, and infallible it would be — as infallible as ever. Are not the catholic doctrines on the subject of Grace changed from what they were in the times immediately succeeding Saint Augustine? Possibly this will be denied; for on such a subject what can pin a man down — how can the metaphysical Proteas be bound by a chain of words — but surely it may be allowed that the Molinists believed one way on this subject, with the sentiment of being in accordance with the church of Rome, which they allowed to be infallible; and the Jansenists the contrary, & with the very same sentiments of obedience; and does not this absurdity frequently occur among the catholics in various other forms? When we protestants argue upon alledged infallibility and upon data, which are indeed found in our adversaries words, but which in the minds & actions of man are non-existent, and deduce what seem to be the legitimate consequences, we are but as in a dream; our labours are of no practical utility; we do but trouble the roversies and absurdities of the papists by mixing up with them absurdities of our own — tis arguing logically upon improbable suppositions, than which nothing can be more illogical — if logic be used in any good sense, as allied to reason. Infallibility, to be any thing, must be absolute in all its numbers. Curtail it in any limb, & it becomes lame and impotent throughout; find in it but a weak place to touch, and the charm is broken — the whole structure falls to pieces. How then can it be

be anything more than a formal word? How can it have any strict meaning, as applied to written decrees &c, since language is always more or less indefinite, & like man in all his works, imperfect!

As for indulgences, dispensations, auricular confession and absolution, though they, like many other tenets, in many other churches, might be construed into danger, yet, as they are not abstractions, but entirely practical, and admit of a more & a less, so the reality of the dangers they may seem to threaten to the welfare of society depends on the manner in which they are dispensed - on the actual and habitual procedures of the times. The moderation with which they have been long practiced enables us to pronounce them, with reference to catholic emancipation, to be, now, no obstacle whatsoever. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

Letter V.

But the church of Rome, it is said, allows none to be saved out of her own communion. When this is urged against the Catholics, is it meant that such a doctrine is inconsistent with social tolerance; that its professors must have a less desire of persecuting heretics? Facts upset this inference. Tis true that in certain countries, and at certain times, catholics have been intolerant. So has the Church of England; witness the court of high commission - witness the cruel episcopal persecution carried on in Scotland in Charles the 2^d time - witness the act of uniformity - witness the conventicle act &c &c. And the Presbyterians, those doughty champions for religious freedom, they, who found the yoke of Episcopacy so intolerable; who have shewn more rancorous intolerance than they? Who have been more strenuous in denying salvation to Catholics, & others not of their own sect?

sect? The bitter lees of this spirit still tinctured the conversation of the elect godly in Scotland, even within the memory of some yet alive; and whether 'tis now entirely absorbed in heresy, I know not; but at any rate time has so diluted its acrimony that it no longer offends. — Twas this spirit that burned Soretus — 'twas this spirit that hanged the innocent Quakers in America.

But if in other times and in other countries catholics, genuine catholics, have been and are tolerant, both in practice & in principle, it will follow that though they may have been more guilty of infractions of the spirit of tolerance than other christian sects — though that church may, from its nature and constitution, be somewhat more liable to fall into that error than others, yet intolerance is not their indispensable concorrent.

A glance at Switzerland will shew us whether zealous catholics and zealous protestants can live together in peaceful political and civil union; a glance at Hanover, at Prussia, at Saxony, at Holland, at France, at the Canadas, fellow subjects with ourselves, and whose church is by the British Legislature established to be Roman catholic.

Or is it meant that the abstract belief in such a doctrine is so presumptuous and ungodly, that its professors ought to be marked by disqualifications? But a similar abstract doctrine is fully maintained by the church of England. The members of this church do every year, at stated times, in the most solemn and public manner affirm that not any man can be saved who does not believe in the Trinity. Yet the church of England is eminent by tolerant; and Unitarian worship is protected by the law. Again: the church of England declares Baptism and the Lord's Supper to be generally necessary to salvation (and the Romish church pushes the necessity no further); for

for in cases of overbearing obstacles to the celebration of these rites,
as in martyrdom or other sudden deaths, early after conversion, or
where water or wheat flour or ordained priests are not procurable,
she bars not the gates of heaven; and both churches do
bar them in case of infants dying unbaptized) — yet the
Quaker, who sets these two ordinances at nought, is respected
and amicably treated by the church of England man, and
by legislative enactment is entitled to most ample toler-
ation.

