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III. THE NO-POPERY MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN IN 1828–9

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THE passage of Catholic emancipation in April 1829 was resisted, in the name of the inviolability of the Protestant Constitution, by a group of 'ultra' anti-catholics.[1] The principles and personnel of this group have already been well described,[2] but its political activities have been inadequately explored. Since 1824, when they criticized Lord Liverpool's Government for dilatoriness in prosecuting O'Connell's Catholic Association, these ultras had tended to form a distinct group on the right wing of the anti-catholic Tories, and had been the most aggressive opponents of Canning's short-lived ministry in 1827. The emergence of an Irish demand for Catholic emancipation, of unprecedented force, was shown in O'Connell's victory at the County Clare by-election in July 1828 and in the ensuing months. This produced a determined resistance by the Irish anti-catholics, which had its counterpart in a British no-popery movement led by the ultras. Most of the leading ultras were peers, and the most prominent among them were the dukes of Cumberland and Newcastle, the marquess of Chandos, the earl of Winchilsea and Lords Colchester and Kenyon. For nine months before the passage of the relief bill they sought to counteract the immense fervour of the Irish Catholics by stimulating the ingrained anti-catholic feelings which had characterized the English masses since the sixteenth century. Their efforts, however, were of no avail against Wellington's decision to carry a Government emancipation measure. It is the object of this study to investigate the no-popery movement and to account for its failure.

Early suggestions for anti-catholic combination took place in June. Towards the end of that month, Lord Kenyon wrote to Lord Colchester suggesting that a meeting should be held in the former's London house to consider the best means of organizing the expression of anti-catholic feeling.[3] From the reaction which this suggestion aroused, it seems that some unorthodox method was contemplated, and it is clear from the first that some ultras were fearful of taking action which might be labelled unconstitutional. Colchester showed the letter to four other ultra peers;[4] and all of these, besides Col-

[1] I have given them the name 'ultras' to distinguish them from those anti-catholic Tories who were converted to Catholic emancipation in 1828 and 1829.

[2] By G. F. A. Best in his article 'The Protestant Constitution and its Supporters', *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.* 5th series, VIII (1958), 105–27.

[3] 25 June 1828; Colchester's *Diary and Correspondence*, III, 574–5.

[4] These were the earl of Harewood and Lords Feversham, Malmesbury and Skelmersdale. Colchester to Kenyon, 26 June 1828; K[enyon] P[apers], at Gredington Hall, Flintshire.

chester himself, declined the invitation to attend, preferring to limit their protests to the more orthodox channel of parliamentary petitions.[5] The meeting, however, was apparently held, for on 4 July Colchester noted 'another meeting' of anti-catholic peers and commoners at the earl of Longford's town house, which was held on that day.[6] We learn from newspaper reports that it was attended by the dukes of Cumberland, Newcastle and Gordon; the marquess of Chandos (in the chair); the earl of Longford, Lords Farnham and Hotham, and several commoners.[7] At this assembly, it was decided to establish a 'Protestant Club' to meet monthly during the parliamentary session. Eldon, the former lord chancellor, joined the club, but because he was sensitive about its constitutional propriety he had its name changed to the 'Brunswick Constitutional Club'.[8] A leading part was said to have been taken by Cumberland. 'The whole affair was started by Cumberland', wrote Princess Lieven on 24 September; 'he boasted to me the other day that he had an organization which would defeat the *Catholic Association*'.[9] According to Cumberland's own account, the first 150 members of the club were to be peers and M.Ps., and when this number had been achieved the doors might be thrown open to other country gentlemen.[10]

The Brunswick movement took its name from the dynasty whose accession to the throne was, according to the anti-catholics, peculiarly associated with Protestant Ascendancy; and it took its principles from other anti-catholic societies, the chief of which were the Orange Institution and the Pitt Club.[11] It seems that the new society was not meant to replace the old ones but to run concurrently with them. The membership of these anti-catholic associations probably often overlapped. Thus, Cumberland was simultaneously a leader of the Brunswick movement and of the Orange Institution of Great Britain; Lord Kenyon was pre-eminent simultaneously in the Orange, Pitt and Brunswick associations. It was in Ireland, where the Catholic threat was most menacing, that the Brunswick reaction was strongest. The earl of Longford presided over the new system in Ireland, and Brunswick clubs spread as tension mounted. At the end of September it was reported that there was scarcely a town in Ireland where there was not a Brunswick club.[12] Such rapid success was most gratifying to the ultras. 'I rejoice much', wrote the earl of

[5] Colchester wrote: 'We all think it safer & also more effectual to see what course public Events take between this time & the time of petitioning—& nothing will be more easy when the Re-assembling of Parlt approaches, than for all & each of us, in our respective Counties & Neighbourhood, to urge the propriety & necessity of expressing these Sentiments by public meetings & Petitions to any extent' (ibid.).

[6] Colchester, III, 578–9.

[7] *Birmingham Gazette*, 14 July 1828; *Liverpool Mercury*, 25 July 1828.

[8] Colchester, III, 582.

[9] Princess Lieven to Countess Cowper. Lord Sudley (ed.), *Correspondence of Princess Lieven and Lord Palmerston, 1828–56* (London, 1943), p. 3. This account is endorsed in the *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, II, 212.

[10] Cumberland to Kenyon, 6 August 1828 (KP).

[11] The Pitt Club was named after the younger Pitt, but reversed his pro-catholic inclinations.

[12] *Spectator*, 27 September 1828.

Winchilsea, 'to see the firm & decided spirit which appears generally to prevail amongst the great body of the leading Protestants of Ireland.'[13] In Britain, however, their task was much more difficult. The last anti-catholic demonstration of much significance had been the Gordon Riots, and the general election of 1806 was the last in which the no-popery cry had much effect on the results. The general election of 1826 had shown that although anti-catholic feeling was widespread it was not sufficiently ardent to influence many results.[14] Not being challenged by an aggressive Catholic body such as existed in Ireland, British no-popery remained torpid and impassive, and it seemed unlikely that it would lead to a popular demonstration. It was this discouraging climate of opinion that the ultras had to stimulate, and a determined effort to do so was made by Winchilsea. At the end of August he wrote to Chandos:

> ...the time is fully arrived, when every individual who feels the slightest attachment to our Protestant Constitution, is called upon, boldly to stand forward in its defence... I, for one, am determined to remain no longer quiet, but to exert, to the utmost, the humble talents & power which I possess, in rousing the dormant spirit of the Country, & awakening it to the perilous situation in which we now stand.[15]

