Correspondence between the Right Hon. Lord Redesdale, Lord High Chancellor of Ireland, and the Right Hon. the Earl of Fingall, &c.; &c.; &c.; from the 28th of August, to the 26th of September, 1803 : and the narrative of the Rev. P. O'Neil, a parish priest of the County of Cork, referred to in the correspondence To which is added, a letter from Dr. Coppinger to Lord Redesdale / [John Mitford Redesdale].

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CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN THE

RIGHT HON. LORD REDESDALE,

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND,

AND THE RIGHT HON.

THE EARL OF FINGALL,

&c. &c. &c.

FROM THE 28TH OF AUGUST, TO THE 26TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1803;

AND THE

NARRATIVE of the Rev. P. O'NEIL,

A PARISH PRIEST OF THE COUNTY OF CORK,

REFERRED TO IN THE CORRESPONDENCE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A LETTER from Dr. COPPINGER to LORD REDESDALE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. GINGER, 169, PICCADILLY,
BOOKSELLER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

1804.

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CORRESPONDENCE,

&c. &c.

LETTER I.

LORD REDESDALE TO THE EARL OF FINGALL.

Ely-Place, Dublin, Aug. 18, 1803.

MY LORD,

ACCORDING to your Lordship's request, I have signed, with great pleasure, a Warrant for your Lordship's appointment to be Justice of the Peace for the County of Meath. At this moment, my Lord, it is peculiarly important that every person intrusted specially with the preservation of the public peace should know and conscientiously pursue the strict line of his duty. Your Lordship's distinguished loyalty, at all times and on all occasions, leaves me no room to doubt that you will exert yourself to the best of your judgement for this important purpose,

and the same distinguished loyalty that probably marked your Lordship, as one to whom nothing could be safely uttered tending to demonstrate any disposition towards the rebellious outrages which have of late produced such dreadful effects, and excited so much alarm. But, I fear there have been too many in whose presence and hearing demonstrations have been made and uttered, which ought to have alarmed the minds of loyal men, and induced them to communicate the ground of that alarm to those in authority under the Government, and especially to the Justices of the Peace in their several districts, but who have thought fit to retain the impression made on their minds within their own breasts, and to leave the chance of discovery to other means. The persons to whom I allude have principally been persons professing to hold the same religious faith with your Lordship, and over whom I most sincerely hope your Lordship's high character may give that influence which justly belongs to it. It would be highly important, therefore, that your Lordship, in the discharge of your duty, as a Magistrate, should take every opportunity of clearly stating, and most strongly inculcating and enforcing the great duty of allegiance, and, that that duty is not confined to forbearance from open rebellion, or even from acts tending towards rebellion; that true allegiance is an active duty, requiring every man not only to suppress rebellion when it shall shew

itself in violence, but to disclose to that Government under which he lives, whether he be a natural-born subject of that Government, or Sojourner only under its protection, every thing which can raise ground for suspicion of disloyalty in others; and it is particularly important that your Lordship should, as a Magistrate, state and enforce, that persons knowing of a treasonable purpose, who do not disclose it, are guilty, in the eye of the law, of that crime which has been denominated Misprision of Treason, and, if they yield any kind of assent to the intended treason, they become traitors themselves. Your Lordship's enlarged and liberal mind, distinguishing clearly between spiritual and temporal concerns, must feel that there can be no duty of religion contrary to the duty of allegiance; and, indeed, no man, however ignorant or prejudiced, can read the Holy Scriptures, without finding that the duty of allegiance to a Pagan Government was strongly and repeatedly enforced by Christ and his Apostles, and especially by the latter, who found the Christians of their time too much disposed to consider their faith in Christ, as absolving them from their allegiance to the Country in which they lived. I am truly sorry to say, that I fear, in this Country, all who profess to be Ministers of the Gospel of Christ, do not teach Christ's doctrine of allegiance to their flocks; and I particularly lament to find in the minds of men, who assume the highest rank

amongst the Ministers of the Roman persuasion, the frequent use of language, tending to raise in the minds of the ignorant an opinion that none are to be considered as Members of the Catholic Church of Christ, that none are therefore to be esteemed as brethren in Christ, but those who profess adherence to the See of Rome. Until the minds of men are brought to a different temper—until the Priests of the Roman persuasion shall cease to inculcate to those under their instruction doctrines so repugnant to their temporal allegiance—until they shall cease to inculcate that all who differ from them in religious opinions are to be considered as guilty of defection from the See of Rome, that is, as guilty of rebellion (including his Majesty's sacred person in that description), it cannot be expected that vulgar men should think themselves bound by any tie of allegiance to a King thus represented to them, as himself guilty of a breach of what is termed a higher duty of allegiance. That liberty of conscience, which those of the Roman persuasion desire for themselves, they ought to allow to others, and they do not allow that liberty of conscience; but, on the contrary, sanction the worst of persecutions, wherever they treat any man sincerely believing in Christ the Redeemer of Mankind as not a member of the Catholic or Universal Church, founded by Christ and his Apostles, because that man does not believe all that they believe of the

See of Rome, and of the doctrines taught by it. *I can consider no man (whatever his profession of loyalty may be) as truly the loyal subject* of a King, whom he thus holds up to his people as the object of disaffection, *nay, of hatred*, because that King holds a different opinion in matters of religion from those who adhere to the See of Rome, and because he refuses any obedience, in matters temporal, to that See. It will be your duty, my Lord, as a Justice of the Peace, with the most anxious attention, to respect no man whose conduct shall tend to disturb it; to exhort all men, by patience and forbearance, as well as by exertion, to use their utmost endeavour to preserve it, and however anxiously they may wish for a change in the establishment provided for by the Law of the Land, for the maintenance of religion, however conscientiously they may think that the ends of religion would be better answered by putting those of the Romish persuasion in place of those of the Catholic Faith, they cannot, consistently with the duty of their allegiance, pursue that purpose, by abetting, or even by declining to resist and suppress the rebellious conspiracy formed for that purpose.

I have no doubt that the firm and distinguished loyalty which has marked your Lordship's character in every other situation of life will guide your steps in the discharge of your duties as a Magistrate.

May God, to whom all our errors and imperfections are known, protect and guard you, and lead you to that end which will most accord with the beneficent purposes for which the office of Magistracy were intended, and for which, alone, I am persuaded, you prevail on yourself to undertake so arduous a charge, under circumstances of so much difficulty.

I have the honour to be, with the most sincere respect and esteem,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's faithful humble servant,

REDESDALE.

LETTER II.

ANSWER FROM THE EARL OF FINGALL.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to receive your Lordship's letter, and am much obliged to you for appointing me a Magistrate of the County of Meath, at a time when the task is so arduous. I must beg leave to assure you, that nothing but my most anxious desire to be useful, by every means in my power,

would have induced me to solicit the Commission of the Peace. Permit me to return your Lordship my best thanks for the very able and excellent instructions contained in your letter — it shall be my unceasing endeavour to prove myself not unworthy the post of trust confided to me, for which I should feel myself very ill qualified, if I did not understand the duties of active loyalty to be such as are laid down by your Lordship. I have always been taught that that man was a traitor, and violated his allegiance, who concealed any Plot against the State; — to this opinion all those who profess the same religious faith that I do are bound by the most solemn pledge. I am sorry any have deviated from it; they cannot be, I am persuaded, those remarkable for their religious and good conduct.

