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COLUMBIA UNITED, THE LAND OF FREEDOM, THE CLIME OF PEACE AND THE GRAVE OF TYRANTS.

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ELOQUENCE.

An aggregate meeting of the Catholics of Ireland was held in Dublin Jan. 24th. The chair was taken by OWEN O'CONNOR, the lineal descendant of the last monarch of Ireland. After some very sound and able remarks of the chairman, Mr. PHILLIPS presented himself. He delivered his sentiments upon the subject before the meeting, in a strain of such indignant eloquence, mingling the reflections of the Philosopher with the feelings of the Man—commanding, as it were, the flood and ebb of admiration, of horror, of hope, of fear—measuring the depths of reasoning and the heights of sublimity—exhibiting not only the display, but the mastery of the passions—that we do sincerely believe, so wonderful a combination of the art of Rhetoric with the eloquence of Nature, has never been surpassed by ancient or by modern orator. The soundness of his arguments, the wide range of his illustrations, the immovable ground on which he places his subject, would, without any other attribute, stamp him as the philosopher and the statesman—but when he seizes on the fancy, when he casts the spell of his feelings about us, the mind and the heart are subdued by this great master of his art, and we are moulded like wax to every variety of "form and pressure" which he pleases to impart. He who can keep pace with the rapidity of his conceptions, must borrow the wings of the morning, and quit "this visible diurnal sphere." We have never seen the great principle of TOLERATION presented in the light and attitude in which it is here presented—and if ever it has found a resistless advocate, that advocate is

MR. PHILLIPS.

"Having taken, in the concerns of your question, such humble share as was allowed to my station and my capacity, I may be permitted to offer my ardent congratulations on the proud pinnacle on which it this day reposes. After having combated calumnies the most atrocious—sophistries the most plausible, and perils the most appalling, that slander could invent, or ingenuity devise, or power array against you, I at length behold the assembled rank and wealth, and talents of the Catholic People offering to the Legislature that approval which cannot be rejected, if there be a power in Heaven to redress injury, or a spirit on earth to administer justice. Faction may bark and bigotry may fulminate; but in the eye of reason, this earth never presented a more ennobling spectacle than that of a Christian Country suffering for her religion with the patience of a martyr, and suing for her liberties with the expostulations of a philosopher—reclaiming the bad by her piety—refuting the bigotted by her practice—wielding the Apostle's weapons in the Patriot's cause; and at length, laden with chains and laurels, seeking from the country she had saved, the Constitution she had shielded. If ever there was a period when concession could be made not only without danger but with dignity, it is the present. Perhaps when France flourished with success, fired with ambition, and infuriated by enmity—her aim, an universal conquest—her means the confederated resources of the continent—her guide, the greatest military genius a nation fertile in prodigies has produced—a man who seemed born to invert what had been regular—to defile what had been venerable—to crush what had been established, and to create as by a magic impulse, a fairy world, peopled by the paupers he had commanded into kings, and based by the thrones he had crumbled in his caprices. Perhaps when such a power, so led, so organized, and so incited, was in its noon of triumph, the timid

might tremble even at the change that would save, or the concession that would strengthen; but now her Allies faithless—her conquests despoiled—her territory dismembered—her legions defeated—her leader dethroned, and her reigning Prince our ally by treaty, our debtor by gratitude, and our inalienable friend by every obligation of civilized society—the objection is our strength, and the obstacle our battlement.

Perhaps when the Pope was in the power of our enemy, however slender the pretext, bigotry might have rested on it, the inference was false as to Ireland, it was ungenerous as to Rome. The Irish Catholic, firm in his faith, bows to the Pontiff's spiritual supremacy, but he would spurn the Pontiff's temporal interference. If, with the spirit of an earthly domination, he was to issue to-morrow his despotic mandate, Catholic Ireland, with one voice, would answer him—"Sire, we bow with reverence to your Spiritual mission—the descendant of St. Peter, we freely acknowledge you the head of our church and the organ of our creed; but sire, if we have a church, we cannot forget we also have a country, and when you attempt to convert your mitre into a crown, and your crozier into a sceptre, you degrade the majesty of your high delegation, and grossly miscalculate upon our submission. No foreign power shall regulate the allegiance we have sworn to our sovereign—it was the fault of our fathers that one pope forged our fetters, it will be ours if we allow them to be riveted by another." Such would be the answer of universal Ireland—such was her answer to the audacious menial who dared to dictate her unconditional submission to an act of parliament, which emancipated by penalties and redressed by insult. But fortunately for you it did so happen that the personal character of your Pontiff, gave your enemies an ample refutation. No splendor of promise could purchase, no threat of punishment could overpower him—he saw his capital a garrison—his conclave banished—his grey hairs dragged with ignominy, and his aged frame emaciated amid dungeon damps, and wasted by a lingering martyrdom. He might have had a palace, but he chose a prison—he might have had a sceptre, but he preferred a scourge—he might have worn a diadem, but he took the wreath of thorns—happily for himself, thrice happily for the church he represented, the hour of his sufferings has passed away, but the memory of his fortitude will live forever. If the solitude of his dungeon was disheartening, yet, when the God he worshipped touched its door, he walked forth from the splendors of his captivity, the most independent potentate, the only christian prince of the continent, who had not in his turn bowed before the bloody divinity of Moloch. Thus then, the phantom of a foreign interference has been banished by Ireland, and the very idea of its existence disproved by Rome.—The people upon whom it was to act deprecate its authority, and the power to which it was imputed abhors its ambition; the pope would not exert it if he could, and the people would not acknowledge it if he did.