Chandos was bent on the same purpose. He advised Kenyon that the best means of making a popular appeal would be 'a declaration...drawn up in firm & temperate language, calling on the Protestants to support the Constitution & signed by those in every parish, who are anxious for the good of their Country'.[16]

Kenyon proceeded to advocate this scheme in four 'letters to the Protestants of Great Britain' which were published in the anti-catholic national and provincial newspapers. The first of these asserted that the king would not break his Coronation Oath, which compelled him to maintain Catholic exclusion, provided his subjects made it clear that they wanted to maintain it. The appeal then advanced what became a recurrent theme of the ultras—that the House of Commons, which had passed several Catholic relief bills in recent years, did not represent the anti-catholic sentiments of the people:

> Some of the last sessions of Parliament have shown how little safe it is to trust to such quarters for security. In the voice of the Protestants of the empire alone can strength be afforded to those who desire to uphold the Protestant faith and constitution. Let every parish declare its sentiments; let them unite in a holy and constitutional declaration of their attachment to the Protestant Constitution of these realms as their dearest birthright.[17]

[13] Winchilsea to Newcastle, 8 November 1828; N[ewcastle] P[apers], Nottingham University.

[14] According to my calculations, there was an anti-catholic gain of 16 seats at the elections in Great Britain (excluding Ireland).

[15] 26 August 1828; W[inchilsea] P[apers], in Northamptonshire Record Office.

[16] Chandos to Kenyon, 27 August 1828 [KP].

[17] *Standard*, 1 September 1828; *John Bull*, 8 September 1828. Kenyon's subsequent letters in similar vein, were dated 10 September and 1 October 1828 and 13 February 1829.

Newcastle issued a similar address on 18 September, in reply to Kenyon's appeal. The Government was blamed for being influenced by liberal tendencies and for taking no firm action to defend Protestant Ascendancy:

> Nothing is to be expected from Parliament, because nothing is to be done by the Government; nothing is to be done by the Government, because neutrality, conciliation, and modern liberality are still ruling the deliberations of the Cabinet.[18]

Newcastle was unwilling to blame this laxity specifically on Wellington, who, he admitted, 'may be the victim of a monstrous error'.[19] Nevertheless, in the previous parliamentary session Wellington had acquiesced in the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which some regarded as a preliminary to Catholic emancipation. So far, wrote Newcastle, the duke's Government had been 'by far the most disastrous of any in the memory of man'.[20] The ultras did not know that the Clare election had finally persuaded Wellington to adopt Catholic relief, and that he was already considering the form of such a measure together with his colleagues, but they had their suspicions about his secretive conduct. Eldon wrote that the ministers 'let us know nothing. For that Reason I believe they intend something.'[21] Particularly mysterious, in Newcastle's view, was Wellington's inaction over the Irish situation. Catholic turbulence was growing, but 'who offers the slightest opposition to all this? No one.'[22] The anti-catholics must therefore take their own action: 'They must unite in Protestant associations from one end of the country to the other, and as Parliament is not sitting, they should address their Protestant King.'[23] If they refused to rouse themselves, continued Newcastle, they might expect divine retribution: 'I simply ask, if we desert our God, will he not desert us? Will he not be avenged upon such a nation as this?'[24]

Such were the ultra exhortations to anti-catholic action on a nation-wide basis. We have now to consider the methods through which they tried to put these demands into effect. One method was the establishment of Brunswick clubs throughout Britain, on the model of the metropolitan club. The ultra peers took the initiative in their respective areas—Winchilsea in Kent and Chandos in Buckinghamshire.[25] But such attempts were greeted with various objections. In response to Winchilsea's effort, several anti-catholic Kentish peers expressed unqualified aversion to 'Club government'.[26] Lord Camden could not agree that 'Catholic intemperance should be met with Protestant

[18] *Standard*, 22 September 1828. Reprinted in Newcastle's *Thoughts in times past tested by subsequent events* (London, 1837), 69–81.

[19] *Thoughts in Times Past*, 77.

[20] Ibid. 75–6.

[21] Eldon to Lady Elizabeth Repton, 31 August 1828 (KP).

[22] Newcastle's *Thoughts*, 77.

[23] Ibid. 80.

[24] Ibid. 77.

[25] Chandos wrote to Winchilsea on 28 August that he was pleased that the latter intended to form a 'Kent Protestant Club' and said: 'I am doing the same here' (WP).

[26] Lord Sydney to Winchilsea, 2 September 1828 (WP).

intemperance';[27] such matters were better left to Parliament 'where I conceive, those who have Seats in either House, can with more effect & Propriety declare their Sentiments'.[28] Lord Bexley thought that Winchilsea was unduly hurrying matters: a little patience would allow the intentions of Government to be revealed, and the anti-catholics would then be better able to judge what action they should take.[29] Another peer suggested that positive action by the anti-catholics would only lead to similar action by the pro-catholics, and a dangerous collision would be caused.[30] More profound objections than these were doubts about the constitutional propriety of extra-parliamentary clubs, such as had already marked the foundation of the metropolitan Brunswick club. This view was expressed in Kent by Lord Romney, as follows:

> The principle of a self constituted, permanent, political body I consider to be very objectionable. Different as the practice has been, the principle I consider to be uniformly bad, whether it originates a Whig Club, a Pitt Club, a Jacobin Club, a Corresponding Society, an Orange Lodge, a Catholic Association, a Brunswick Protestant Club.[31]

Discouraged though he must have been by this response, Winchilsea persisted with his plan. A meeting was arranged at Maidstone on 16 September, in order to form a Brunswick club; and despite what Winchilsea called 'the great lukewarmness & apathy on the part of those who profess an attachment to the Protestant Constitution',[32] the meeting was a success. Winchilsea received support from most of the speakers—one of whom said he was ready to fight the Catholics 'up to his knees in blood'[33]—and it was resolved to form a Brunswick club whose membership should be open to all the 'noblemen and gentlemen' present at the meeting. The second branch of the metropolitan club to be established appears to have been that formed in Buckinghamshire, through the initiative of Lord Chandos, at a meeting at Aylesbury on 26 September.[34] Over two hundred members enrolled in the first instance, and by the end of October there were said to be 1200 members.[35] The formation of Brunswick clubs was soon being discussed in many other

[27] Camden to Winchilsea, 31 August 1828 (WP).

[28] Ibid.

[29] Bexley to Winchilsea, 2 September 1829 (WP).

[30] Earl Stanhope to Winchilsea, 3 September 1828 (WP).