It gives me much concern, and I should be very sorry it were generally conceived, that your Lordship, the person to whom the Catholics of another part of the United Kingdom never cease expressing their obligations; with your superior talents, enlightened and liberal mind; holding the high situation you do in this country, with so much credit to yourself and advantage to the public, should have any opinion in any degree unfavourable of the Irish Catholics. My Lord, the Catholic religion is the same every where: I very reluctantly enter upon the subject. Religious disputes I have always considered the great-

est misfortune any country could experience. I must, however, beg leave to state to your Lordship, what I have always found to be the conduc- and faith of the Catholic. I need not speak of his attachment to and respect for an oath; were he less delicate, why should he labour under any exclusion now, or have suffered many years of penal restriction? I must say, I *never heard a Catholic wish for the overthrow of the Protestant Establishment, and setting up in its place one of his own religion — this was not,* as is well ascertained, the object of the promoter of the Rebellion in 1798; nor do I believe it was of the ruffians and murderer who disgraced this country on a late occasion. — The Catholic is ready at this moment to sacrifice his life, his property, every thing dear to him, in support of the present Constitution, in defence of that beloved Sovereign, *to whom your Lordship does not seem to think* we look up with that veneration and gratitude which I assure you we do.

The Catholic wishes no other family on the throne, no other Constitution, but certainly wishes to be admitted, whenever it shall be deemed expedient, to a full share in the benefits and blessings of that happy Constitution under which we live — a participation which, I trust, we have and shall continue to prove ourselves not undeserving of. Catholic loyalty and allegiance, I need not tell your Lordship, would

oblige every one of that persuasion to resist or repel even the head of the See of Rome, were it possible to suppose that the usurper who now disturbs the peace of the world would send him here with his invading army. My Lord, the doctrine of allegiance is perfectly understood, and unceasingly preached by the Catholic Clergy. I have just seen an address, in the Newspapers, from Dr. Coppinger to his flock, at Cloyne, in which Catholic principles and allegiance are much more fully explained and inculcated than I could attempt doing. The late exhortation of the Rev. Dr. Troy, in Dublin, your Lordship has probably seen, and his character for distinguished loyalty is known to every one. In 1796, when Hoche's Fleet were in Bantry-Bay, the Rev. Dr. Moylan published an Address to his People in Cork, for which, had the French landed, he would undoubtedly have lost his head. Surely, my Lord, *solemn* pledges and distinguished acts of loyalty are the best proofs that can be given.

I have, my Lord, taken the liberty of stating to your Lordship what I consider Catholic principles and Catholic conduct. Standing in the situation I do, I feel it my duty to vindicate the Catholics from any unfavourable opinion entertained. That your Lordship should know and properly appreciate their sentiments and conduct

is my only aim, and would be, I am sure, highly gratifying to them.

I beg pardon for trespassing so long on your Lordship; but, when there is a question of the conduct and opinions of so large a portion of his Majesty's subjects, at a time that every man is wanting to defend the empire, you will, I trust, excuse me; and I think I could not give your Lordship a better proof that I shall endeavour to merit the good opinion you are so kind as to entertain of me, which I hope I shall never forfeit.

I am, &c. &c. &c.

FINGALL.

Great Denmark-Street, Aug. 19, 1803.

LETTER III.

FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD CHANCELLOR TO THE EARL OF FINGALL.

Ely-place, Dublin, 21st Aug. 1803.

MY LORD,

MANY parts of your Lordship's letter have given me much pain. I have no doubt that your Lordship has every feeling of Christian charity

towards those who differ from you in religious opinion; but I have daily experience, that the same charity does not prevail amongst a great many who profess to be of the same religious persuasion with your Lordship. I am fully persuaded that the want of true Christian charity, one towards the other, has been the real cause of all the unfortunate events which have of late disgraced this country; and I think it the duty of every man, however he may differ in points of faith from others, to endeavour to impress the great doctrine of Christian charity on the minds of all, as the only means of restoring peace to this distracted country. Your Lordship seems to imagine that those inhabitants of Ireland, who adhere in matters of faith to the doctrines of the See of Rome, are disposed to discontent; because, as your Lordship is pleased to express yourself, they are not admitted to a full share of the benefits and blessings of the happy constitution under which they live. If your Lordship means they are discontented, because they are not admitted to be members of either House of Parliament; or to hold certain great offices; or because they are excluded from the throne; I must confess, I cannot believe that the lower orders of the people in Ireland, amongst whom the ferment principally prevails, have any anxiety on the subject, except as it may be raised in their minds by others; and your Lordship must allow that no disturbances, of the same description, are exci-

ted amongst the Quakers, who certainly are liable to more disabilities, for conscience sake, than those of which your Lordship complains. I am afraid, or rather, I am persuaded, that the difference arises from the different temper given to their minds by their religious instructors; that the Quaker is taught to live in charity with all men, whilst those who follow the See of Rome, are unfortunately taught a very confined charity, being told they are exclusively members of the Church of Christ; and those whose minds have not been enlarged, by education or habit, feel it difficult to conceive how those whom they are taught to consider as not Members of the Church, can be deemed Christians; and, accordingly, your Lordship will find, upon inquiry, that the appellation of heathen is applied by those to every Protestant. If those who are considered as holding a higher rank in the priesthood used their influence to correct this impression on the minds of the lower orders, we might hope, that by degrees they might be taught to consider all who believe in Christ as their Redeemer, though not adhering to the See of Rome, as their brethren in Christ; but, unfortunately, that is not the case. Dr. Troy, in his pastoral instruction on the duties of Christian citizens, published in 1793, holds up high, the exclusive doctrine; which those who think humility a Christian virtue, in all respects most becoming so weak and fallible a creature as man, cannot but consider

as savouring of presumption. Dr. Hussey, in his pastoral letter, published in 1797, expresses himself in a stronger language; and, indeed, it is difficult for a loyal subject to read that publication without feeling, that, especially at the time of its appearance, it could not tend to produce loyalty, or even submission to the Government of the country, in the minds of those to whom it was addressed. Whilst such impressions, so excited, are rankling in the minds of men, very little regard can be paid to addresses of the nature to which your Lordship refers me. They are given to the winds, as long as the priests of the See of Rome shall think fit to hold up to their flocks, that all who do not yield obedience to that See are guilty of rebellion against it; are not to be considered as members of the Church of Christ; and therefore are not (in the eyes of the vulgar at least) to be considered as Christians. I am fully persuaded, that those who listen to their doctrines will never bear Christian charity towards those whom so represented; and will never be loyal and dutiful subjects of a King, thus held out to them as himself a rebel.—In fine, my Lord, those who clamour for liberty of conscience, (which in truth they have,) must be taught to allow liberty of conscience to others; and those who desire complete participation must treat those with whom they desire to participate as brothers. Until, therefore, the priests of the Romish persuasion shall think it their duty

to preach, honestly and conscientiously, the great doctrine of *universal charity in Christ;* until they shall, in all their instructions to those under their care, represent, honestly and conscientiously, all who sincerely believe in Christ, the Redeemer of Mankind, to be brethren in Christ, however mistaken they may suppose any of them to be in certain points of faith; until they shall teach their flocks that desiring liberty to think for themselves, they ought also to permit others to think for *themselves,* and not to murder them, because they differ in religious opinions; peace never can be established in the land; and the loyal addresses of Dr. Troy and Dr. Coppinger will, as I have before said, be given to the winds. They can have no effect; they may indeed reach the eyes or the ears, but never will enter the hearts of those to whom they are addressed. There are parts of your letter to which I will not advert, because I cannot without pain, or without giving pain.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

REDESDALE.

