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COMMUNICATIONS, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

*To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.*

*I send you a Portrait of the Earl of Clare, which appeared some years ago, in one of the diurnal publications, and your Readers will judge whether it has yet lost its vivid colouring. It certainly deserves re-publication.*

*I am, Gentlemen, your's &c. M.*

THE grave, which closes on the dead, gives to History the character of the departed, but the presence which imposed and the manner which awed, avail but little in framing those records, in which posterity will search for objects of reproof, or for models of imitation. The praise of history is fame, and that praise may be the last wish of the vain, the ambitious, or the proud. But it is not the pomp of place, the love of domination, and the pertinacious maintenance of every system and every policy, which could indulge the ruling passion for power, that can embalm the vulgar great man, and bid him live to future ages. The spell is over. The magic vision is dissolved, and he who yesterday heard the pæans of applause, is to day but the unconscious subject of the philosopher's reflection. The bare and naked mortal, whose wisdom or weakness, virtue or vice must determine what place (if any) he is to hold in the good will of mankind.

Of those whose situation and character have had a prevailing influence on the affairs of this nation, the late EARL OF CLARE must be considered as one of the most conspicuous, and if bigotry held the pencil, and prerogative the pallet, the portrait of this nobleman would want none of those ornaments which mere zeal could bestow.

Heir to a liberal fortune, the Earl of Clare commenced his career with more

adventitious than natural assistance. Nor was it until the anxious eye of a father had discovered the germ of ambition, and opened it to the fostering breath of authority, that this nobleman prevailed on himself to exchange the vulgar levities of phaetons and horses, for the diligent practice of the law, and its emoluments. His ambition made him industrious, and the aid of his father, who was an eminent barrister, was serviceable to his reputation as well as his income.

The season was favourable to the promotion of such a man, and a seat in parliament opened the vista to the higher preferments. His mind was unexpanded by science, or softened by the more elegant culture of letters. He was less profound in the principles, than expert in the practice of the law. A coarseness of intellect, long and frequently exercised on a topic or two, was easily mistaken for vigour; and a confidence, from being unused to metaphysical reflexion, or to any other exercise of the understanding than upon a professional or political subject, passed for that promptitude and force of decision which is the result of an intuitive perception of the mind's object. It was his boast that since he addicted himself to the study of the law, he never opened any other than a professional book. To boast of so discreditably a forbearance is very characteristic of the man.

His complexional peculiarities, and the habits which grew out of them, rendered him irritable, impatient, and overbearing, and the weakness of his constitution mingled itself not infrequently with the exercise of his public duties. He would sometimes forget the dignity of place, and the gravity of authority to indulge himself in a vein of petulance, and in such a mood he would condescend to

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adopt the phraseology of the street. He had no dissimulation, and but little phancy; he was sour and sincere; and, indeed, if his progress through life had depended on the occasional adaptation of himself to the humours of others, his friends and his enemies would be fewer than they are, as his obscurity would have been so much greater. He was a man, who might impose by his earnestness, and bear away with him a light unbalanced mind, but he never could persuade by patient plausibility, by the felicity of address, or by any of the softer arts of life.

On the judgment seat, his integrity stands unimpeached, although many of his decrees have been questioned and some successfully disputed, but of the wisest judge that ever lived, the latter may be said, though that praise, which is his own, cannot be bestowed in the same unmeasured and general manner. His faculty lay in a quick discernment; and the utility of it, in a familiar acquaintance with the modes of common life, and particularly, with such of our habits, as are more especially national than others. That misdirected subtlety which ages of oppression and poverty have engendered, and which is so peculiarly characteristic of the humbler litigants of this country, he was well able to deal with. The practice of his court he improved by his exactness, and its regularity by the celerity with which its business was transacted, although he sometimes seemed to value himself not much less on a quick dispatch of the cause than on the merit of the decree. He awed and chastised those pernicious though formidable people, who sometimes discredit the respectable profession of an attorney; of the legal knave he was unsparing; but he punished and he favoured with equal zeal. "The chancellor's favourite" is a phrase not without meaning in the hall of the Four-Courts.

In the senate, he had none of these commanding gifts which enable men to take a mastery in public debate. He was voluble, but not eloquent. Many shrewd and homely sarcasms of his are remembered, but not one beautiful saying, or profound reflexion.