[31] Romney to Winchilsea, 7 September 1828 (WP). In reply to this letter, Winchilsea defended the Brunswick clubs as being the very opposite of a factious organization: 'I perfectly agree with you', he wrote, 'as to the general objection to political Clubs, where they are intended to support any party question, but surely a Club established to guard against the attempt of Associations, formed for the avowed purpose of subverting our Protestant Constitution, cannot be liable to that objection.' Winchilsea to Romney, n.d. 1828 (WP).

[32] Winchilsea to Newcastle, September 1828 (NP).

[33] This was John Wells, M.P. for Maidstone: speech reported in *The Times*, 18 September 1828. The Brunswick clubs were later called 'up to the knees in blood clubs' by the pro-catholic press.

[34] *The Times*, 29 September 1828.

[35] *The Times*, 29 September 1828; *Leeds Intelligencer*, 2 October 1828.

parts of the country.[36] A resolution to form one at Leeds was said to have been carried by 400 votes to four,[37] but the figures were of course liable to exaggeration in the anti-catholic press. By the middle of November it could be said, with good reason, that 'the example of Kent had become epidemic'.[38] Thirty-six places were reported to have followed the Kentish example.[39]

Not all these clubs, however, were established without active pro-catholic opposition. At Worcester, for instance, where an anti-catholic meeting was called to form a Brunswick club, pro-catholic meetings were held in opposition to it, at the same time and in the same building.[40] The pro-catholics had several reasons for attacking the Brunswick clubs, the chief one being that the Brunswick movement threatened to violate the constitution. *The Times* asked:

> ...what business has the majority of a great nation with confederacy of any description? The law administers itself—the Government enforces it. The *State* requires no support from clubs, composed of those in their individual character, who already, in their collective character, constitute the State. If clubs of such men exercise any power, it is one which must overawe and supersede the Government—it becomes a revolutionary Government.[41]

Secondly, it was held that to adopt the name 'Brunswick clubs' implied a calumny on the royal house. The house of Brunswick had come to the throne as upholders of religious liberty, not as attackers, and a more suitable name for the new societies would be 'Stuart clubs'.[42] The pro-catholics further asserted that hardly any of the Brunswick strength came from commercial centres. The *Morning Chronicle* said it appeared that English public opinion was now to be sought in 'the wealds of Kent, or round Dartmoor, or in Wales'.[43] It is true that the clubs bore a strong rural complexion, and their leaders were usually local landed gentry.[44] The Leeds Brunswick club formed an exception, but for some time it was the only one. The clubs were also accused of attracting only meagre attendances to their public meetings.[45]

[36] See, e.g., the *Standard*, 17 September, 6 October and 8 November 1828.
[37] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 13 November 1828.
[38] *Spectator*, 15 November 1828.
[39] *Spectator*, 22 November 1828.
[40] See *Birmingham Gazette*, 1 and 8 December 1828.
[41] 16 October 1828.
[42] *The Times*, 19 September 1828.
[43] *Spectator*, 22 November 1828.
[44] Thus Lord Kenyon, whose seat was in Flintshire, was asked to become president of a Brunswick club at Wrexham (Kenyon to Hon. Lloyd Kenyon, 14 October 1828; KP); and his brother, the Hon. Thomas Kenyon, was prominent in the Salopian Brunswick club (*Staffordshire Advertiser*, 15 November 1828). Since family estates were often in more than one county, the leading ultra peers were sometimes asked to lead more than one county Brunswick organization. Thus, Winchilsea was asked to become patron of the Northampton club; but he replied that after the prominent part he had taken in Kent, it was 'by no means expedient' that he should take the lead in another county (Winchilsea to R. G. Stanton, 2 November 1828; WP).
[45] *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 November 1828.

Underlying all these objections was a vein of simple contempt. Lord Althorp condemned the Brunswickers as 'bigoted idiots', and said that although such associations might prove dangerous in Ireland they could only be ridiculous in England.[46]

The anti-catholics, for their part, were far from united in their opinion of the Brunswick clubs, and they gave but a half-hearted answer to pro-catholic hostility. Even so staunch an upholder of Irish Protestant Ascendancy as Lord Redesdale, while being 'convinced that stout opposition to emancipation is our only safety', confessed that 'I do not like clubs, nor do I like the leaders of the Brunswick Clubs in England'.[47] Behind such opinions was the nagging fear, already in evidence when the formation of a club was first suggested, that such associations were unconstitutional. This view was expressed in the anti-catholic press. *John Bull* insisted that anti-catholic feeling should be revealed not in such societies but in petitions to the legislature:

> ...the speeches and debates of the Clubs themselves only tend to create irritation, without the remotest chance of doing good, except as they display that feeling which can be more quietly, more efficiently and more constitutionally done by way of petition.[48]

The same conservative view was held by various individual anti-catholics. Lord Verulam, lord-lieutenant of Hertfordshire, refused to take any part in forming a Brunswick club in that county, saying that the Catholic question should be left to Parliament alone.[49] Sir Thomas Lethbridge, M.P. for Somerset, said that he could not join a Brunswick club so long as he remained a member of Parliament: 'I object', he said, 'to any fetters out of Parliament, *good or bad*.'[50] Even Lord Eldon, although he had joined the metropolitan club, was anxious that the clubmen should be no more than respectful petitioners to Parliament. They must be very careful, he wrote, to avoid accusations of unconstitutional conduct:

> Already very inconvenient questions seem to have been stated, whether the calls upon the people of the country have not, some of them, been expressed in such terms as make it questionable whether those, who...make such calls, act as legally as they ought.[51]

Eldon expressed the same objections more openly to his brother:

> I cannot forbear to think that the strong language used in many of the clubs is most mischievous, and deters many from meeting to express in sober and temperate petitions their feelings.[52]

[46] Althorp to Brougham, 30 September 1828; Althorp Papers, Northants.
[47] Redesdale to Colchester, 25 November 1828; Colchester, III, 589.
[48] 17 November 1828.
[49] Letter published in the *Birmingham Gazette*, 17 November 1828.
[50] Letter published in *John Bull*, 30 March 1829.
[51] Eldon to Lord Howe, 1828 (probably October); H. Twiss, *Eldon*, III, 58.
[52] Eldon to Lord Stowell, post-mark 28 November 1828; ibid. 61.

The Brunswickers found a rival in the personal influence of the duke of Wellington over many anti-catholics, an influence which in 1829 was strong enough to carry Catholic emancipation in the face of die-hard opposition in Parliament. The duke of Northumberland, for example, refused an invitation to join the Brunswickers in the following terms:

> With respect to the Brunswick Club I have only to repeat that I am unable to comply with your wishes. To all similar applications, I have stated my unwillingness to take the Question out of the hands of the Duke of Wellington. Of his judgement & his justice I have the highest opinion, & I feel anxious to learn his view of the subject at the present crisis, before I allow my mind to come to any fixed determination.[53]

When so many anti-catholics had reservations about their methods, it was most unlikely that the Brunswick clubs would succeed; and the division in anti-catholic opinion served only to strengthen Wellington's confidence in adopting Catholic relief.