These objections refuted, a third started up with reference to your faith; it is an article of their creed, exclaims the bigot, not to keep faith with heretics. In vain did your people disclaim the tenet; in vain did your prelates denounce it as unchristian—in vain did the most celebrated universities in Europe solemnly deny it as a most unfounded calumny. The unblushing bigot only flourished from defeat, and fattened on refutation. What was the consequence? In the course of a contest, without parallel in its prodigies, the Spanish peninsula, the most rooted in its faith, perhaps the most prejudiced in its practice, because the theatre of action; Catholic Spain warring against Catholic France, fought by the side of Protestant England. Catholic Spain, with her imputed prejudices, gave a Protestant the command of her armies; and he, who, in his own country, saw you denied any trust whatever for the crime of your creed, saw himself confided in by the zealots of that creed, with no reference but to the merit of his qualifications! Is there a protestant who must not blush at the contrast? But was the imputation true? Did Lord Wellington find that creed made any difference amid the thunder of the battle? Did the Spanish soldier desert his station, because his general believed not in the real presence? Did the brave Portuguese neglect his orders to negotiate about mysteries? or what comparison did the hero draw between the policy of England and the piety of Spain, when at one moment he led the heterodox legions in victory, and the very next was obliged to fly

from his own native flag, waving defiance on the walls of Burgos, where the Irish exile planted and sustained it? What must he have felt, when in a foreign land, he was obliged to command brother against brother, to raise the sword of blood, and drown the cries of nature with the artillery of death?—What were the sensations of our hapless exiles, when they recognized the features of their long lost country; when they heard the accents of the tongue they loved, or caught the cadence of the simple melody which once soothed them into sleep beneath a mother's nurture, or cheered the daring exile they must behold no more. Alas! how the poor banished heart delights in the memory that song associates—he heard it in happier days, when the parents he adored, the maid he loved, the friend of his soul, and the green fields of his infancy were round him; when his labors were illumined with the sunshine of the heart, and his humble hut was a palace, for it was his home; his soul is full, his eye suffused—he bends from the battlements to catch the cadence; when his death shot sped by the hand of a brother, lays him in his foreign grave, the victim of a code calling itself christian! Who shall say, heart-rending as it is, this picture is from fancy? Has it not occurred in Spain? May it not this instant be acting in America? Is there any country in the universe, in which these brave exiles of barbarous bigotry are not to be found, refuting the calumnies that banished, and rewarding the hospitality that received them?—And yet England, who sees them in every field of the new world and the old, defending the various flags of every faith, supports the injustice of her exclusive constitution, by branding upon them the ungenerous accusation of an exclusive creed. England, the ally of Catholic Spain—the ally of Catholic Portugal—the ally of Catholic France—the friend of the Pope—England, who seated a Catholic bigot in Madrid—who conveyed a Catholic Braganza to the Brazils—who crowned a Catholic Bourbon in Paris—who guaranteed the Catholic establishment in Canada—who gave her constitution to Catholic Hanover—England, who one would imagine, took out a roving commission from Quarantotti, in search of Catholic grievances to redress, and Catholic princes to restore, cannot trust the Catholic at home, who spends his blood and treasure in her service!

