

THE
ANNUAL REGISTER,
OR A VIEW OF THE
HISTORY,
POLITICS,
AND
LITERATURE,
For the YEAR 1786.



L O N D O N:
Printed for J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall, 1788.

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teers out of view; wed to be brought second reading, it nearly the same re. d defeats did not r of the Irish re- pursuit of their fa- but as all hope of liberate co-operant was at an end, ir applications to whence experience ht them to look for exertions; as go- not yet ventured to gality of the volun- the people at large n to provide them- ms, and to array er that description. ar acts of the new some of which par- so involved by the them, served greatly general discontent

On the 7th day of ne a meeting was gregate body of the blin. It was here sent another petition nd in the mean time by a circular address, e body of the people and vigorous exer-

, after enumerating grievances, and la- his majesty's admini- have taken an active e measures of which ed, states, "That this nstance the more ex- as the first minister had virtuously de- self in favour of the easure which had been

" rejected; that his majesty had
" lately thought it necessary to ap-
" peal to the electors of Great Bri-
" tain against the power of an arif-
" tocracy; that on that occasion
" but one-fourth of the people of
" England exclaimed against their
" House of Commons, and the so-
" vereign prudently dissolved a par-
" liament which had lost the confi-
" dence of a quarter of the na-
" tion, and declared his readines
" to adopt whatever he should col-
" lect to be the sense of his people;
" and that they therefore looked
" up to him with the utmost confi-
" dence for the immediate dissolu-
" tion of the parliament of Ire-
" land, in compliance with the al-
" most unanimous request of his
" loyal subjects of that kingdom."

In the address, the complicated hardships they had suffered from the abuse of power were detailed with great warmth and freedom; the continuance of these sufferings they attribute to the defects of their representation in parliament; and they appeal to experience for the inefficacy of every means they had employed to obtain redress. They therefore call upon and conjure their fellow-subjects to unite with them in the pursuit of some more efficacious plan for the removal of the general calamity; and with this view they propose that five persons should be elected from each county, city, and considerable town, to meet in Dublin in national congress.

But the most remarkable feature in this address was, a proposition to admit the Roman catholic subjects of that kingdom to a participation in the rights of suffrage at the election of members of parliament. Though this measure was not only consonant

consonant to the general principles of the reform they meditated, but promised no small accession of strength to the common cause, yet the sincerity of the Irish protestants on this point, farther than as it served the present turn, has been much doubted.

In a former volume we had occasion to remark, as one of the consequences of the general calamity in which the late war had involved the country of Ireland, that the prejudices entertained against the papists in that kingdom appeared, in some degree, to be giving way to more liberal, wise, and equitable sentiments. The volunteers, at a very early period, expressed their abhorrence of the unjust and impolitic treatment of so great a majority of their fellow-subjects; they recommended their cause to the attention of the legislature, and, in some counties, even invited them to range themselves under the same banners in the field. But the great political objects then in view being obtained, no other relief was granted to the catholics, than the repeal of a few of the most cruel and oppressive clauses in the laws enacted against them*.

* By an act passed in 1778, Roman catholics were empowered to take leases for any term of years, not exceeding nine hundred and ninety-nine, or for any term of years determinable on any number of lives, not exceeding five. They were now enabled to purchase or take by grant, limitation, descent, or devise, any lands, tenements, or hereditaments, in this kingdom, with certain exceptions, and to dispose of them by will or otherwise; to descend according to the course of common law, devisable and transferable in like manner as the lands of protestants. By the same law, certain penal acts respecting the hearing and the celebrating of mass; forbidding Roman catholics to keep a horse of or above the value of five pounds; empowering grand juries to levy from them, in their respective districts, money to the amount of such losses as were sustained by the depredations of privateers; requiring them to provide in towns protestant watchmen; and forbidding them to inhabit the city of Limerick, or suburbs, were repealed.

So much of the former acts as forbade them to teach school publicly, or to instruct youth of their own profession in private, was also repealed; and a law enacted to permit them to have the guardianship, the care, and the tuition of their own children.

When the business of equal representation began to be agitated, the case of the Roman catholics was again brought forward, and the delegates of the meeting at Dunganon, in the year 1783, were instructed to consider of the best plan of admitting them to an equal participation in the benefits of the projected reformation. At the subsequent meeting of the convention in Dublin, when that subject was proposed for their consideration, a pretended letter was produced from the Earl of Kenmare, purporting to convey the general sentiments of the Roman catholics of Ireland, in which they were made to express their perfect satisfaction with what had been already done for them, and that they desired no more than peaceably to enjoy the privileges they had obtained. But though this letter was publicly disavowed, both by the respectable person from whom it was said to have come, and by a general assembly of the committee of the Irish catholics, who acknowledged themselves to have too great a resemblance to the rest of their species to be desirous of opposing any thing that tended to their relief, and that they should