The Brunswick clubs and allied societies, whose membership was usually limited to superior social groups, were the narrowest manifestation of no-popery feeling. The calls to action by ultra peers had a more comprehensive result in mass-meetings held in town and country. This form of assembly, which O'Connell's Catholic Association had acquired from Wesleyan field-meetings, was now used against the Catholics by the enemies to their claims. The first and most famous of these meetings was held on Penenden Heath near Maidstone on 24 October. The anti-catholics were supported by Anglican and Methodist clergy as well as by local laymen, and the general impression was that they scored an easy triumph. However, several pro-catholic Kentish nobles attended and spoke against the Brunswickers, as did the radicals Cobbett and Hunt and the Irish demagogue R. L. Sheil; and the result was sufficiently equivocal to prevent the pro-catholics being downcast.[54] Lord Goderich called it 'one of the most ridiculous proceedings ever known', and said it was 'highly disapproved of by many very strong anticatholics'.[55] Furthermore, the ultras were disappointed in the hope that the Kentish impulse would immediately be reproduced in other counties. 'Kent still remains alone', wrote Lord Harrowby two months after Penenden Heath.[56] When the Kentish example was at last repeated, it was often in an ineffective form. A meeting of the gentry and freeholders of Cheshire was held at the end of December to adopt anti-catholic resolutions, but according to *The*

[53] Northumberland to Newcastle, 3 November 1828 (NP).

[54] For an account of this concourse, see R. L. Sheil, *Sketches, Legal and Political* (2 vols., London, 1855), II, 193–218.

[55] Goderich to E. J. Littleton, 28 October 1828; Hatherton MSS., Staffordshire Record Office.

[56] Harrowby to E. J. Littleton, 15 December 1828; Hatherton MSS.

Times the total attendance did not exceed eight hundred, which 'certainly presented an extraordinary aspect when considered as a county meeting'.[57] This was the account of a pro-catholic newspaper, but even if the real number present had been twice as many it would still have been unimpressive. In early January the anti-catholics of Cornwall bestirred themselves, and gatherings were summoned at several towns in the county.[58] The results of these meetings suggested that anti-catholic opinion was by no means overwhelming in Cornwall. At Bodmin and Lostwithiel, for example, anti-catholic motions obtained majorities of only 5:4.[59]

In January, too, there was held at Exeter the only anti-catholic county gathering comparable in effect to that of Kent. The Hon. G. M. Fortescue, member of an eminent Whig family in Devonshire, wrote on 3 January:

> The thick headed Parsons & Squires of these parts... have got up a Requisition, & we are now in for a County Meeting on the 16th. The petition, however violent it may be, will not fail to be carried, there is no County in England where a more deep rooted... bigotry on this Catholick question prevails with half the violence it does here—but of the intellect, rank & wealth of the Province we shall make a good muster & have an undoubted majority.[60]

The prediction was well fulfilled. An anti-catholic petition was said (by an anti-catholic newspaper) to have been passed by as wide a margin as 20:1.[61] The pro-catholics, however, were not unduly discouraged. They claimed that the intelligence of their representatives at the meeting compensated for their numerical inferiority—an attitude of mental superiority which the pro-catholics were given to assuming. Moreover, Fortescue was convinced that anti-catholic feeling in Devonshire, as revealed at the meeting, was considerably weaker than it had been. He even wrote that 'the Tories look on the decision so little in the light of a triumph that we shall not be troubled with any more County meetings of their calling'.[62] This was true as far as Devonshire was concerned; but further anti-catholic county meetings were held in Wales and the border country during March and April, just before the relief bill was carried. The last of them were held in Anglesey and Caernarvonshire—'a last effort', announced a local newspaper, 'to support our sinking Constitution'.[63]

All these county meetings were held on the rural fringes of Britain, and seemed to justify a favourite pro-catholic accusation that the Brunswickers

[57] 1 January 1829.

[58] *West Briton*, 2 January 1829.

[59] The Cornish anti-catholic movement is summarized in an unpublished thesis by W. B. Elvins: *The Reform Movement and County Politics in Cornwall, 1809–52* (Birmingham M.A.).

[60] Hon. G. M. Fortescue to Ralph Sneyd; Sneyd MSS., University College of North Staffordshire.

[61] *John Bull*, 26 January 1829.

[62] Hon. G. M. Fortescue to Ralph Sneyd, 21 January 1829; Sneyd MSS.

[63] *North Wales Chronicle*, 9 April 1829.

could find support only in the more remote areas of the country. But this picture was incomplete. The Brunswick spirit was by no means absent in the recent industrial urban growths, although it was rather a long time before it took effect in these areas. Mass meetings were held at Leeds and Bristol, and in other large towns anti-catholic petitions were said to have passed by the usual extravagant majorities.[64] It is notable, however, that in London, the scene of the Gordon Riots fifty years before, there were no striking demonstrations of no-popery. Moreover, in towns where such demonstrations did take place, they were faced with more strenuous opposition from the pro-catholics than in the country. A particularly fierce struggle took place at Leeds, where the rival parties were supported by the borough's two newspapers, the pro-catholic *Mercury* and the anti-catholic *Intelligencer*. On the initiative of the pro-catholics, who had high hopes of having their own views sanctioned by a large cross-section of the population of Leeds, a large public meeting was held in Cloth Hall Yard on 5 December, under the chairmanship of John Marshall, pro-catholic M.P. for Yorkshire and a prominent local manufacturer. The result was indecisive: the show of hands after the speeches was so indeterminate that Marshall, who was anxious to declare a pro-catholic verdict but was pressed by vocal anti-catholics around him to do the reverse, vacillated for a considerable time and then adjourned the meeting without reaching a decision.[65] Other examples show that the anti-catholics did not enjoy a monopoly of opinion in the larger towns. At Leicester R. O. Cave, one of the M.Ps., was active in encouraging the expression of pro-catholic sentiments. In the 1826 election Cave had been returned to Parliament after pledging himself not to support Catholic relief. At a public meeting on 4 February 1829 he acknowledged this pledge, but said that Brunswick aggression now compelled him to abandon his neutrality and to vote for emancipation. If his constituents still wanted him to remain neutral he would resign his seat. But the crowd amply showed that they were willing to retain him as their member even if he did support emancipation.[66] At Edinburgh the pro-catholic Tories, including Sir Walter Scott, decided to coalesce with the Whigs in a pro-catholic petition and a public meeting.[67] At this meeting, which was held in the Assembly Rooms on 14 March, some of the most prominent Edinburgh figures spoke on the pro-catholic side. An extremely powerful

[64] One at Bristol was said by the anti-catholics to have been carried by 100:1 (*Spectator*, 14 February 1829); others at Birmingham were said to have obtained 36,000 signatures (*Birmingham Gazette*, 9 March 1829); and one at Sheffield was said to have been signed by 15,000 people in two days (*John Bull*, 2 March 1829).