It may be presumptuous to lay down laws for salvation
that are not found distinctly in the Scriptures. It may
be lamentable that speculative opinions, which experience shows
to be compatible with piety to God, and honest tenor of life, should
be solemnly pronounced to be damnable sinful; to be unredeem-
able disqualifications for heaven; but the members of a church,
whose written tenets deny salvation to a Clarke, a Newton,
a Penn, a Lindsey &c &c &c has no right to cast speculative
intolerance in the teeth of the Romish church, on account of the
tenet we are now discussing.

If the Church of England man says that among us the
charities of social life are not disturbed by these speculations,
neither, I say, are they among the catholic Swiss or in
the clergy of the Church of England technically believe in the
damnatory clauses of the Athanasian creed, & in the impossibility
of an unbaptized infant being saved? Say they do. Yet
their actions, and sentiments as expressed in their daily conversa-
tions, are as if they did not — So may it be on the side of the Catho-
lics; they may technically believe, though their mind
and actions are tolerant. Do they actually disbelieve them?
So again may the catholics on their side. We must mete
out to others with the same measure we mete out to our-
selves.

No moderate man of competent information will deny
that the English Clergy are in general men of integrity,
and sincerely religious. If they are entangled in errors of
verbal inconsistency, they do but undergo the universal fate of

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the ministers of all ancient establishments. Tis an evil that experience shews to be inherent in man's imperfect regulations. We act counter to the spirit of Christianity when we so invidiously spy out the mote in our brother's eye; when we stigmatize our neighbors for what is common to all mankind. The more or the less of these failings in different bodies may be a fit subject of enquiry and discussion; if in charity, and for the sake of amendment. And if each sect, with eyes open to its own errors, reforms them, it will have done all that duty ~~requires~~ on this subject requires. Therest we trust God will pardon, — or who can be saved!

Letter VI.

Many of the friends of English liberty are possessed with the idea that the catholics are, by the nature of their religion, inclined to side with arbitrary government; and, as such, are unwilling to entrust them with power. These men are no enemies to their persons; their religious creeds, they say, are between themselves and God - but no argument of abstract right, of justice &c, can persuade them that 'tis not their paramount duty to guard the bulwarks of the constitution, & to stop up every inlet to tyranny. Their manly and honest feelings are not to be overcome by logic and casuistry. May God grant that this race of men, whose honorable bosoms are the cradles and sanctuaries of liberty, may never have their ranks broken; but with untired constancy stand forth, from generation to generation, the guardians of our laws and liberties! Better fight for a shadow, than be off our guard! These men know too well that the attempts of the jesuits in Queen Elizabeth's time were no shadows; that the attempts of James the 2^d were no shadows. The prominent and fearful points of our history are ever before their eyes. The heart-rousing struggles for liberty absorb their attention. Those interesting passages are indefinitely impressed on their minds by reading; by reflexion; by conversation with their fathers; and actions and designs, which in fact do but belong to certain epochs, to certain men, to certain parties, to certain states and people, come to be considered as inseparable from the catholic, because they were once found in terrible conjunction with that name. The legislature has cooperated with this error; partly willingly, and partly unwittingly. There

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..... There was a time when the catholics, as a general body, were justly subjected to restraint - not because they were catholics, but because they were disaffected to the government - Partly to fall in with the humors of the Reformation, and of the zealous churchmen, and partly for the convenience of an appellation, the law, which by the sounder statesmen were meant against disaffection, and not against heresy, designated their objects as catholics. The penalty fell on the ^{right} persons, and the ^{law} legislature ^{were} careless about such distinctions and declarations, as should have rescued the rights of future catholics, if future catholics should be found loyal. not that they were ignorant that magna charta was the work of catholics; that the Swiss republic was cemented by catholics; nor of any ~~other~~ of the many other transactions in history, which prove that catholics may be the friends of freedom; but it was difficult, if not impossible, to define the disaffection of the times. Transubstantiation, like a cockade, was an obvious symbol, convenient to designate, easy to be brought to the test, and not unfair in its immediate application: for the few well-affected catholics (and somewhere were, who were not drawn into the vortex of their party) would have acknowledged that a temporary privation of their rights, on account of the temporary sins of that party was justified by necessity.* Times change; passions subside; loyalty takes place of disaffection - but the test remains - stat nominis umbra.