To the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Fingall, &c. &c. &c.

LETTER IV.

ANSWER FROM THE EARL OF FINGALL.

Aug. 27, 1803.

MY LORD,

I FEEL indeed much concern that any part of the letter I had the honour of addressing to your Lordship should have given you pain. You need not, I hope, my Lord, any assurance that nothing could be more foreign to my intentions. This I took the liberty of requesting Mr. Wickham, whom I had the honour of seeing this morning, to do me the favour of mentioning to your Lordship on the earliest occasion. I merely stated to your Lordship what my own feelings were, and what I have always found to be the opinion of the Catholics. I do not apprehend, that, in expressing any further wish of the Catholic body, which it is impossible should not be entertained, I hinted at any discontents; on the contrary, I did assure, and do now assure your Lordship, we are now ready to make every sacrifice, encounter every danger, for the defence of the King and Constitution, and for the preservation of the peace. Those who are most affected, by any remaining restrictions, it is well known have never excited clamour or tumult, but

have always been foremost in opposing them. I cannot attempt to vindicate all those who have at different times addressed the Catholics; but the late exhortations, I must beg leave to say, are intended and calculated to inspire sentiments of loyalty, obedience, and Christian charity: and they will, I trust, have that effect. Such have been the instructions I have constantly heard given by the Catholic Clergy to their flocks. — Nothing to excite ill-will or dislike to any person, on account of his religious belief, but the most perfect brotherly love and affection to all. Your Lordship will, I hope, allow me to repeat my regret that any thing I have written should have given you pain, or me reason to feel it, which I should, in a very high degree indeed, if I was conscious of having intentionally advanced any thing that would appear improper or unreasonable to your Lordship.

I have the honour to be, &c.

FINGALL.

To the Right Hon. Lord Redesdale &c. &c.

LETTER V.

FROM THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD CHANCELLOR TO THE EARL OF FINGALL.

Ely-Place, Dublin, Aug. 28, 1803.

MY LORD,

THE high respect and esteem I bear for your Lordship, whose loyalty and humanity have been at all times conspicuous, and the manner in which your Lordship, in the letter with which I was honoured yesterday, has expressed your regret, that any part of your former letter should have given me pain, compels me again to trouble your Lordship with a few words. The pain I felt arose from an apprehension, that I could not hope for such a change in the sentiments of those of the people of Ireland, who adhere to the See of Rome, towards those who refuse obedience to it, as might lead to their living together in peace. In some parts of Europe, misfortune appears to have produced so much of humility, that the persons, who have occupied the choice of that See, have been inclined to bend towards countries, in which some of its most important pretensions have been rejected; and in this state of humiliation, it might have been hoped that a sense of the weakness and imperfections of man

might have been so far felt, as to lead the adherents to that See, in Ireland, no longer to teach their followers a doctrine so repugnant (as it appears to me) to the repose of mankind, as that to which I had alluded in my letter. I conclude, from your Lordship's letter to me, that there is no person amongst the adherents of the See of Rome, in Ireland, whose mind, however cultivated, however liberal in other respects, can be thought to consider any persons as Christians, who refuse obedience to that See. I conclude, also, that the priests of that persuasion still teach their flocks, that all who refuse obedience are guilty of a wicked rebellion against divine authority, which must produce their eternal damnation in the next world, and render them objects of horror and dislike in this. As long as this doctrine (which, with all humility I say it, appears to me to be repugnant to every idea of Christian charity, taught by the Scriptures) shall be preached to their congregations; and until those congregations shall be taught that Protestants of every description, although in their opinion in error on certain points, are to be considered as members of the Church of Christ, and their brethren in the faith of Christ, it seems to me, that there can be no hope that exhortations to loyalty and obedience to a Protestant Government will have any effect. Men of education and property may feel loyalty and obedience to such a Government to be proper, or, at least,

expedient; but preaching to men of the lower orders, and especially to those without property, loyalty, and obedience, under such circumstances, cannot be sincere, without supposing their minds of a refinement of which they are utterly incapable; and seems therefore to me to be either mockery or folly. Perhaps I am too presumptuous in forming this opinion, but it seems to me confirmed by recent events, and I cannot otherwise account for the fact so generally asserted by the Priests of the Romish persuasion, that during the late rebellion, their exhortations to loyalty and obedience had no effect. I find it also confirmed by the circumstances, that those Priests were, I presume, utterly ignorant that those under their instructions had ever conceived in their minds the horrid purposes *which they manifested on the 22d of July, and which persons came from all parts of Ireland with design to effect.*

I have the honour to be, with much respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

REDESDALE.

The Earl of Fingall, &c. &c. &c.

LETTER VI.

ANSWER FROM THE EARL OF FINGALL.

Great Denmark-street, Sept. 4, 1803.

MY LORD,

I must beg your Lordship will be kind enough to excuse my not having sooner acknowledged the receipt of the last letter you did me the honour to address me, which has been occasioned by my absence from town for some days past. Hououred as I must feel by your Lordship's correspondence, and the expressions of personal regard towards me contained in your letters, I am the more anxious to impress your Lordship with that favourable opinion of the persons in this country who profess the same religious faith I do myself, which it has been my endeavour to prove to your Lordship they are deserving of. Nothing but my wish to procure for them an object so desirable, and my high respect for your Lordship, would have induced me to touch at all on a discussion of religious subjects: and not having been, I fear, fortunate enough yet to satisfy your Lordship's mind, as to the objections you make to our religion, I should be glad, with your Lordship's permission, to state them to some of our superior Clergy, who would, I am pretty certain, enable me to convince your Lordship,

that our religious doctrine preaches charity and brotherly love to *all* mankind, without distinction of religion; true and sincere allegiance to our good King; inviolable attachment to the Constitution and our Country; from an honest and conscientious conviction that such is the duty of a good subject, and a good Catholic, be the religion of the Monarch what it may. For my own part, my Lord, I cannot attribute the unfortunate situation of this country to any thing connected with matters of Religious Faith; Jacobinism and French principles and politics, the want of morality, and the depraved state of the human mind, are, I conceive, the sources of our misfortunes; Religion may have been made a tool by wicked and designing people: this has often happened in every country, and is easily effected when religious differences exist. The distracted and melancholy state we are in, every body must lament; how it is to be mended is a matter for the Statesman; and surely it would be difficult to find an object more worthy of your Lordship's high talents and abilities.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

My Lord, your Lordship's very humble

And obedient servant,

FINGALL.

To the Right Hon. Lord Redesdale, &c. &c. &c.

LETTER VII.

FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD CHANCELLOR TO THE EARL OF FINGALL.

Ely-Place, Sept. 6, 1803.