[65] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 11 December 1828.

[66] *Nottingham Mercury*, 7 February 1829. It seems, however, that this willingness was not based completely on altruistic support of Catholic relief. A subsequent meeting made clear that a division existed between the anti-catholic corporation of Leicester and a large number of pro-catholic citizens (*Nottingham Mercury*, 28 February 1829). It is possible that a pro-catholic attitude symbolized opposition to the power of the corporation.

[67] *Journal of Sir Walter Scott* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1939–46), III, 33.

speech was delivered by Dr Chalmers, the well-known theologian;[68] and a large number of the leading intellectuals and professional men of Edinburgh supported the pro-catholic petition.[69] Numbers, however, defeated intelligence, for whereas this petition received 8000 signatures, an anti-catholic one received over 30,000.[70]

In other ways the pro-catholics sought to resist the Brunswickers. In Liverpool a system was begun for collecting a Catholic Rent, a levy on individual Catholics which had been started in Ireland by the Catholic Association in 1824 and had contributed greatly to its success. Liverpool was divided into districts for the purpose, and several Protestants contributed.[71] O'Connell had won the support of Hunt and other radicals by declaring, at the Clare election and afterwards, that he favoured Parliamentary Reform. Hunt championed Catholic emancipation on 21 July, at a meeting of the General Association of Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty;[72] and again in February at a meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in London, where his amendment to an anti-catholic petition was carried amidst uproar.[73] Other opportunities for expressing pro-catholic resistance were provided by the various Whig clubs. At a meeting of the Cheshire Whig club in October, Earl Grosvenor said that if the Brunswick clubs appeared in Cheshire the Whigs would 'hold meeting for meeting... and take good care that if the Brunswick clubs disseminated poison, it should be accompanied by its proper antidote'.[74]

Despite such declarations, suggestions that the pro-catholics should unite in counter-associations did not receive much encouragement. Lord John Russell proposed that a 'Committee for the promotion of Religious Liberty' should be established, but his fellow-Whigs made strong objections which were strikingly reminiscent of those which had been raised against the Brunswick clubs. E. G. Stanley thought that the aims of the proposed committee might be too extreme for his liking;[75] Lord Althorp thought that Russell's scheme would only add fuel to the Brunswick flame, since it would arouse anti-catholic jealousy. Similarly, when a proposal was made by Russell and others that the pro-catholics should organize large petitioning meetings on

[68] See the extracts given in W. Hanna, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1849–52), III, 231–4. Lord Jeffrey afterwards said of this speech that never had eloquence produced a greater effect upon a popular assembly.

[69] *Edinburgh Courant*, 23 March 1829.

[70] Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of his Time* (new ed., Edinburgh, 1909), p. 428.

[71] *Spectator*, 11 October 1828.

[72] This was the Association's first public meeting. According to Hunt, it was founded in response to a deputation from the Catholic Association, which wanted to discover the effect produced in England by O'Connell's declaration in favour of Parliamentary Reform. There is a full report of the meeting in Cobbett's *Political Register*, LXVI, 119–28, 155–60.

[73] *Edinburgh Courant*, 21 February 1829.

[74] *Manchester Chronicle*, 18 October 1828.

[75] Stanley to Lord John Russell, 22 October 1828; Rollo Russell, *Early Correspondence of Lord John Russell* (2 vols., London, 1913), I, 282–3.

the Brunswick model, Grey opposed it on the grounds that it would further aggravate the national anti-catholic feeling.[76] Grey also said that he had 'just the same constitutional objection to Catholic clubs which he had to Brunswick clubs...they would only embarrass the Government'.[77] Lord Nugent said in a letter to his constituents that the Brunswickers would receive a 'mortifying lesson' without their opponents having to form a counter-organization, and that he for one would not 'assist in any way in dividing this country into two factions'.[78] In the face of this opposition, Russell's projects were abandoned, and the pro-catholics in Britain did not resist the Brunswickers in the manner which the latter had adopted. In any case, such displays of popular pro-catholic opinion as there were did not suggest that it could compete with the numerical weight behind the Brunswickers. The Brunswick movement did not fail through the threat of pro-catholic opposition, still less through its open manifestation. It failed because of the apathy and conservatism of the anti-catholics and because they hesitated to venture into extreme paths.

The Brunswick leaders were particularly dissatisfied with the pro-catholic inclination of the House of Commons. Pro-catholic majorities had been returned there for the past seven years, with the single exception of 1827. There was a marked discrepancy between the pro-catholic bias of the representatives and the anti-catholic bias of the represented. It was this which led the ultras to claim that, if the full weight of popular anti-catholic opinion was to be revealed, it had to be done through extra-parliamentary channels. We have seen that Brunswick clubs were established and mass meetings held, but these were hardly more than token protests. When it came to giving effect to their protests even the boldest Brunswick hearts stopped short of revolutionary behaviour, and action was taken only in a thoroughly constitutional manner.

The Brunswick movement took effect mainly in the tame and conventional process of petitioning Parliament. The signing of anti-catholic petitions was usually initiated in areas where Brunswick clubs were established and public anti-catholic meetings were held; and the pro-catholics often sought to counteract this process by setting up their own petitions in the same areas. A particularly large part in encouraging anti-catholic petitions was taken by the established clergy. The individual opinions of the bishops doubtless influenced the lesser clergy, since the former were responsible for giving the testimonials necessary for the promotion of the latter. In 1825, when there had been a crisis over the Catholic question, anti-catholic petitions had flowed from the dioceses of anti-catholic bishops, and the only clerical pro-catholic petitions

[76] Grey to Russell, 28 October 1828; S. Walpole, *Life of Russell*, I, 153–4.
[77] Ellenborough's *Political Diary*, I, 266–7.
[78] *Edinburgh Courant*, 25 October 1828.

