

KILDARE CATHOLIC MEETING.

[FROM THE DUBLIN EVENING POST.]

The Catholics of the County of Kildare had been convened to meet at McDonald's, in Naas, on the 3d inst. but the attendance of Gentlemen (Protestant as well as Catholic) was so numerous, that it became necessary to hold the Meeting in the Court-house of the town.

Dominick Wm. O'Reilly, of Kildangan Castle, Esq. was called to the Chair, when Wogan Browne, of Castle Browne, Esq. addressed him in the following words:

Mr. Chairman—Before you proceed to the business of the day, I hope you will allow me, as a zealous well-wisher, to address a few words to you. Little accustomed as I am to speaking in public, and not wishing to trust a fallacious memory, that may be incapable to recall at the moment the proper argument, I beg leave to refer occasionally to a few memoranda which I hold in my hand.

Mr. Chairman—Previous to you and the Roman Catholic Gentlemen of this County, of whom I see so many respectable names annexed to this call, and so full an attendance here, I hope it may be allowed to one of your zealous well-wishers, to offer to you and to them his congratulations on the cool and temperate manner in which this Meeting has been held, and on the legal as well as constitutional objects which it has in view.

To your friendship, to your confidence in me, I owe and feel much indebted for the communication of the Resolutions which are to be proposed at this Meeting; and the very discreet manner in which you intend to act has rendered unnecessary much of the topics upon which I did intend to address you. My intention had been to trace the history of the Convention Act, and the secret motives which prompted the framers of that law.

This led into animadversions upon some now alive, upon many now dead; the discussion is rendered useless, and let us allow their ashes to remain undisturbed, lest, in my own instance, it should be supposed that I was more prompted by private pique than public justice. The same motive will prevent me from animadverting upon one of the living characters, who has brought this law into effect—not that I forget the injury, but think it beneath me to resent it.

I need not remind you, or the Gentlemen who hear me, that the first duty of a good citizen is obedience to the law, however impolitic or arbitrary he may think it, or however anxiously he may wish its repeal. Nor need I mention to many respectable Magistrates met here, that a confidence, inspired by our long acquaintance with the loyalty of our Fellow-countrymen of the County of Kildare, emboldened us to attend here—certain that in our situation, as Magistrates, we should have nothing to reprehend; for I cannot avoid declaring it to be my fixed opinion, that after the solemn Proclamation of the Law Officers of the Crown, of the construction put by them upon the Convention Act, we must have abstained sedulously from an attendance upon any Meeting which had Delegation for its purpose.

Gentlemen, in the anxiety which I feel for the strict and legal propriety of the Roman Catholics of this county, you will, I am sure, perceive my real motive, the desire I have to prevent any of your counsels from being able to attach any blame to the conduct of men, who, in pursuing the objects which you have in view, are not merely securing themselves, but are essentially forwarding the real interests of every Protestant in Ireland—who are fixing upon its only true and solid foundation the love and unanimity of the Subject;—and the grandeur of the Sovereign.—(Hear, hear, hear.)—Yes, Gentlemen, I am bold to declare it, with the Catholic cause—all that is safe to Ireland; with its success we shall rise, and with its reverse we our downfall.—(Hear, hear.)—What a picture does this country exhibit—how different now from the state in which it was in my first acquaintance with it! To what cause ascribe? To the partial repeal of the Penal Code. See the Sons of Ireland now fighting the battles of their Sovereign, foremost to meet every danger. Here, when in foreign service, they once wrested from George II. at the battle of Fontenoy, this exclamation: "Cared he the Laws which thus array my own subjects against me, and secure victory to my Enemy?"

The number of Irish Officers in the Austrian army, in the year 1774, amounted to six hundred, and at least as many more in the service of France and Spain. No such emigration now obtains, and the splendid achievements which mark the progress of our arms, where they meet the enemy's, are evident proofs of that which they have lost, and we have gained. Look at the state of our agriculture—the land smiling with plenty, which, during the American war, in 1775, was starving with want; whereas the Tenant is allowed to obtain in the land stimulating his industry, and making ample recompense to the Protestant Landlord for the liberality of his policy; the income of the land more than trebled during that period; giving to the rich proprietors of our own soil the means of keeping up a suitable rank in the sister Country; and when, in the exertions of the Leinsters, the Downshires, and the Downshires, we see rank and consequence contending against bigotry and self-assumed authority; then we feel that all-wise dependence established in society; the rich borrowing their consequence from the exertions of the poor, and the poor, in return, securing the affections and protection of the upper orders in the State. Look again to this same impulse given by the abrogation of that Code to the exertions of our manufacturers—to our extended commerce—to our home-felt comforts; you will recognize in that departure from the nar-

row policy of the country which had preceded it, the true cause of the high situation which these countries occupy in the face of the world, and perceive that in Ireland, half-won to English feelings, Great Britain has obtained more than an equivalent for that which an illiberal scheme of policy was the occasion of wresting from her—I mean America. Near twenty years have now elapsed, Gentlemen, since the dawn of Irish greatness has been seen, and now the time is come by increased exertion to reap the harvest of benefit which it promises. The moment is fast approaching, not for concession—the name is odious—but for the restoration of all their rights—all the rights of loyal subjects in a free state, to the Roman Catholics of Ireland. Delay, the mildew of disappointment, will blast your past successes; you will lose all the benefits which twenty years have been ripening for you. The present generation has been educated in every line to be useful to their country—Lawyers are ripe to be judges—Colonels to be Generals; perhaps by so glorious a change I may be blessed by the restored society of the dearest of Brothers, impelled into foreign service by the Penal Code, and contending, and successfully, though repeatedly contending, in foreign service, against the Ally of his Country. Will you refuse from the grasp of the meritorious officer, who has so long and valourously employed his sword in your cause, the truncheon of command, which he wishes to wield for your benefit?