Those pithy sayings that we hear sometimes, that catholics cannot change, and the like, betray a wondrous ignorance of human nature; a sadly distorted view of the importance to be attributed to words - ^{fancies} ~~as importuning~~ belied by the facts, as exhibited in the actions of men, in all

all ages, and all countries. One might as well say A Roman
cannot change - once a gladiator, always a gladiator. A Dane
cannot change - once a pirate, always a pirate. A Colum-
bian cannot change - once a slave, always a slave: for I do
not hear that they have changed any of their religious opi-
nions; nor not even that of the personal infallibility of
that Pope, who solemnly decreed that all south America
should for ever belong to the Kings of Spain and Portugal!

The insensible changes, which from time to time have
introduced the present state of Catholicism, forms too differ-
ent a question for men in general to occupy their minds
about; and the very circumstance just mentioned, of the sub-
siding of the persecutions, has been a bar against any interest being
taken in it. Why should men ~~think of~~ examine the Catholics and
their proceeding in connexion with the safety of our consti-
tution, in any period times posterior to King William's?
or at furthest, after the year 45? What new animo-
sities have arisen; what are they to us (politically) after
that period?

Feeling ourselves safe and at large, we forget, or refuse
to examine whether the demoniac patient, who lies bound
hand and foot, be dispossessed yet. He has been cured. The
evil spirit left him long ago. He begs to be set free; some-
times gently, sometimes angrily; but we, who are slow to run
do his bidding, answer him with "You are safe where you are
and so are we". As the timorous throng that pressed round
the dead body of the Dragon Sir Guy had slain, still saw
signs of life in him, and little dragonets creeping out of
his wounds - all of which was but in their imagination, -
so we attribute to Catholic possession the phantoms of our
own courage; and the shapings of our own fears and fan-
cies: so difficult it is to distinguish the cessation of a cause
when the impressions have been vivid! In the mean time
the patient perhaps, in a fit of anger or despair, struggles, and
vociferates in too high a tone; tis very natural he should: but
this

this we turn against him; we take it as a symptom of his old complaint; we fancy we see the cloven foot in it: let us take care that we do not drive him mad indeed. Seriously; 'tis high time for the opposers of catholic emancipation to open their eyes; to rouse themselves, and cease dreaming of King William's times - of heats and burnings long since extinguished - of fires, whose last sparks went out in the middle of the last century.

If we look a little deeper into the causes that have in former times too much allied the catholics with arbitrary power, we shall find that we are not warranted in drawing from their temporary conduct, such inferences to the discredit of the natural and necessary spirit of their religion, as is usually done by many of those protestants, who holding in just and strong abhorrence the bigotry and slavish practices their forefathers have had to contend against, still dread to receive the papists into political fellowship.

When the Reformation first dawned upon the world, the whole of Christendom was catholic, obeying the spiritual supremacy of the Pope. Now, though reforms do sometimes emanate from a wise prince, and are by him promulgated to the people, yet it more frequently happens, as is well known, that they are wrested from governments by the more enlightened and active portion of the subject community.

Tis natural, tis even desirable that public functionaries should ever shew a strong tendency to uphold the present state of things: otherwise institutions would be the sport of caprice. Happy the country, where this steadiness and slowness to change does not degenerate into obstinacy and selfishness; into impenetrable refusal to adjust things agreeably to the indications of that great changer of all things, time; — where, as in great Britain, the government is both willing to lead the people & to be the first mover of improvement; and, in its turn, to meet and satisfy the wholesome wishes of the public, & adapt the laws to the wants & temper of the age.

The spirit of the Reformation was mainly a spirit of throwing off a yoke. Such a spirit cannot be kindled in one compartment of the moral world, without communicating itself to all the rest. If it arises on religious ground, and overthrows abuses there, will it be possible for it to rest, and spare abuses in the state? How could Princes calmly see a flame break out, which threatened to invade all the departments of Government? Above all, how could despotic princes ensure that the people should shew a proneness to throwing off any yoke of authority? The spirit of the Reformation must, at every step, appear in their eyes as a spirit of rebellion & disobedience. And in fact did not rebellion and disobedience and fanaticism enlist themselves among the advocates of the cause, as, unhappily, they will, moreover, be, in all popular reforms? The Reformation having in it the stamina of genuine piety, of real devotedness to the service of God & man, survived the dangers of this alliance; but was impaired and pulled back by it, and impeded in its course. Every arbitrary prince must have seen and felt instinctively, that if a people had such independence of spirit as to insist on a reform of religion, they could not be counted upon as unconditionally obedient in any thing. Hence their alarm and sore dismay; hence their troubled thoughts; their impatience, bitterness and rancour. And if such prince had under him an obsequious servile people, the reformers would have that people for their unthinking enemy. Thus, if we could suppose all Christendom at that time, instead of being under the see of Rome, to have been divided into independent churches, not holding the doctrines of transubstantiation, & that some fantastic new light had sprung up, & misled the free-spirited portion of Europe into the conscientious belief that it was due to God's service to set up one spiritual head to the Christian world, & to declare the consecrated