had come from the dioceses of pro-catholic prelates.[79] This pattern was repeated in 1828–9. The anti-catholic bishop of Bath and Wells could say that petitions in accordance with his views would come from 'almost every parish in his diocese';[80] but a pro-catholic petition came from the clergy of Bishop Bathurst of Norwich, who was a pro-catholic anomaly on an almost completely anti-catholic bench. The effect of this largely clerical-sponsored petitioning movement was shown when the petitions were considered in Parliament during February and March. The number of anti-catholic petitions far outran the pro-catholic. At the end of February it was said that 720 anti-catholic petitions had been presented, against only 220 pro-catholic ones;[81] and at the end of March the total number of anti-catholic petitions was assessed at 2312.[82] No less impressive than the number of these petitions was the mass of signatures they contained. One from Leicestershire was said to have 17,935 signatures; one from Glasgow, 36,796; from Bristol, 38,000; and from Kent, 81,400.[83]

Despite this consistent numerical weight, the pro-catholics in Parliament constantly resisted their opponents' claim that the country was overwhelmingly anti-catholic, and one of their methods was to attack the validity of anti-catholic petitions. They claimed that many of the subscribers to these petitions had no idea of the political situation which had made Catholic relief necessary, and that they entertained the most extravagent notions of what Catholic emancipation would mean.[84] The pro-catholics further asserted that the petitions were frequently signed by women, children and illiterates;[85] and that many people were induced to sign them through the display of lurid anti-catholic placards.[86] J. S. Upton, a tutor at Cambridge, wrote to Viscount Milton: 'I wish the placards and copies of the scrawls on the walls were regularly forwarded from every place from which an anti Catholic petition comes. It would then only be necessary to read them, nothing need be said against the petition, to shew what feelings the promoters of the petition endeavoured to infuse into the breasts of their neighbours.'[87] But all these accusations could not reduce the overwhelming number of anti-catholic

[79] A pro-catholic petition came from the archdeaconry of Norwich, in the diocese of one of the two pro-catholic bishops (*Parl. Deb.* n.s. XIII, 20–1); but in the diocese of the anti-catholic bishop of Exeter a curate who presented a pro-catholic petition was said to have had his preferment checked on account of his pro-catholic views (*Parl. Deb.* n.s. XII, 1328–33). See my article, 'The Catholic Emancipation Crisis of 1825', *English Hist. Rev.* (1963).

[80] *Parl. Deb.* n.s. XX, 134.

[81] *Parl. Deb.* n.s. XX, 598.

[82] *John Bull*, 30 March 1829.

[83] *Parl. Deb.* n.s. XX, 161, 572, 1105–6; *John Bull*, 30 March 1829.

[84] *Parl. Deb.* n.s. XX, 245–6.

[85] Ibid. 579, 645–6.

[86] Ibid. 904–5.

[87] 13 March 1829; Fitzwilliam MSS., Northamptonshire Record Office. Not all such placards were anti-catholic: one extolling the virtues of mediaeval Catholicism in England was said to have been posted on the walls of Stourbridge, Worcs. (*Birmingham Monthly Argus* 1 April 1829).

petitions, and many of the objections of the pro-catholics seemed no more than jealous quibbles. Sir Robert Inglis said in the Commons:

> It seemed almost impossible to satisfy these hon. members (the pro-catholics). If petitions were adopted by vast multitudes of the people, they were represented as the offspring of a riotous and ignorant rabble; and if they proceeded from more secret meetings, they were designated 'hole and corner' petitions.[88]

Apart from petitioning, the Brunswickers aimed to influence Parliament more directly by replacing pro-catholic M.Ps. with anti-catholics. Sometimes this remained an unachieved desire. At Caernarvon, the anti-catholic burgesses were anxious to expel Lord William Paget, son of the pro-catholic marquess of Anglesey, on the grounds that he had voted pro-catholic after he had been elected on the understanding that he would vote anti-catholic; but the scheme was foiled by the resolution of Lord William and his father.[89] In this case popular anti-catholic hostility proved impotent against the Anglesey influence. But in cases where an M.P. found himself in conflict over the Catholic question not merely with his constituents but with his parliamentary patron, there was more likelihood of his being replaced. At Marlborough, where the nomination was held by the anti-catholic marquess of Ailesbury, there were two pro-catholic members; both resigned, and were replaced by anti-catholics.[90] There was a similar replacement at Newark, which was under the influence of the ultra Newcastle. One of the members, Sir W. H. Clinton, Lieutenant-general of the Ordnance, decided that he would be unable to oppose the Government's relief measure. Since this was incompatible with the understanding on which he had been returned—a pledge of hostility to the Catholic claims—he resigned the seat under pressure from Newcastle.[91] For the ensuing by-election Newcastle chose as his candidate M. T. Sadler, one of the few anti-catholics with speaking talent, and he was successful against pro-catholic opposition.[92]

More striking was the defeat of Peel at Oxford University, though here the anti-catholics won only a pyrrhic victory. Oxford had long been regarded as the centre of ultra-toryism. In February 1829 an anti-catholic petition was carried as usual by a large majority in Convocation.[93] Peel's conscience would not allow him to remain the elected representative of the university after he had determined, in January, to remain in office and initiate the Government's

[88] *Parl. Deb.* n.s. xx, 704.

[89] See my article, 'Catholic Emancipation as an Issue in North Welsh Politics, 1825–9', *Trans. of the Cymmrodorion Society* (1962).

[90] The pro-catholic Lord Brudenell was succeeded by the anti-catholic W. J. Bankes, and the pro-catholic Earl Bruce was replaced by the anti-catholic T. H. S. B. Estcourt.

[91] Ellenborough's *Political Diary*, I, 355.

[92] Sadler had made a celebrated speech before the Leeds Pitt Club in May 1828, which the anti-catholic Robert Southey said would have 'told well in the House of Commons'; Southey to John Rickman, 1 March 1829 (NP). Sadler had also written a two-volume treatise entitled *Ireland: Its Evils and their Remedies* (London, 1828), which insisted that the only satisfactory cures for Ireland were economic and social, not religious or political.