It seems a high and portentous dispensation of Providence, that the great reborn shall have been so long withheld, in order to give to that high-minded Prince, who is soon likely to wield, without unconditional restrictions, the power of the State, an opportunity, a never-to-be-neglected opportunity, of linking, by ties of gratitude, the Subject to the State, and thus secure, if possible, additional attachment to his Royal Person. Let the wise, the liberal, and enlightened wish of his Protestant Irish subjects resound from every part of this Country, and he will call the Roman Catholics into the bosom of the State; he will thus consolidate the power of the empire; he will reduce our enemy, now despairing to divide us, to consent to a safe and honourable peace; or, if the war is to be continued, with means ten-fold augmented, with renovated zeal, with energy not yet experienced, we will wage it, till our nation, roused by our example and our perseverance, shall join, to dissipate the proud but vain pretensions of Napoleon to the empire of the world.

Leut.-Col. Fitzgerald, of Geraldine, then moved the following Resolutions: Resolved, That being impressed with an unalterable conviction, that the full participation of all the Privileges of the Constitution, by each and every class of his Majesty's Subjects, is an object essentially interwoven with the prosperity of the Empire, we consider it a duty we owe not only to our Body, but to the State, to persevere in our course of Petitioning the Legislature for their plenary attainment.

Resolved, That the interests of the Protestant and the Catholic are connected and inseparable, and that to benefit the latter is to serve both.

Resolved, That to the persevering and decorous exercise of the right of Petitioning, the Catholics are indebted for the portion of the Constitution they enjoy.

Resolved, therefore, That we request the following Gentlemen, possessing our entire confidence, viz. Ambrose O'Farrell, of Ballina, Esq.; Christopher Nangle, of Garriskier, Esq.; Dominick William O'Reilly, of Kildangan Castle, Esq.; Thomas Fitzgerald, of Geraldine, Esq.; Robert Archbold, of Davidstown, Esq.; Alexander Mansfield, of Yeomanstown, Esq.; Philip Roche, of Donore, Esq.; John Cassidy, of Monasteran, Esq.; Thomas Ryan, of Ballynakill, Esq.; and Daniel Caulfield, of Kilkenny Castle, Esq. to prepare and cause to be presented Petitions to the Legislature, early in the coming Session of Parliament, for the total Repeal of the Penal Laws still affecting our Body.

Christopher Nangle, of Garriskier, Esq. seconded the Resolutions. On the question being put, Robert Latouche, Esq. M. P. for the County of Kildare, spoke to the following effect: He (Mr. Latouche) approved of every word in the Resolutions, and he was happy in having an opportunity of expressing his zealous wishes for the Catholic Cause.—(Loud Applause.)—He always considered the Claims of the Catholics to be founded in Justice, as every Class of Persons in those Reins had a right to enjoy all the privileges of the Constitution. With regard to the support which those claims received from their Protestant fellow-subjects, he (Mr. Latouche) thought the argument deducible from the circumstance most forcible. It proved that it was the conviction of the persons most interested in the safety of the Country, that unanimity was most desirable at so critical a period. The Aggregate Meetings throughout Ireland had been attended by Protestant Gentlemen of rank and fortune; he (Mr. Latouche) conceived, that, in doing so, they acted wisely, because it was their duty, as well as interest, to manifest the utmost confidence in their Catholic Countrymen. (Loud Applause.) It would have the double effect of increasing the zeal of the Catholics to preserve the Country against the Common Enemy, and of convincing the People of England that the Protestant Gentlemen, who knew their Catholic Countrymen best, trusted them most. (Hear, hear!—enthusiastic applause.) He concluded by declaring, that, as one of the Representatives of the county, he would endeavour to render them every service in his power.

Mr. Joseph Henry said, he felt great embarrassment in addressing the Meeting; but he thought he could not discharge his duty to his God and his Country without saying a few words. He had not come

hither, nor any of his fellow-subjects, for the purpose of implying any anticipation of the course of justice, nor of insinuating any ridicule against any man entrusted with the administration of the country. He approved of mild and conciliatory language in the pursuit of the great object of their wishes, and he deplored that enthusiasm of the moment which might be carried to any excess injurious to the cause. It might afford a handle to their enemies to misrepresent their intentions. It would place in the hands of their enemies a formidable weapon. A word had fallen from his most respected friend (Mr. Wogan Browne) proceeding from a similar cause, which he could not avoid noticing. The Gentleman (Mr. Browne) was unwilling to use the word "concession," but he (Mr. Henry) would ask, in the name of common sense, how they (the Catholics and Protestants) were otherwise to obtain the great object of their wishes, unless through the medium of conciliatory language. It would be quite improper to pass over such a phrase unnoticed. It would arm their enemies with weapons which could not be wrested from them.