Is this generous? Is this just? Is this politic? Is it the act of a wise country, to fetter the energies of a wise population? Is it the act of a christian country to do it in the name of God? Is it politic in a government to degrade the body by which it is supported, or pious to make Providence a party in its degradation? There are societies in England for distributing the bible; there are christian associations for discountenancing vice; there are volunteer associations for converting the heathen; the black of Guinea is visited by their philanthropy, and the plains of Hindostan are to be blessed with their religion. But Ireland, the scene of their government, the stay of their empire, their associate by all the affinities of nature and of interest, how has she benefitted by the gospel of which they boast?—Has the sweet spirit of christianity appeared in our plains in the character of her precepts, breathing the air and robed in the beauties of the world to which she would lead us—with no argument but love; no look but peace; no wealth but piety—her creed comprehensive as the arch of Heaven, and her charities bounded but by the circle of the creation? Or, has she been let loose amongst us, in the form of a fury, and in spirit a demon—her heart festering with the fires of hell, her hands clotted with the gore of earth—writhing alike in her repose and in her progress; her path apparent by a tract of blood, and her pause denoted by the expanse of desolation?—Gospel of heaven! is this thy herald?—God of the universe! is this thy handmaid? In what language should the English missionary address the heathen; if he asked him should he estimate the christian's doctrine, by the christian's practice; if he dwelt upon those periods when the inhuman victim writhed upon the altar of the peaceful Jesus, and the cross crimsoned with his blood, became little better than a stake for the sacrifice of its votaries—if he pointed to Ireland, where the word of peace was the war whoop of destruction; where the son was bribed against the father, and the plunder of the parent's property was a bounty on the recantation of the parent's creeds—where the march of the human mind was stayed in his

* Burgos was garrisoned by the Irish legions in the French army.

By an act of Queen Anne, 1704, the son of a Catholic was authorised to dispossess his father of his estate, the son becoming a protestant.

name who has inspired it with reason, and any effort to liberate a fellow creature could only be attended by the dungeon or on the scaffold—where ignorance was no longer a legislative command—where heaven was placed as a barrier between the sexes, and the intercourse of nature was pronounced felony by law; where God's worship was an act of stealth, and his minister sought among the savages of the woods that sanctuary which a nominal civilization had denied him; where at this instant, conscience is made to blast every hope of genius, and every energy of ambition, and the catholic, who could rise to any station of trust, must, in the face of his country, deny the faith of his fathers; where the preferments of earth are only to be obtained by the forfeiture of heaven.

Unprized are her sons, till they learn to betray.

Undistinguished they live, if they shame not their sires;

And the torch that would light them to dignity's way.

Must be caught from the pile where their country expires."

How would the christian missionary droop beneath this catalogue of Christian qualifications! But thus it is when sectarians differ on account of mysteries; the cause of the contest is sacrificed in the strife, and the infidel smiles at the triumph of the conqueror. In the heat and acrimony of the causeless combat, religion, the glory of one world, and the guide of another, drifts from the splendid circle in which she shone; into the comet maze of uncertainty and error! The code against which you petition is a vile compound of impiety and impolicy; impiety, because it oppresses in the name of God; impolicy, because it disqualifies in the name of government. If we are to argue from the services of protestant Ireland, to the losses sustained by the bondage of catholic Ireland, and I do not see why we should not, the state which continues this system is guilty of little less than a political suicide.—It matters little where the Irishman has been employed; whether with Burke, wielding the senate with his eloquence; with Castlereagh guiding the council by his wisdom; with Barry enriching the arts by his pencil; with Swift, adorning literature by his genius; with Goldsmith, softening the heart by his melody; or with Wellington leading victory captive; he may boldly challenge the competition of the world.

Oppressed and impoverished as our country is, every muse has cheered and every art adorned, and even conquest crowned her. Plundered, she was not poor, for her character enriched; attainted, she was not titleless, for her services ennobled; literally outlawed into eminence, and fettered into fame, the fields of her exile were immortalized by her deeds, and the links of her chain decorated by her laurels. Is this flattery or is it fact? Is there a department in this state in which Irish genius does not support its predominance? Is there a conquest which it does not achieve, or a dignity which it does not adorn? At this instant there is scarce a court in the world to which England has not selected an Irishman as her representative. She has lord Moira in India; sir Gore Ouseley at Isphahan; lord Stewart at Vienna; lord Castlereagh at congress; sir Henry Wellesley at Madrid; Mr. Canning in Lisbon; lord Strangford in the Brazils; lord Clancarty in Holland; lord Wellington in Paris—all Irishmen.