[93] Peel's *Memoirs*, I, 317; Morley, *Gladstone* (1903 ed.), I, 53.

emancipation policy in the Commons. He decided, therefore, to resign his seat.[94] Eventually he yielded to the entreaties of his Oxford friends and agreed to stand for re-election;[95] but he had to contend with a larger body of university opinion which put forward Sir Robert Inglis as an anti-catholic candidate. The anti-catholics were strongly impressed with the importance of the forthcoming election. The *Morning Journal* wrote in hyperbolic terms that the ascendancy of the Church of England depended 'more upon the issue of the approaching contest at Oxford than upon the decision of the House of Commons itself'.[96] Despite Oxford's reputation, an anti-catholic victory was by no means universally expected. 'Some people represent the ultra-Party as excessively strong', wrote the bishop of Oxford, 'others, as very weak.'[97] John Henry Newman, then Fellow of Oriel, told his sister that he thought the 'Peelites' would succeed.[98] Peel, indeed, had several advantages in his favour. A large majority of Christ Church, his own College and the dominant one, was behind him; and majorities in six other colleges declared for him.[99] A great many London lawyers, non-resident members of the university, were said to support him.[100] Moreover, not all anti-catholics were satisfied with Inglis as a candidate. *John Bull* thought that he seemed lacking in ability when compared with Peel and previous university representatives.[101] Most of his support came from the non-resident parsons.[102] Inglis finally won by 755 votes to 609, and according to an undergraduate cousin of John Cam Hobhouse the parsons were mainly responsible for the result. He wrote:

> ...the odium theologicum has done it—the outlying Parsons are strong, Church against State. One of them told me just now, they could fight as well as vote, if necessary.[103]

In view of Oxford's reputation as an anti-catholic stronghold, so narrow a majority was a victory for Peel and the Government rather than Inglis and the

[94] Peel to the vice-chancellor of Oxford University, 4 February 1829; *Memoirs*, I, 312–15.

[95] The process of persuasion and consent may be followed in N. Gash, *Mr Secretary Peel* (London, 1961), 546 ff.

[96] Among the Extracts of the election, in the Bodleian Library.

[97] Dr Charles Lloyd to Peel, 10 February 1829; Peel Papers, British Museum Add. MSS. 40343, fo. 355.

[98] Newman to his sister Harriet, 17 February 1829. Anne Mozley, *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman during his life in the English Church* (2 vols., London, 1891), I, 200–1.

[99] Calculated from the lists in the poll-book of the election (Extracts, no. 118).

[100] Bishop Lloyd to Peel, 12 February 1829; Peel Papers, Add. MSS. 40343, fos. 362–3.

[101] 23 February 1829.

[102] For example, a large number of clergy left Liverpool to vote for Inglis, but only one to vote for Peel (*North Wales Chronicle*, 25 February 1829). Inglis was an evangelical, and it is ironical that he was also supported by most of the future leaders of the Oxford Movement. Newman and Keble supported Inglis, as did Hurrell Froude and Robert Wilberforce. Only Pusey supported Peel (H. P. Liddon, *Pusey*, I, 198 f.).

[103] H. Hobhouse to J. C. Hobhouse, 27 February 1829; Broughton Papers, Add. MSS. 36465, fo. 76.

ultras. Peel was now pleased that he had stood and proud of the support he had obtained. If he was in a numerical minority, he had received a majority of talent. Statistics of this election, at least, endorse the pro-catholics' presumption that they were superior in ability to their opponents. Dr Whately of Oriel wrote to Peel:

> The majority is not quite five to four... & it is hardly invidious to say that the minority wh. is so near a numerical half, is notoriously & palpably much more than half in everything else...of nineteen professors who voted, we had *thirteen*; &...of forty members of parliament, thirty eight! After this, few will talk of the sense of the University being against you.[104]

After his defeat, Peel was immediately elected for the pocket borough of Westbury, where the proprietor, Sir Manasseh Lopez, retired in his favour. Even this remote backwater did not escape no-popery fervour; Lopez's action was so unpopular with the local inhabitants that they threw stones at his windows.[105]

The anti-catholic by-election successes had a negligible effect on the progress of the Catholic question. Once the ministers had announced their policy, nothing could stem the flow of conversions in Parliament. But the ultras fought with desperate resistance throughout the final parliamentary struggle. Winchilsea delivered a renewed appeal to the people, similar to the original ones of Kenyon and Newcastle. 'Let the voice of Protestantism be heard from one end of the Empire to the other', he exhorted. 'Let the sound of it echo from hill to hill, from vale to vale. Let the tables of the Houses of Parliament groan under the weight of your petitions; and let your Prayers reach the foot of the Throne.'[106] In England, however, the impetus to call popular meetings was almost exhausted, and the only fresh onslaught came from the ultra press. 'The anti-catholic press is furious', noted J. C. Hobhouse, 'and abuses Wellington and Peel in good set terms.'[107] Perhaps the most unrestrained attacks of all came from the *Birmingham Monthly Argus*, whose March and April numbers were filled with anti-catholic venom in prose and verse. The apostate ministers were accused of 'fear, treachery, mental imbecility, producing cowardice, political incapacity, a want of wisdom, of fortitude, and of a firm and conscientious adherence to protestant principles; a desire of fame, and a thirst for popularity with a certain class of the community'.[108] Peel received the greatest share of condemnation, for his

[104] 1 March 1829; Peel Papers, Add. MSS. 40399, fos. 11–12. Peel was also supported by twice as many First Class men as Inglis, and by 24 out of 28 prizemen (*Memoirs*, I, 338).

[105] For this affair see W. G. Hoskins and H. P. R. Finberg, *Devonshire Studies* (London, 1952), 414–17.

[106] *John Bull*, 16 February 1829.

[107] Broughton, *Recollections*, III, 305.

[108] 1 March 1829.

previous position as anti-catholic leader in the Commons made his apostacy seem all the more heinous:

No acts of his future life—no services however valuable—no personal sacrifices however great—no canting, no whining, no sanctimonious deceit, can ever wash away the damned spot. He stands before the public the victim of his own mean ambition—the slave of his own avarice.[109]

The ultras continued to resist the relief bill throughout its readings in the Commons, but they had lost hope of defeating it in a House which was so far out of sympathy with the anti-catholic mass. Winchilsea said that Catholic emancipation was 'in opposition to the sense of the nation...because the present parliament does not truly represent the feelings of the body of the people'.[110] The ultras insisted that Parliament should be dissolved and the people allowed to express their true sentiments at a general election;[111] and Winchilsea even expressed himself favourably inclined to Parliamentary Reform, though this was an individual judgement with which other ultras disagreed.[112] The ultras' main hope lay in persuading the king to resist the bill. Winchilsea announced in his appeal to the people:

...though the great body of your degenerate Senators are prepared to sacrifice, at the shrine of Treason and Rebellion, that constitution for which our Ancestors so nobly fought and died, yet I feel confident that our gracious Sovereign, true to the sacred Oath which he has taken upon the Altars of our country to defend our constitution...will not turn a deaf ear to the Prayers and Supplications of his loyal Protestant Subjects.[113]

Thus it was that, Parliament and the Government having failed them, the ultras concentrated their final efforts on the king. In this last effort too they were unsuccessful. During the last days of February and in early March the duke of Cumberland did all he could to persuade the king to revoke his consent to the introduction of a Government relief bill; but Wellington finally prevailed, and the bill was introduced on 5 March.[114] After the first and second readings of the bill had passed the Commons by handsome majorities, the ultras renewed their efforts. Certain ultra peers obtained inter-

[109] Ibid.

