
PART OF MR. O'CONNOR'S SPEECH IN THE IRISH
HOUSE OF COMMONS, IN FAVOUR OF THE BILL FOR
EMANCIPATING THE ROMAN CATHOLICS, 1795.

IF I were to judge from the dead silence with which my speech has been received, I should suspect that what I have said was not very palatable to some men in this House. But I have not risked connexions, endeared to me by every tie of blood and friendship, to support one set of men in preference to another. I have hazarded too much, by the part I have taken, to allow the breath of calumny to taint the objects I have had in view. Immutable principles, on which the happiness and liberty of my countrymen depend, convey to my mind the only substantial boon for which great sacrifices should be made.

And I here avow myself the zealous and earnest advocate for the most unqualified emancipation of my catholic countrymen; in the hope and conviction, that the monopoly of the rights and liberties of my country, which has hitherto effectually withstood the efforts of a part of the people, must yield to the unanimous will, to the decided interest, and to the general effort of a whole united people. It is from this conviction, and it is for that transcendently important object, that, while the noble Lord and the Right Honorable Secretary, are offering to risk their lives and fortunes in support of a system that militates against the liberty of my countrymen, I will risk every thing dear to me on earth.

It is for this great object I have, I fear, more than risked connexions dearer to me than life itself. But he must be a spiritless man, and this a spiritless nation, not to resent the baseness of a British Minister, who has raised our hopes in order to seduce a rival to share with him the disgrace of this accursed political crusade, and blast them afterwards, that he may degrade a competitor

to the station of a dependent. And, that he may destroy friendship which his nature never knew, he has sported with the feelings of a whole nation. Raising the cup with one hand to the parched lip of expectancy, he has dashed it to the earth with the other, in all the wantonness of insult, and with all the aggravation of contempt.

Does he imagine, that the people of this country, after he has tantalized them with the cheering hope of present alleviation, and of future prosperity, will tamely bear to be forced to a re-endurance of their former sufferings, and to a re-appointment of their former spoilers? Does he, from confidence of long success in debauching the human mind, exact from you, calling yourselves the representatives of the people of Ireland, to reject a bill, which has received the unanimous consent of your constituents? or does he mean to puzzle the versatile disposition of this House, on which he has made so many successful experiments already, by distracting you between obedience to his imperious mandates, and obedience to the will of the people you should represent?

Or does he flatter himself, that he shall now succeed, because he has succeeded in betraying his own country, into exchanging that peace, by which she might have retrieved her shattered finances, for a war, in which he has squandered twenty times a greater treasure, in the course of two years, than with all his famed economy, he had been able to save, in the course of ten? for a war in which the prime youth of the world have been offered up, victims to his ambition and his schemes, as boundless and presumptuous, as ill-concerted and ill-combined; for a war in which the plains of every nation in Europe have been crimsoned with oceans of blood; for a war in which his country has reaped nothing but disgrace, and which must ultimately prove her ruin?

Does he flatter himself, that he shall be enabled, Satan like, to end his political career by involving the whole empire in a civil war, from which nothing can