MY LORD,

I FIND myself as little qualified as your Lordship represents yourself to be, to discuss with the persons to whom you refer me the points you mention. I can only say, that the impression made on the minds of those of the lower orders, certainly does not correspond with the doctrines which your Lordship represents to be the doctrines of the religion you profess. I have no doubt that your Lordship heartily and conscientiously embraces and acts upon those doctrines—the whole tenour of your life shews that you have done so; but the whole tenour of the conduct of the lower orders of the people of the Romish persuasion shews, that such doctrines are not *effectually* taught to them; and, if I am to judge from the writings, as well as the conduct of some of the higher orders of the laity as well as of the Clergy, I cannot believe that they are thoroughly impressed with the feelings which appear to guide your Lordship's liberal and beneficent mind. On the contrary, in many instan-

ces it appears to me, that the conduct of some high amongst the priesthood, is calculated to excite in the minds of those under their care, hatred to their Protestant fellow-subjects, and disloyalty to their Government. I am assured, from very high and very respectable authority, that (at least in one district) the Priests who were instrumental in saving the lives of the loyalists in the late rebellion, are universally discountenanced by their Superior;* and that a Priest proved to have been guilty of sanctioning the murderers in 1798, transported to Botany Bay, and since pardoned by the mercy of Government, has been brought back in triumph by the same Superior, to what in defiance of the law he calls HIS *parish*, and there placed as a martyr, in a manner the most insulting to the feelings of the Protestants, to the justice of the country, and to that Government, to whose lenity he owes his redemption from the punishment due to his crimes.†

It is strongly reported, that the successor to

* In the district alluded to, the "Superior" selected for his Vicar-General, (the highest situation in his power to bestow) a Clergyman, who, in the year 1798, had been happily instrumental in saving the life of a respectable gentleman, by putting him on his guard against an assassin.

† Vide Narrative of the Priest here intimated, and which is printed at the close of this Correspondence.

Dr. Hussey, (whose disaffection was so manifest, that perhaps Government consulted its disposition to lenity much more than its duty, when it permitted him to return to Ireland) is to be a man also notoriously disaffected. If the appointment is to be made in the usual manner, at the recommendation of the higher order of your Clergy, I cannot think that much of loyalty is to be expected from those who recommended such a man.* If the authority of the See of Rome supersedes the ordinary recommendation, it must be recollected that that authority is now in the hands of France; indeed it cannot be forgotten, that your whole Priesthood acknowledge obedience to one who is the vassal of France, who exists as a temporal Prince at least only by the permission of France, the avowed enemy of the Government under which we live; under such circumstances, it cannot be believed, that any *honest* and conscientious means have been or will be taken by the Priests of the Romish persuasion to make the lower orders of the people, composing their congrega-

* The successor to Dr. Hussey is not yet named, and it was impossible that the noble writer could have accurate information on the subject. The recommendation to Rome is in the Bishops of the province—of whom one is Dr. Moylan, and another Dr. Coppinger; both have eminently distinguished themselves by their personal attachment to the British Government, and by their pathetic and nervous exhortations addressed to their Clergy, for the purposes of exciting and maintaining loyalty and good conduct in their respective districts.

tions, loyal subjects of the Protestant Government of this country.

I have the honour to be, with the sincerest respect and esteem,

My Lord,

You Lordship's most obedient,

And humble servant,

REDESDALE.*

To the Earl of Fingall, &c. &c.

To the Nobility and Gentry of the County of Cork.

THE HUMBLE REMONSTRANCE OF THE REV. PETER O'NEIL, R. C. PARISH PRIEST OF BALLYMACODA, (VIDE NOTE, LETTER VII. OF THE CORRESPONDENCE.)

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

THE present mild administration of his Majesty's Government, in Ireland, having graciously recalled me

* This letter was not answered. But, after some interval, the correspondence recommenced, and four letters were interchanged; but, as the latter have not got into circulation, the same motives do not exist for their publication as for that series now laid before the public. As soon as they are, they will be printed separately, for the convenience of those who may purchase the foregoing.

from a painful and humiliating exile, to liberty in my native country, I avail myself of the earliest opportunity to solicit your attention, while I endeavour, by a plain statement, to remove from your minds that odium which misrepresentation and obloquy have long excited against me; and which, unremoved, must render my existence here equally painful to you and to myself. Were this obloquy and misrepresentation confined in its effects to my own individual person, however desirable the reinstatement in your good opinion must be, I should hardly presume to intrude upon you; but my character affects, in some degree, that of the body to which I have the honour to belong; it interests the reputation of many respectable persons who have humanely interfered in my behalf; and, what is still of far greater importance, it may possibly interest the reputation of his Majesty's Government in Ireland, which, with discriminating impartiality hath looked down upon me, enveloped as I was in a mist of calumny, hath stretched forth a parental hand to release me from imprisonment, to break my chains, and to expunge the hasty sentence which consigned me for a time to shame and suffering. I shall be particularly careful, while you condescend to indulge me with a hearing, to confine myself to what is absolutely necessary for my exculpation. To express, or even to harbour resentment, would ill become me at any time, but particularly now. I forgive, from my soul, every injury I have received, and every person concerned in inflicting it; not only religion requires this at my hands, but common sense and justice.

When I was arrested and punished, it was doubtless in the supposition that I was deeply engaged in the horrors which disgraced many parts of this kingdom at that

distressing period. To have been pointed at as an United Irishman, as concerned in the shedding of blood, as an abettor of treason, as assenting to, and encouraging murder, was naturally a death-warrant in that moment of irritation. If it were allowed me to complain, I should only find fault with the precipitancy of the proceedings which then afflicted me. Had I been favoured with a regular trial, or even a calm investigation, the error would have been discovered, and my misfortunes would have been obviated; but, though the measures were precipitately adopted, they were so, under the full conviction of *my* flagitious guilt; and, however painful to me, were certainly much lighter than such guilt would have deserved. Hanging were too mild for it; and did my conscience charge me at this moment with what I was accused of then, I should think myself *favoured* by transportation. I should hide my head, during the remainder of my ignominious days, from the sight of the most atrocious fellow-criminals; but no proof of these enormities ever has, or ever can be adduced. My Lords and Gentlemen, I am now liberated: not through a pardon solicited for, or granted me, but on the merits of my case. To volunteer in perjury, is an excess of wickedness so vile, as not to be attributed to the most abandoned without the strongest proofs. Under a full conviction that an appeal to the God of Truth, in support of known falsehood, would be nothing less than a call upon him to expunge my name for ever from the book of life; to withhold from me all participation in the merits of my Redeemer; to doom, of its own nature, my soul to never-ending misery; I most solemnly swear, in the presence of Almighty God, upon his Holy Gospels, first, that I was never an United