[110] *Parl. Deb.* n.s. XXI, 424.

[111] 'The franchise should be given back to the people, in order that they may decide this question', said Winchilsea on 13 February. 'I will never suffer the rights of the people to be trampled upon' (*Parl. Deb.* n.s. XX, 303).

[112] See Winchilsea's speech in the Lords on 10 March (*Parl. Deb.* n.s. XX, 931–2). On this occasion Richmond and Falmouth both dissented from his remarks about Parliamentary Reform, and said they only agreed with him in his opposition to the relief bill (ibid. 941). During the debate on the second reading in the Lords, on 3 April, Falmouth and Mansfield thought it necessary to deny that they had become parliamentary reformers (*Parl. Deb.* n.s. XXI, 143 ff.).

[113] *John Bull*, 16 February 1829.

[114] For this struggle, see *WND*, V, 513 ff.; Ellenborough, I, 366 ff.; Mrs Arbuthnot, II, 243 ff.; G. M. Willis, *Ernest Augustus* (London, 1954), 185 ff.

views with George IV at the end of March;[115] and various ultra meetings were held, where schemes of resistance were no doubt discussed.[116] Cumberland planned to persuade 20,000 Londoners to march to Windsor in order to petition the king against the bill. Newcastle was deputed to present the petition, and it was feared that a large crowd would accompany him from London.[117] Wellington, however, remarked that he 'wd send the Duke of Cumberland to the Tower as soon as look at him';[118] he eventually persuaded the king to order Newcastle to present his petition through the Home Secretary in the usual manner, and to this demand the ultras gave way.[119] A last attempt to stimulate a popular protest was made in order to dissuade the king from giving his assent to the relief bill, after the bill had passed its second reading in the Lords on 4 April. The project was revived of a procession to Windsor on 10 April, preceded by a public meeting in Hyde Park.[120] It was thought, however, that the persistent lack of no-popery fervour in London would bring about the failure of this move. 'There is no agitation in London', wrote Lord Ellenborough. 'No feeling, no excitement.'[121] Pro-catholic expectations were fulfilled: the bearers of the petition to Windsor filled only four carriages.[122] Meanwhile, Wellington told the king that such a proceeding was illegal, and urged him only to accept the petition through one of the authorized channels.[123] George IV yielded to his premier's advice. When they arrived at Windsor the bearers were told to present their petition through the Home Secretary, and they then dispersed quietly.[124] Three days later the king gave his assent to the bill.

This meagre and unsuccessful demonstration was the last effort to arouse popular anti-catholic action, and its failure reflects that of the no-popery movement as a whole. Contemporary observations show that anti-catholic prejudice was still profound and widespread in British society;[125] and this is

[115] The king saw Newcastle for two hours at an uncertain date (an account of this interview is given in Ellenborough, I, 389–90, 394–5); he saw Mansfield for two hours on 26 March and Eldon for four hours on the 28th (Lord Kenyon's diary, 28 March 1829; KP).

[116] Lord Kenyon's diary, 27 and 30 March 1829 (KP); Ellenborough, I, 410.

[117] Ellenborough, I, 412.

[118] Mrs Arbuthnot, II, 254.

[119] Ellenborough, I, 413–14; Mrs Arbuthnot, II, 262–3.

[120] Ellenborough, II, 9.

[121] Ibid. Nevertheless, the authorities took the precaution of locking all the gates of Hyde Park. Charlotte, Lady Williams Wynn to Henry Williams Wynn, 9 April 1829 (Williams Wynn Papers, National Library of Wales).

[122] Ellenborough, II, 11.

[123] Wellington to the king, 9 April 1829; *WND*, V, 577–8.

[124] Ellenborough, II, 11.

[125] For example, after the relief bill had been carried, the young W. E. Gladstone noted the opinion of his 'scout' at Christ Church, who 'declared himself much troubled for the king's conscience, observing that if we make an oath at baptism, we ought to hold by it'; of his bed-maker, who asked him 'whether it would not be a very good thing if we were to give (the Irish) a king and a parliament of their own, and so to have no more to do with them'; and of an egg-woman, who wondered 'how Mr Peel, who was always such a well-behaved man here, can be so foolish as to think of letting in the Roman Catholics' (Morley, *Gladstone* (1903 ed.), I, 53–4).

endorsed by the popularity of anti-catholic meetings and the overwhelming number of anti-catholic petitions. The passage of Catholic emancipation was no indication that public opinion had suddenly become tolerant of Catholics. Anti-catholicism was a persistent strain in British public opinion in the nineteenth century, and remains so today.[126] It is clear, however, that the fiery no-popery of the Gordon Riots had been transformed by 1828–9 into smouldering impassivity. Whether it was possible to stimulate this torpid prejudice into a movement which could effectively prevent the Government carrying emancipation is a question which cannot be answered. Certainly the Brunswick leaders could not do it. Their movement was defeated not so much by pro-catholic opposition as by their own inherent conservatism, which prevented them from taking steps which might seem dangerously unconstitutional. Not only did the establishment of clubs appear to question the competence of the king's Government, but the whole Brunswick movement was based on the assumption that a predominantly pro-catholic Commons grossly misrepresented the views of a predominantly anti-catholic nation. The logical answer to this was a radical reform of Parliament, but this was something which very few ultras could bring themselves to support.[127] The possibility of such developments had alienated many anti-catholics from the movement at the start. The ultra leaders who remained were not, on the whole, the men to stimulate an active popular movement. Winchilsea may have shown considerable demagogic ability on Penenden Heath; but it was inconceivable that Newcastle, with his veneration for a rigid social hierarchy and his vested interest in an exclusive parliamentary system, should be an effective leader of a popular anti-parliamentary movement. Thus the potential role of the Brunswick movement as a rival to the unreformed Parliament was not fulfilled. It remained fragmentary and uncoordinated; and its main function was the impeccably constitutional one of a petitioner to Parliament.

[126] Take, for instance, the popular *furore* over the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill in 1851. Today a running feud still persists between Orangemen and Catholics in Liverpool, although its manifestations appear to be only of token significance.

[127] On 2 June 1829 the ultra marquess of Blandford moved two resolutions in the Commons for the extinction of rotten boroughs, saying that he wished to prevent the Catholics from using the system of nomination and patronage to become a powerful party in the House. But Blandford's fellow-ultras would not support him: he obtained only 40 votes, and nearly all these were Whig (*Parl. Deb.* n.s. XXI, 1674 ff.).