His acquirements were few. He was not intelligent nor enlightened beyond his profession. He was the mere lawyer; in every thing technical and teasing. Enlarged and statesmanlike views of policy were extended beyond his comprehension. He saw a portion of every subject, but nothing entire. The castle he understood well: IRELAND not at all, and he always preferred a party to the public. His speeches contain a little history, and a deal of invective. They are little better than libels on the country. All that should be consigned to oblivion he raked up, with offensive labour, and he could better recite those disgusting parts of our history, than reason upon them, with the skill of a statesman, or the liberality of a philosopher. In debate we cannot compliment his candour. He attacked those with virulence who had no opportunity of defending themselves, and where he could not be interrupted, his obloquy flowed, unembarrassed by temper or scruples. When he was most peevish, some most admired his firmness, as it was called, and when he was most splenetic, many of his adherents, with similar accuracy, thought him most wise. He was seldom calm, temperate and dignified, very often vehement, acrimonious, and personal. He always spoke after that peremptory manner, which a certainty of success naturally occasions, and he was more anxious to give his opponents *a good dressing* as it used to be called in the parliamentary phrase, than to recommend public measures by their tendency to service, or individual adherence by seeming principle. The distempered state of the modern world he knew not how to appreciate. His prejudice usurped the dominion which his philosophy should have held. He would have whipped the world back into its old state, and he would have whipt in vain.

It there be a merit\* in the con-

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\* The late Mr. Day having heard Mr. Fitzgibbon pledge himself to eternal hostility against an incorporating union, immediately predicted of him, that if that measure was ever propounded, he would be among the most animated supporters of it.

sistency of public principle, to that he has no claim. He was steady only on the score of his prejudices, which were aident and intolerant, and determined the course of his political life. He was an enemy to religious freedom, and the friend of that exclusive and oppressive system, which has stood in the way of the national redemption from divisions, dissensions, dishonour, and disgrace. He was one of those who thought that a conciliatory temper in the administration of the government, was an indication of cowardice, and he judged of the state, as he would do of an individual. His panegyrists must be found among his own party; the challengers of his fame among the wise, and patriotic of his countrymen. The man of morals will not exult in the page which records him, but the meek and pensive charity of the christian will forgive him. The scholar, and the patriot, the statesman, and the philosopher, WILL EMULOUSLY DISOWN HIM.

For the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*.

IT is an act of literary justice that every author should have the credit of his own writings, and his fame not to be injured by their being appropriated to another. I have frequently met with the assertion that the Parable on Toleration was written by Dr. Franklin, and it has been so printed in a late edition of his works. But I find in a late Monthly Review that this beautiful apologue was written by Dr Jeremy Taylor, who was bishop of Down and Connor, and died at Lisnegavey, since denominated Lisburn, in 1667; and that it is in the latter part of his essay "On the Liberty of Prophesying." The excellent moral contained in it, may be a sufficient motive for copying it into your pages. It may possibly be new to some readers, and it is sufficiently excellent to bear frequent repetition.

"When Abraham sat at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was one hundred years of age; he received

him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down, but observing that the old man eat and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of Heaven? The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only; and acknowledged no other God. At which answer, Abraham grew so zealously angry that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night, and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, "I thrust him away because he did not worship thee." God answered him, "I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonoured me; and couldst not thou endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?" Upon this, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment, and wise instruction. "Go thou," says the pious bishop, and go thou says the writer of his life, to every christian of every denomination, "and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham."

This good bishop lived in tempestuous times of persecution. He had suffered himself, and feelingly knew the evils of oppression.

Permit me to observe, that in a late magazine, in a paper, being a translation from the French, taken from Nicholson's Philosophical Journal on the quick perception of animals of the state of the weather, I observed the word *\*presentation*, used in an uncommon sense, partaking much of the Gallic idiom, and which could only be intelligible by placing a strong accent on the second syllable. On looking at Johnson's dictionary, I find he says this word in this sense is misprinted for *presension*.

Care ought to be taken to avoid the use of expressions in translations not admitted by good authority into the English language. Swift long ago complained "there was a danger of the license of translators inducing us to habble a dialect of French." The

\* This remark is not quite correct, the word in T's manuscript was that stated here, but the Editor changed it to *presentation* (the word in the letter press) for the very reasons mentioned.