Irishman; that I never took that oath; that I never encouraged, advised, or permitted others to take it; but, on the contrary, that I dissuaded others from taking it: some of whom have had the generosity to make affidavit of my exertions in their behalf; and there are others, who have candidly added that they would have taken it, had I not prevented them. Some of these affidavits have long since been laid before Government, together with the other documents of my exculpation. Secondly, I do declare upon my oath, that I never signed the death-warrant of any man; or an assent to the murder, or to the death of any man; and that I never was asked to sign such death-warrant or assent. This declaration is further strikingly corroborated by the following circumstance: no such paper has been ever produced against me. It would have amounted incontrovertibly to conspiracy or murder; it would alone have condemned me to the gibbet; and there can be no doubt, if you consider the temper of *my* treatment, that such an important paper would not have been kept back through lenity. There are some gentlemen of this country, who have declared to others that will attest it, that they had this paper in their hand; that they knew my signature. I now call upon them most respectfully, most earnestly, and without intending the slightest offence; I challenge them, I defy them to produce it. When these gentlemen were asked by my friends, during my banishment, why this paper was not brought forward previous to my punishment, or before the Court of Inquiry, which was held upon me in Youghal, some could give no answer, while others asserted that it was subsequent to that inquiry this paper was discovered. Again I call for it; let it be produced; and, if it cannot, let common jus-

tice remand it for ever to its source—malignant calumny. It was my peculiar misfortune, that the charges then made against me were not only withheld from myself, but even my friends had no intimation of them, except by common report, which then was busily employed in disseminating the various atrocities supposed to have been committed by me; but nothing specifically authenticated had transpired: the very committal was so vague, as to have excited the astonishment of a professional friend of mine in Dublin, and to have eventually led to my discharge. I shall now proceed to the particulars of my case. Immediately upon my arrest, I was brought into Youghal, where, without any previous trial, I was confined in a loathsome *receptacle of the barrack*, called the Black Hole, rendered still more offensive, by the stench of the common necessary adjoining it. In that dungeon I remained from Friday until Monday, when I was conducted to the Ball-alley to receive my punishment. No trial had yet intervened, nor ever after. I was stripped and tied up; six soldiers stood forth for this operation; some of them right-handed, some left-handed men, two at a time, (as I judge from the quickness of the lashes) and relieved at intervals, until I had received two hundred and seventy-five lashes so vigorously and so deeply inflicted, that my back and the points of my shoulders were quite bared of the flesh.

At that moment, a letter was handed to the officer presiding, written, I understand, in my favour, by the late Hon. Capt. O'Brien, of Rostellan. It happily interrupted my punishment. But I had not hitherto shaken the triangle; a display of feeling which it seems was eagerly expected from me. To accelerate that spectacle,

a *Wire-Cat* was introduced, armed with scraps of tin or lead. (I judge from the effect, and from the description given me.) Whatever were its appendages, I cannot easily forget the power of it. In defiance of shame, my waistband was cut, for the finishing strokes of this lacerating instrument. The very first lash, as it renewed all my pangs, and shot convulsive agony through my entire frame, made me shake the triangle indeed. A second infliction of it penetrated my loins, and tore them excruciatingly: the third maintained the tremulous exhibition long enough — the spectators were satisfied.

I should spare you, my Lords and Gentlemen, the disgusting minuteness of this last detail, but it will be found materially connected with a most dreadful charge which appears upon the minutes of a *Court of Inquiry*, held to investigate my case, the year following, in Youghal, under General Graham, by order of the Marquis Cornwallis. Before this Court I was not brought; nor any friend of mine summoned thither to speak for me. It was even a subject of sarcastic remark in the prison-ship, that, while I stood there among the sailors, my trial, as they termed it, was going on in Youghal. With the proceedings of that court I am to this day unacquainted. It was ordered, I know, in consequence of a memorial upon my situation, handed to a distinguished Nobleman, and by him presented at the Castle; I was not consulted with regard to its contents. Unfortunately for me, it was penned with more zeal than accuracy; setting forth, among other hardships, that, after my punishment, I had been left without medical assistance, (on the report, I presume, of a Sister-in-Law, who visited me within the interval between the whipping

and apothecary's arrival); it further stated that I had been *whipt and thrown into a dungeon;* instead of stating, as it ought to have done, that I had been *thrown into a dungeon and whipt.* This inversion was fatal to me. For the evidence of Mr. Green, Apothecary, most plausibly contradicted these allegations of the memorial; and that circumstance, when coupled with the subsequent horrid charges audaciously *forged and foisted into* the Minutes of the Inquiry, excited an almost invincible prejudice in the mind of the merciful Lord Cornwallis against me. For when, after a considerable lapse of time, my professional friend in Dublin renewed his efforts to save me, at the risk of being deemed importunate and troublesome, he was still graciously honoured with an audience, wherein to preclude all future interference, as quite ineffectual and hopeless, his Excellency directed Colonel Littlehales to read these minutes to my patron. They reported that I had freely avowed to Mr. Benjamin Green, Apothecary, while he was dressing my wounds, at the time I was about to be sent on board the prison-ship, that I deserved all I had suffered and more; for I was privy to the murders, &c. &c. committed in my parish: that I could account for my conduct in no other way, than by attributing it to the instigation of the Devil; and that I deserved to be shot. The cruel edge of this forged evidence was still further whetted, by subjoining to it, that this Mr. Green was a Roman Catholic. My respectable intercessor, being quite unprepared to meet such an accusation, hung down his head and withdrew. But he lost no time in communicating this reverse to my Ordinary, Dr. Coppinger, who was equally astonished at these assertions; but who seized the opportunity, until a refutation of all

could be procured, to point, in the interim, to the designing and notorious falsehood of Mr. Green's *Catholicity*. In a very few days, Mr. Green himself spontaneously furnished my Bishop with a peremptory denial of the above particulars, under his own hand: declaring moreover, in a written acknowledgement, that no conversation had passed between him and the prisoner, but as between a *medical man and his patient*. This same gentleman also ingenuously presented himself at the parish-chapel of Ballymacoda, offering to make oath, that he had not given the evidence here attributed to him. The Deputy Judge Advocate General, Major Ellis, has been pleased to transcribe these minutes, as far as they reguarded Mr. Green, for the express purpose of contradicting this forgery. I shall now insert them, with his letter to the said Mr. Green:

" Youghal, July 28, 1800.

" SIR,

" Your application to me for a copy of the evidence you gave at a Court of Inquiry, by order of Major General Graham, at which, by the said General's orders you were obliged to attend, I have not the smallest objection to give you, which I have taken verbatim from the original, now in my possession, and in which I cannot be mistaken, as you know I acted as Deputy Judge Advocate General at the said Court.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

RICHARD ELLIS."

" *Evidence given by Mr. Benjamin Green, Apothecary, at a Court of Inquiry, which sat at Youghal, on the 28th of August, 1799, to inquire into and investigate the Conduct of the* Rev. Peter O'Neil, *formerly Parish-Priest of the Parish of Ballymacoda.*

" *Question by the Court.* — As the prisoner has set forth in his Memorial to his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant, that he was kept in a dungeon, and, after punishment, was neglected; not having his back dressed; the Court call upon you to declare what you know, as to that part of his Memorial.

" *Answer by Mr. Benjamin Green.* — In less than two hours after O'Neil, the Priest, had been punished, I attended him, and dressed his back; and gave him such medicines as I deemed necessary. The prisoner was confined in an airy, comfortable, healthy room, in the upper part of the jail, where I visited him every day, and dressed his back, and administered every assistance I judged necessary; not only to preserve his health, but likewise to heal his back; and when the prisoner was removed from the jail to the guard-room, in order to be put on board of a boat, I then dressed him and gave him a lotion to use afterwards, in order to preserve his health. And am sorry to be obliged to state, that I never received any payment for my medicines or trouble. — This is the whole of the evidence given by Mr. Benjamin Green.

" RICHARD ELLIS,
" Deputy Judge Advocate General."