There was also another subject of regret. He alluded to the mention of the name of the man holding the highest situation in the country. If an error was committed it was certainly an error of the most innocent kind. It was the duty of the Magistrate to point out what he conceived to be the breach of the law. He (Mr. Henry) would not hold any man in estimation who would point out the error.—He knew that man, but, swaying all personal feeling, he made the observation for the sake of their great and good cause.

Lord Cloncurry.—Mr. Chairman, I did not come hither intending to take any share in your debate, nor am I a person who would countenance any improper proceedings. This Meeting was convened for the purpose of claiming those rights of which the Catholics have been deprived, and sorry I am to find that one of the best of men—who I and every person who knows him most highly esteem, has evinced at the expression of my respectful friend, in your conduct, and I say, do not call it concession, but demand your right. It may be said, would you use compulsion? I am not a man likely to be disposed to agitate the People. My stake in the country would prevent me from disturbing that peace of the country in which I am so deeply interested, but I will maintain that a man demanding his right cannot be said to use compulsion.—(Hear, hear.)—The Catholics had that right conferred by the Treaty of Limerick. The Catholics of Ireland were robbed of their rights. (Loud applause for several minutes.)—With the greatest humility—with most respect, they have often approached the Legislature for a restoration of their rights.—Their petitions were sometimes unheeded—sometimes they were listened to—sometimes they were rejected with the greatest indignity; and those privileges which they now possess were given rather through fear than a sense of justice.—(Hear, hear.)

As an individual I shall support the Catholic cause, and I am happy to think that the time is very near when the complete emancipation of my countrymen will take place. But emancipation is only a small matter of what you will get. The attainment of this great object will confer national strength and prosperity, and it will secure us from the machinations of that Enemy, who seems to be gifted with far more talent than it is to be found in the Administration of this country!—(Repeated peals of the most enthusiastic applause.)

Mr. Browne regretted that he had used any expression which could have excited the disappointment of his friend. That with respect to Lord Mansfield, it was impossible to sit down without expressing his feelings—but that any further animadversion was rendered unnecessary, by the ability with which his Noble Friend (Lord Cloncurry) had vindicated his conduct. Mr. Browne then contended, that as the Claims of the Catholics were founded on strict right, "restoration," and not "concession," was the proper word to be used.

Mr. Henry explained—declaring that he objected to the word, lest the Enemies of the Catholic Claims should use it as a weapon against the great and good cause which they had all so much at heart.

The Resolutions were then put, and carried unanimously. The Protestant Gentlemen were then requested to withdraw, and Lieutenant-Col. Fitzgerald, seconded by Mr. Nangle, moved the following Resolutions: Resolved, That the most cordial Thanks of this Meeting are most justly due, and are hereby given to the Right Hon. Viscount Cloncurry, Sir John Bradstreet, Bart.—Seacombe; Robert La Touche, Esq. Harristown; Rev. Kildare Burrows, Kilkenny; Rev. Henry Annesley, of Ballyas; Rev. Matthew West, of Claine; J. Joseph Henry, Esq. Straffan; Wogan Browne, Esq. of Castle Browne; Thomas Tickle, Esq. Carnolovary; Arthur Henry, Esq. Lodge Park; Christopher Baggot, Esq. Narney; Maurice Clifford, Esq. Furnace; Thomas Kelly, Esq. Gilttown; Thos. Kennedy, Esq. Ballyshannon; Joseph Atkinson, Esq. Barberstown, and to the other Protestant Gentlemen present, for the honor of their support and attendance on this day, for their comprehensive patriotism, and for the high example they hold forth to Great Britain of distinctions buried, prejudices annihilated, and liberality triumphant.

Resolved, That the most cordial Thanks of this Meeting are most justly due, and are hereby given, to our worthy Representatives, Lord Henry Fitzgerald and Robert Latouche, Esq. for their general conduct, and particularly for the steady support they have uniformly given to our Claims.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting are most justly due, and are hereby given, to the Right Hon. the Earl of Donoughmore and the Right Hon. Henry Grattan, for their constant, powerful, and unflinching support.

Resolved, That the most cordial Thanks of this Meeting are most justly due, and are hereby given, to the supporters of the Catholic cause, both in and out of Parliament, who by their enlightened and liberal conduct have endeavoured to promote the best interest of the Empire.

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Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting are most justly due, and are hereby given, to the Right Hon. the Earl of Donoughmore and the Right Hon. Henry Grattan, for their constant, powerful, and unflinching support.

Resolved, That the most cordial Thanks of this Meeting are most justly due, and are hereby given, to the supporters of the Catholic cause, both in and out of Parliament, who by their enlightened and liberal conduct have endeavoured to promote the best interest of the Empire.

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