Whether it results from accident or from merit, can there be a more cutting sarcasm on the policy of England? Is it not directly saying to her—Here is a country, from one-fifth of whose people you depute the agents of your most august delegations; the remaining four-fifths of which, by you odious bigotry, you incapacitate from any office of station or of trust. It is adding all that is weak in impolicy to all that is wicked in ingratitude. What is her apology? Will she pretend that the Deity imitates her injustice, and incapacitates the intellect as she has done the creed?—After making Providence a pretence for her code, will she also claim it as a party of her crime, and arraign the universal spirit of partiality in his dispensations? Is she not content with him as a protestant God, unless he would consent to become a catholic demon? If the charge were true; if the Irish Catholic was imbruted and debased, Ireland's conviction would be England's crime, and your answer to the bigot's charge would be the bigot's conduct. What! is this the result of six centuries of your government? Is this a connexion which you call a benefit to Ireland? Have your laws so debased them, that the very privilege of reason is worthless in their possession? Shame, shame to the government where the people are barbarous!—

The day is not distant when they made the education of a catholic a crime, and yet they arraign the catholics for ignorance. The day is not distant when they proclaimed the celebration of the catholic worship as felony, and yet they complain that the catholic is not moral! They hoodwink him, and complain that he sees not! They make him mad, and taunt him with his insanity. Is it to be expected, that a people are to emerge in a moment from the stupor of a protracted degradation?

There is not perhaps to be traced on the map of national misfortunes, a spot so truly and so tediously deplorable as Ireland. Other lands, no doubt, have had their calamities. To the horrors of revolution; the miseries of despotism, or scourges of anarchy, they have in their turns been subject; but it has been only in their turns; the visitations of woe, though severe, have not been eternal; the hour of probation or punishment, has passed away, and the tempest which emptied the vials of its wrath has given way to the serenity of the calm, or the vicissitude of the sunshine. Has this been the case with respect to our miserable country? Is there, save in the visionary world of tradition; is there, in the progress either of record or recollection, one verdant spot in the desert of our annals, where patriotism can find repose, or philanthropy refreshment? Posterity will pause with wonder on the melancholy page which shall portray the story of a people, amongst whom the policy of man has waged an impious warfare with the providence of God, blighting into deformity, all that was beautiful, and into famine all that was abundant. I repeat, however, the charge to be false. The catholic mind in Ireland has made advances scarcely to be hoped in the short interval of its partial emancipation. But what encouragement has the catholic parent to educate his offspring? Suppose he sends his son; the hope of his pride, and the wealth of his heart, into the army. The child justifies his parental anticipation; he is moral in his habits; he is daring in the field and temperate at the board, and patient in the camp; the first in the charge, the last in the retreat; with a hand to achieve, and a head to guide, and a heart to conciliate; he combines the skill of Wellington with the clemency of Cæsar and the courage of Turaine; he can never rise; he is a catholic!

Take another instance; suppose him at the Bar; he has spent his nights at the lamp, and his days in the Forum; the rose has withered from his cheek, mid the drudgery of form; the spirit has faded in his heart, mid the analysis of crime. He has foregone the pleasures of his youth, and the associates of his heart, and the fairy enchantments in which fancy may have wrapped him. Alas! for what?—The lightnings of Genius flashed from his eye, and the thunder of eloquence rolled from his lips; though he spoke with the tongue of Tully, and argued with the learning of Coke, and thought with the purity of Fletcher; he can never rise; he is a Catholic. Merciful God! What a state of society is this, in which thy worship is interposed, as a disqualification to thy Providence; and obedience to thy will as a barrier to thy bounty! Behold then, the Code against which you Petition; it disheartens exertion, it disqualifies merit; it debilitates the State; it degrades the Godhead; it disobeys Christianity. It makes Religion a mart, & its founder a monopolist; and for ages, it has reduced a country, fertile in its soil, commodious in its harbors, rich in its mines, celebrated for its genius, exemplary for its faith, blessed with every beauty of nature, and every bounty of Providence, to a state unparalleled for such a period, under any constitution professing to be free, or any government pretending to be civilized; to justify this compound of folly and infamy there is now no argument. The whole world is at peace with England; the Pope is her friend; Catholic Europe is her Ally. The aspirations on the Catholic creed have been refuted abroad, and the fear of a foreign influence has been rebutted at home. Now then is the time to concede with dignity that which was never denied without injustice. This hour of prosperity may be but the hour of probation; our time has been the theatre of prodigies; we have seen the labor of ages overthrown, and the whim of a day erected on its ruins. Establishments, the most solid, withering at a word; and visions, the most fantastical, realized at a wish; crowns crumbled; discords confederated; Kings made vagabonds and vagabonds made Kings, at the capricious frenzy of a village adventurer. We have seen the whole political and moral world shaking as with an earthquake, and shades the most fantastic, formidable and