Another respectable gentleman is represented in these minutes to have said, that immediately after my punishment, I acknowledged to him that I was privy to the murder of two soldiers; that I knew of a gun kept in my parish for the purpose of murder, and remarkable for the certainty of its aim: he is there beside stated to have said, that I made this declaration, not under any apprehension of punishment, but I seemed rather to speak, as one Clergyman would to another, in a moment of contrition: such at least is the substance of this gentleman's words, as far as my friend in Dublin, to whom the evidence was read, could recollect it. Now from the nature of the communication, which it is here asserted I made, it will be naturally supposed, that the gentleman had a private interview with me after my punishment; but he himself is thoroughly persuaded that he had not. I never laid my eyes on him since I saw him at that time, in the public Ball-alley. During my flagellation he stood opposite me, close to the triangle, with a paper and a pencil in his hand, noting down whatever then occurred to him. He asked, *Did you not know that fire-arms were taken from my house?* My answer was rather too short — *Sir, I heard you say so;* but I felt at the moment, by heavier strokes, the consequence of my impoliteness. I really considered that gentleman, on account of his apparent insensibility at the time, as the very reverse of a friend; and while I now positively deny my having made the acknowledgement above reported, I thall take the liberty to ask; first, whether it be consistent with likelihood, that, when such a severe punishment and *so* witnessed by *him*, was over, I had selected that very gentleman in order to criminate myself to such a confident; without any possible advantage.

beg leave to ask in the second place, if I had made this acknowledgement at the Ball-alley, why a certain subaltern, declaring that he had power to act as he pleased by me, should take me (naked and bleeding as I was) into a small room in a corner of the Ball-alley, and sternly tell me, that if I would not now make an avowal of guilt, I should be brought out to receive a repetition of my punishment; and afterwards to be shot. And why he should repeat that menace the same evening in the jail, and still more forcibly the day following. The circumstances of his exertions on that occasion, are too striking to be omitted. After I had answered him in the corner of the Ball-alley, that I would suffer any death rather than acknowledge a crime whereof I was not guilty, he told me I should be set at liberty if I would agree to a certain proposal which he then made me; but justice and truth commanded me to reject it. When conducted to jail, after a lapse of three hours, I was presented with a refreshment: it appeared to be wine and water, but must have had some other powerful ingredient; for it speedily brought on a stupor. The same officer soon roused me from my lethargy, with a renewed effort to extort this avowal from me: he drew his sword; he declared he would never part with me until it were given in writing; he threatened that I should be forthwith led out again, flogged as before, shot, hanged, my head cut off to be exposed upon the jail top, and my body thrown into the river: that he would allow me but two minutes to determine. Then going to the door, he called for a scrip of paper, while the sentinel swore terribly at the same time, that he would blow my brains out if I persisted longer in my refusal. Under this impression I scribbled a note to my brother, which they instantly cried

out was what they wanted; the precise expressions of it, I do not at this moment recollect; it purported a wish that my brother might no longer indulge uneasiness upon my account, for I deserved what I got. The officer withdrew; my sister-in-law then got admittance: she told me, she had just heard the sentinel say, that during my entire punishment, nothing was against me: however, that the paper I had just written would assuredly hang me. I exclaimed that their dreadful threats had compelled me to write it; which exclamation being carried to the officer, he returned the next day: he called me to the jail window commanding a view of a gallows, whereon two men were hanging; their bodies so bloody, that I imagined they wore red jackets. A third halter remained yet unoccupied, which he declared was intended for me, should I persist in disclaiming the aforesaid note. Look, said he, at these men, look at that rope, your treatment shall be worse than theirs, if you disown what you wrote yesterday: adding that it was still in my power to get free. I imagined from this, that he wanted money from me; or a favourite mare which I had occasionally lent him. My answer was, if you liberate me you shall always find me faithful; there is nothing in my power that I will not do. Do not then attempt, said he, to exculpate yourself, and so retired. I now procured paper, whereon I wrote a formal protest against what he extorted from me as above; that, should I be executed, this protest might appear after my death. — I wrote a second, with the same design; but I left them both after me in the jail; apprehensive, that should they be found in my possession, they might cause me to be treated with additional severity. Neither did I afterwards, while in jail, openly assert my innocence for that rea-

son. Now, so little credit seems to have been attached to this paper, in any subsequent proceeding, that it was never after, to my knowledge, produced against me. Indeed there is reason to imagine that what this gentleman is reported to have advanced in the above minutes, was never said by him; because the same audacity which forged a declaration for Mr. Green, might be daring enough to forge a similar declaration for this gentlemen. Thus by the providence of God, what was maliciously intended to ruin me, has in the event effected my release. Lord Cornwallis, whose discernment perceived, and whose generosity recoiled at this questionable proceeding, unhesitatingly issued an order for my removal from the transport. The following letter announces that order to my friend in Dublin:

" Dublin-Castle, 30th June, 1800.

" SIR,

" I HAVE had the honour to receive, and to lay before my Lord Lieutenant, your letter of the 28th instant, with its enclosure, and am directed to acquaint you, that his Excellency's commands have been this day conveyed to Major General Myers, to take the Rev. Peter O'Neil from on board the Ann Botany Bay ship, in Cork Harbour, and to cause him to be imprisoned until furthers orders, but not to treat him with harshness or severity.

" I have the honour to be,
" Sir, your most obedient,
" Humble Servant,
E. B. LITTLEHALES."

I had sailed before this order arrived.

On this passage out, a mutiny arose among the convicts, who, taking advantage of the moment when the Captain was fumigating the ship, suddenly set upon and tied him. The sentinel, a Malais, cried out to me in his own jargon, as I was walking the main deck, that *there was war below*; offering me his drawn sword, in order to fortify my interference. What my conduct at that critical moment was, will come better from others. I shall only say that the most prompt and athletic exertion preceded my entreaties and rendered them essential. How, as well as by whom, the Captain was extricated, without even the intervention of an officer, he himself can tell. Another gentleman, Mr. Piper, of the New South Wales Corps, can tell. Mr. Roberts, the surgeon, told it so circumstantially to the Lieutenant Govenor Major Foveaux, that he afterwards treated me with particular kindness. This powerfully contributed to reconcile me to my fate: I had almost made up my mind to remain there for ever: the thoughts of home ceased to be importunate. In the mean time, the exertions of my friend were indefatigable: he contrived to bring my case under the eye of our present Chief Governor, Lord Hardwicke, whose firmness, tempered by that clemency which distinguished his illustrious predecessor, was not to be warped by party opposition. An injured subject, in the very Antipodes, was alike within the range of his power and attention. He listened with patience; he examined with impartiality; he decided with justice. An order from him hath set me free. At my return to Ireland I waited upon my Ordinary, Dr. Coppinger; I represented to him the many hardships I had undergone; I referred him to the several proofs of my innocence, which had passed through his own hands, and which