27

secrect elements to be the real body of Christ; and that it was
the duty of mankind to follow these new lights, whether their re-
less allowed them or not; I say, in this case, Spain, France
and Italy would have exhibited the same cruel seal against
catholicism, as in actual fact they did against protestantism.
So true it is that though some undomineering princes & priests
may have been betrayed by religious zeal into intemperance,
and even cruelties, yet the great body of persevering intrigues
and plots, the treacheries, the massacres, & the violences, for which
religion has been the pretext, and even appeared sometimes to the
actors themselves to be the cause, has in fact been engendered, by
brought forth and nurtured by the love of arbitrary power, and
the hatred of independence.

Protestantism was a self-willed change; a setting up against
authority; therefore the arbitrary spontaneously acted together, as
in League against it. and as their fears for authority were unbound-
ed, so was the cruelty of their measures for stifling its new enemy:
as their hatred to disobedience was intense, so was their eagerness for
crushing its germs. And as the bold & rebellious spirit, by rank-
ing themselves among the reformers, obscured and embar-
rassed that cause, so the timid pions, together with all those whose
zeal for old obedience was overpowerful, left their assistance, and
(such is the delusion that misleads the unwary; such the empire that
the worldly and interested obtain over the minds of the simple) often
conscientiously lent it to catholic intolerance and counteraction;
and so, by making it difficult to distinguish how far permanent
religious feeling entered into that intolerance, have clogged the
cause of emancipation, by affording an objection that is easy to
make, plausible to support, & bona fide ^{thought} believed valid by many,
who would otherwise be glad to conciliate their fellow-subjects
in Ireland, & who have no wish to domineer merely because they have
the power to do so; namely, the objection of the tendency of the
catholic faith to generate slyish and intolerant feelings.

The Reformation was from catholicism. Reformation implied
a longer to all abuses, & to all claims to unconditional obedience. Hence
it had for its enemies
despotic princes with ultra obedient subjects, and despotic priests
issuing from that den of despotism, the court of Rome, & guided by
its councils, together with all those they could influence, ~~merits~~
~~enemies~~—these men being thus zealous for arbitrary power and for
catholicism at the same time, not because the catholic faith is na-
turally

naturally united to arbitrary government, but from the circumstance of the Christian world, previous to the Reformation, being catholic.

Lewis the 14th united religious bigotry with love of arbitrary power; but this love was, after all, the leading principle of his conduct. Under its influence he disliked the boldness of the English Parliaments, & other princes joined in these sentiments: but do not all despotic rulers bear a like hatred to English freedom? And is it confined to catholic princes? Let us look abroad, & into history, & see if we cannot find it as well without as within the pale of the Romish church.

Do the catholic Cantons of Switzerland bear us this illiberal enmity? They, no doubt wish us to become reunited to the Romish church — where would be their sincerity, where their charity, if they did not? — but would scorn to supplant our institutions by treacherous intrigue. So we wish them a speedy conversion from the errors of their faith, with the like abhorrence of employing unfair means to effect it.

Established churches naturally encourage obedience. They inculcate subjection and submission to the laws. This love of order and uniformity is often pushed too far; even into intolerance. It has been so pushed by the church of England; by the Church of Rome also. Granting that tis in heretical stronger in the church of Rome than in most others, yet to attribute all the intolerant practices of catholics to any thing peculiar in their faith, & not to the peculiar circumstances of the times, to conform the spirit of the court of Rome with the natural spirit of catholicism, would be as unfair as to attribute the temporary persecutions under Archbishop Laud & under the court of High Commission &c &c to the natural and ineluctable spirit of our church Establishment. If the church of Rome is set too high against concision and liberal indulgence of conscience, tis a good reason for us to endeavour to convert, & bring down her members to a milder strain — to induce them to temper their faith with some natural infusion of doubt and consciousness of the hopelessness of man's being exempt from error: but tis no reason for our holding on disqualifying statutes against them, after we are convinced that they are loyal subjects, & that they have really no wish of treacherously subverting our Establishments.