were now officially authenticated, by my *warranted* return to my native country. I reminded him, that, as I had a regular collation of my parish, and could not forfeit it by the unfounded charges alleged against me, nor by my subsequent misfortunes, I could not in justice be deprived of it, nor opposed by him in resuming my functions in that parish. He suggested, in answer, that the strong prejudices, which still seemed to prevail against me, rendered it in his mind imprudent, not to say unsafe, for me to return thither. Yet, when I remarked to him that the sending me to any other quarter, beside the injustice of such a step, would in a great degree reflect a censure upon me; that it would be an extreme of severity, while I was acquitted in the eyes of the Government, and by the act of Lord Hardwicke, that he, my Ordinary, and as I hoped my friend, should seem, in this way, to asperse me; he yielded to my remonstrance: I again took charge of my parish, where, with the assistance of God, I shall persevere in the most strenuous endeavours to maintain peace, industry, loyalty, and good order, among my parishioners. A circumstance occurred upon the present occasion, very trivial in itself, but which, as it gave rise to a most injurious misrepresentation, I feel myself bound to notice. Six or seven of Dr. Coppinger's Clergy had been engaged to dine with him on the following day: he was pleased to ask me to join them; which, having done, I was since, in addition to my other crosses, extremely mortified to learn, that this plain private repast was magnified into a most *sumptuous banquet*, given in honour of Mr. O'Neil's return. This glaring mis-statement, which of itself would not have affected my Ordinary, has been the cause of much uneasiness since: as seemingly con-

nected with an intimation from a respectable character in Dublin, informing him that a personage in that metropolis, of high rank and great power, misled by this false intelligence, had complained that Dr. Coppinger restored me to my parish, as a *Martyr, in triumph; with insult to the offended justice of the laws, &c. &c.*

I am neither commissioned nor qualified to vindicate the character of Doctor Coppinger, in this or in any other particular: I can only express my sorrow at having been thus the unintentional cause of this painful imputation. His character, wherever it is known, will be its own support; little does it stand in need of adventitious aid, much less of that which my poor depreciated suffrage can administer. He has, I learn, drawn up a *narrative*, which such misrepresentation, if long continued will call upon him to publish.

I have now, my Lords and Gentlemen, to apologize for the tedious length of this elucidation, which I humbly submit to you, in the hope that I am not now in your mind the sort of person you have been taught to consider me. I will also hope that the urgency of my case will effectually plead in excuse for my presumption in thus publicly addressing you; a liberty I shall never again, upon any account, assume. I commit myself with confidence to your humane consideration; and have the honour to be with the most profound respect,

My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most devoted,
And most faithful,
Humble Servant,
P. O'NEIL.

October, 23, 1803.

A Letter *from the Roman Catholic* Bishop *of* Cloyne *and* Ross *to the Right Honourable* Lord Redesdale, *Lord High Chancellor of Ireland.*

Middleton, Jan. 26, 1804.

MY LORD,

If the heavy weight of insinuation, whereby I am aspersed in your Lordship's recent correspondence with the Earl of Fingall, were not as unfounded in fact as it is extreme in rigour, I should not feel warranted to expostulate in this manner with your Lordship upon the injustice you have done me. Of your great power, my Lord, of your pre-eminent dignity, I am thoroughly sensible: these are the very circumstances, which, in my mind, aggravate the injury I complain of; and, therefore, far from deterring, they encourage me rather to present myself with confidence before you. To redress wrongs is the peculiar province of your Lordship's exalted station. We all know, my Lord, that, if the subject were aggrieved even by the King, who can do no wrong, your Lordship is empowered to cancel his Letters-Patent, if founded upon untrue suggestions: I must then persuade myself that being, at least, as much inclined as you are warranted to do such act of justice, you will be equally ready to cancel your own severe sentence upon me, when your Lordship shall have considered the extent of the injury, and

shall have detected the misinformation that grounds it. In your letter to the Earl of Fingall, your Lordship would convince that Roman Catholic nobleman how little faith is due to Roman Catholics in their professions of loyalty, by representing to him that I, a Roman Catholic Bishop, have been treating with pointed disrespect those of my clergy, who, in the year 1798, had saved the lives of loyal men; and, in honouring as a martyr, with insult to the offended justice of the laws, a Priest supposed to be deeply implicated in rebellion, and permitted to return from transportation through the mere indulgence of Government. This sentence, my Lord, will, by easy implication, be thought to insinuate, that, beside being a traiterous, a perjured hypocrite, I am also an abettor of murder, a sanguinary monster under the sheep's clothing of Episcopal Consecration, while I preach the loyalty I have sworn, am sanctioning, by my conduct, the murder of loyal men; and promoting, as far as in me lies, a rebellious spirit among my clergy, by reserving my chief attentions for such of them as were said to be guilty of rebellion. A dreadful insinuation, indeed, deriving multiplied effect from your Lordship's character and station! It would bear heavily upon me, my Lord, had it been no more than a sudden explosion bursting from an ordinary nobleman in the heat of altercation; but how much more oppressive, as a sentiment committed to writing, by the cool, unruffled, discri-

minating impartiality of a Lord High Chancellor, in a letter to a Roman Catholic Peer, for the obvious purpose of wounding the Roman Catholic religion, through the degradation of a Roman Catholic Bishop; and, if unrefuted by me, or rather, if not explained by your Lordship as an unintentional mistatement, it must go down to posterity with irreparable injury to myself, and by association, perhaps, to the community I belong to. It becomes, therefore, imperative upon me, my Lord, to convince you, that you have here most grieviously misrepresented me, through the unfounded suggestions of others: after which, I cannot but hope that your Lordship will be forward to acknowledge the error, and equally disposed to regret it.

I now beg leave, however humiliating the asseveration, to declare before that awful tribunal, where your Lordship as well as I shall one day be arraigned, that were it possible an Angel from Heaven could propose to me, not the mace of your Lordship, nor the sceptre of my Sovereign, but the uncontrouled dominion of this globe, as a reward for assenting to the murder of the meanest wretch that ever moved upon it, I should consider myself bound to say to that Angel, with St. Paul, " Be thou accursed;" nor for so saying should I raise myself in my own estimation above the lowest line in the scale of negative merit. Neither do I claim a higher

place for declaring, as I now do in the presence of God, that, being a liege subject of his Majesty King George the Third, I hold myself bound, by the dictates of my religion, independently of the oaths I have taken, to bear him true allegiance, and to inculcate the same obligation upon all those who are subject to my jurisdiction. Nay, further, I declare myself more firmly bound to him, by the dictates of my religion, than by every tie: being as little able in adverse circumstances to answer for my loyalty to the King, without the aid of my religion, as to answer for my fidelity to God, without the aid of his grace. Conformably to this impression, my Lord, I have enforced, with particular energy, the duty of allegiance, both in my public and private instructions, during the troubles of 1798; strictly enjoining my clergy to withhold the sacred rites from all persons implicated in the treason of that time, until the oath and the treason it cemented should have been first abjured: by which means, many hundreds, if not many thousands, were detached from that treasonable compact, who, to this very day, might have adhered to it.

In answer to the allegation of pointed disrespect to those clergymen who were represented to your Lordship as having saved the lives of loyal men, I can boldly assert, in the face of this diocese, that the only priest I knew of, as coming precisely within that description, by having

given a timely notice to a gentleman whose life was threatened, is the very man I soon after selected for my Vicar-General; and with him at this day, in that confidential capacity, I continue on terms of sincere regard and affection. The other Clergymen distinguished for loyal exertions at that trying period will acknowledge, if called upon, that, instead of treating them disrespectfully, I esteem them all and venerate them. That every priest of mine, however, is perfectly satisfied, is what I am not presumptuous enough to affirm: it seldom falls to be the lot of any one in my place, not to have individuals displeased with him; but I can confidently say, that I know of only one Clergyman in this entire Diocese who considers himself aggrieved by my administration: and that to this very Clergyman I as confidently appeal, whether what he complains of in my conduct towards him has risen from his efforts in behalf of loyal men. If more minute inquiries, suggested by your Lordship's pregnant charge, have since discovered to me a Priest prostituting the sacred Laver of Regeneration, in compliance with the pusillanimous request of a loyal Protestant Gentleman, who, to court the rabble, (when like others around him he should have opposed them,) entreated this Priest, in their presence, to baptize him; I shall never deem such condescension, whether elicited by good nature, or by loyalty, entitled to extraordinary credit; much less can I look upon it as a coun-

terpoise against every subsequent failure or inaptitude.

The Rev. Peter O'Neil, to whom your Lordship alludes in this same letter to Lord Fingall, has been urged, by the obloquy which assailed him, to lay the particulars of his situation before the public in a humble remonstrance, forwarded to your Lordship, through the Post-Office, at my own instance, the moment it issued from the press. It has, I trust, my Lord, fully vindicated my conduct towards that much-injured man, and removed the painful imputation of insult to the offended justice of the laws. It has, in my apprehension, demonstrated that his return was the concurrent act of two successive Chief Governors; the one suspending his transportation, the other ordering him home from it. Nor this, my Lord, by way of a pardon, which was never solicited, but by an impartial decision upon the merits of his case. I will accordingly presume to hope, that your Lordship, having duly considered the facts stated in his remonstrance, is rather inclined to think that the justice of the laws, which had sunk under his condemnation, hath re-asserted its power, and triumphed in his acquittal. Your Lordship, I will also hope, has seen, by this remonstrance, that Mr. O'Neil's reinstatement in his former place, was not so much an act of mine, as the provision of a Spiritual Law, which, in similar circum-

stances, would restore a Clergyman of the Established Church.

By thus shewing how strangely I was misrepresented to your Lordship, I would not be understood to insinuate that the Personage who had the honour of addressing you, intended to misrepresent me; I am fully convinced, my Lord, that you would admit no man to your correspondence who could willingly deviate from the truth: but I am alike convinced, that this personage, respectable as he doubtless is, must have been, in the present instance, most grossly imposed upon.

Neither the elevated rank of Noblemen, nor their sacred regard to veracity, can always secure them against imposition from a certain class of men who artfully contrive to beset them ——— Esquires of very late creation, who, with matchless intrepidity of countenance, can assassinate characters, or whisper them away, and swear their own falsehoods into currency. When the truly loyal are every where intent upon uniting all hearts and all hands in the common cause, and for the common good, these men are every where indefatigable in promoting animosity and distrust, for their own private purposes. I shall say no more of them than barely to remind your Lordship, how much easier it is for such gentry

to make their impression, than for an honest man to efface it.

It remains for me to observe, before I close this letter, that, upon the first intimation I received from a person of rank in the metropolis, that I had been traduced as above, I instantly wrote a refutation of the charges, and was then assured it should be laid before your Lordship. But an unwillingness to intrude has since, it seems, prevailed against the promise made me; which circumstance, together with the publication in the *Star* and other Papers since, as they have compelled me to address your Lordship in this direct manner, they will, I hope, at the same time, be graciously admitted as my apology.

I have the honour to be,

With inviolable respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most devoted humble Servant,

W. COPPINGER.*

* On the second day after I had written and posted my letter to Lord Redesdale, I obtained a more accurate account of the paragraph concerning me, than the public prints or the prior communication afforded. The paragraph says, that I brought him, (meaning Mr. O'Neil) back *to what, in defiance of the Law, I call his parish.* I would gladly shelter myself, in this case, under the Act of Parliament of the 21st and 22d of his present Majesty; entitled "An Act, for the further Relief of his Majesty's Subjects professing the

Answer from Lord Redesdale.

Ely-Place, Dublin, Feb. 1, 1804.

SIR,

My letters to Lord Fingall (as far as they are the subject of your complaint) were a confidential statement to a person of high rank and character, and supposed influence among the Roman Catholics, of representation made to me, the truth of which I did not assert, but communicated them to his Lordship as I received them, that he might make proper inquiries; and if he found the representations to have any foundation, I hoped he might be induced to use his influence (which, I find, very much over-rated) to prevent what might produce considerable irritation in the minds of the Protestants of Ire-

Popish Religion;" which Act, as I conceive it, expressly requires that Popish Ecclesiastics, to be exempted from former penalties, do insert, upon a separate and distinct roll in the Register's Office of each respective Diocese, their Christian name and surname, their age, the orders they have received, and the persons from whom they received them; as also their place of abode; and their parish, if they have any parish; a copy of which roll was to be annually returned by the Register, to the Clerk of the Privy Council, under the penalty of 100l: But as the authority of Lord Redesdale, gives me now to fear that I have totally misconceived the meaning of this Act, I can only supplicate his indulgence for an error, which, if not quite pardonable, will at least induce a milder qualification than *defiance of the law*. I am the more earnest in this petition, as his Lordship has precluded me from any future recurrence to him; and from my further explanation, than what he has kindly condescend to give, in the following answer to my letter:

land. These letters, therefore, ought to have remained in the closet of Lord Fingall: a different use has been made of them, for purposes sufficiently obvious; but I am not responsible for a publication which is an abuse of my confidence, and perhaps also of the confidence of Lord Fingall. I have, I think, a right to complain of any publication of those letters; but I have a right most strongly to complain of the great injustice of that partial publication, which has afforded ground for the grossest and most malicious misrepresentation. Those who determined to abuse my confidence and (as I am informed) that of Lord Fingall, would have acted a more manly, and so far a less blameable part, if they had given the whole correspondence as it has actually passed, in print, so as to be accessible to every one. Any publication I should have considered as a gross injustice, and must resent it as such. My letters could not have been injurious to you, if they had remained with Lord Fingall. If any injury had arisen to you from the publication, it would not have proceeded from me. But the letters, though published, could not have been injurious to you, had they stood alone, and without comment; for I did not mention your* name, nor did I know that your name could be, in any manner, connected with the informations which I had received, and communicated to Lord Fingall,

* Mr. O'Neil, whose superior I am, is the only Roman Catholic Clergyman in Ireland who has returned from Botany-Bay.

until Mr. O'Neil's pamphlet was sent to me, and, you now tell me, *at your instance*. If that pamphlet makes an application which I never made, the application springs from Mr. O'Neil and yourself. You call that pamphlet "an humble remonstrance." I consider it as one of many extraordinary publications which have lately appeared; some imputed to high authority; others countenanced by high authority; the tendency of which is to insult the Protestants of Ireland, and their religion, and to irritate the different sects against each other. I have no disposition to attribute these publications to the Roman Catholics in general. On the contrary, I believe there are many, very many, who sincerely deplore their mischievous effect. But the publications demonstrate the temper of those who have composed and patronized them; and with a person who professes to consider Mr. O'Neil's pamphlet as "an humble remonstrance," I think I cannot prudently hold any correspondence, especially after the treatment I have experienced with respect to my letters to Lord Fingall. I shall therefore decline giving any further answer to your letter, which would unavoidably lead to a long and unpleasant discussion.

I have the Honour to be, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

REDESDALE.

The Rev. Dr. Coppinger.

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