

THE following short specimen of gorgeous declamation and rich rhetorical imagery is extracted from a speech made by John Philpott Curran, an eminent Irish Barrister in defence of a person accused of a treasonable Libel. — In one of the passages of the alledged libel, which among others was adduced in support of the Indictment, was the phrase of “Universal Emancipation”, which was charged as inviting to a conspiracy of the Irish People against the Government. Towards the close of Curran’s speech, on being reminded of this phrase, he broke forth, apparently unprepared, into the following sentence.

“Universal Emancipation? — Yes I had forgotten that phrase, — and I thank you for reminding me of it. And now, Gentlemen of the Jury, I speak in the spirit of the British Law, which makes Liberty commensurate with and inseparable from the British Soil; which tells even to the Stranger and the Sojourner that, from the moment he has set his foot upon British Earth, from that moment he is free; and why? because it has been hallowed by the Spirit of Universal Emancipation. No matter what climate incompatible with Freedom; — an Indian or an African Sun may have burned upon that man’s head; no matter in what disastrous battle his liberties may have been cloven down; no matter with what horrid solemnities he may have been devoted to the altar of slavery. From the moment he touches the British earth, he is where the Altar and the God sink together in the dust. His soul walks abroad in her own majesty; his body swells from beyond the measure of his chains, which burst from around him; and he stands, redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled, by what? by this much blamed Spirit of Universal Emancipation.”

Τὸ ἀκόλουθον παράδειγμα ὑψηλοτάτης ῥητορείας καὶ πλουσίων ῥητορικῶν εἰκόνων ἐλήφθη ἀπὸ λόγον, ἐκφωνηθέντα ἀπὸ τὸν περινούσαντον Νομικὸν Ἰωάννην Φίλποττ Κόρραν εἰς ἀπολογίαὺν ὑποκειμένου τινὸς, ἐγκαλεσθέντος διὰ σκλητέυμα ἐσχάστης προδοσίας. Μία τῶν φράσεων τοῦ ῥηθέντος στηλιτεύματος, προβληθεῖσα, μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων, πρὸς ὑποστήριξιν τῆς κατηγορίας, ἦτον ἡ ἐκφρασις « Καθολικὴ Ἀπελευθέρωσις » ἣτις μεθερμηνεύθη ὡς πρόσκλησις, προτρέπουσα τὸν Ἰρλανδικὸν Λαὸν εἰς συνωμοσίαν κατὰ τῆς Κυβερνήσεως. Εἰς τὸ τέλος τῆς ὁμιλίας του, ὁ Κόρραν, ἐπειδὴ τὸν ὑπεθυμίσαν τὴν φράσιν ταύτην, ἀπεκρίθη ἐξ ἀπροόπτου, μετὰ τὴν ἐξῆς περίοδον:

Καθολικὴ Ἀπελευθέρωσις; Ναι, ἐγὼ εἶχα λησμονήσει τὴν φράσιν ταύτην. Σᾶς εὐχαριστῶ, διότι μετὰ τὴν ἀνεκαλέσατε εἰς τὴν ἐνθύμησιν. Καὶ τώρα, ὦ Εὐγενεῖς Ὀρκωτοί, (*Juri*) ὁμιλῶ κατὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Βρετανικοῦ Νόμου, ὅστις ταυτίζει ἐνταυτῷ καὶ καθις ἡ ἀδιάσπαστον τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀπὸ τὸ Βρετανικὸν ἔδαφος ὅστις λέγει πρὸς τὸν ξένον καθὼς καὶ πρὸς τὸν κάτοικον, ὅτι ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδίας σιγμῆς, ἀφ' ἧς πατήσῃ βρετανικὴν γῆν, εἶναι ἐλευθερος καὶ διατί; Διότι καθηγιάσθη ἀπὸ τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς Καθολικῆς Ἀπελευθερώσεως. Εἶναι ἀδιάφορον, ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, ὅποιουδήποτε κλίματος ἤθελεν εἶσθαι ὁ τοιοῦτος· ἂν ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ κεφαλῆς ἐπέφλεξεν ὁ Ἰνδικὸς, ἢ τῆς Ἀφρικῆς ὁ Ἥλιος. Εἶναι ἀδιάφορον εἰς ποίαν ὀλέθριον μάχην ἡ ἐλευθερία του κατετροπώθη· εἶναι ἀδιάφορον μ' ὁποίας φοικώδεις τελετὰς αὐτὸς καθιερώθη εἰς τὸν Βωμὸν τῆς δουλείας. — Ἀφ' ἧς σιγμῆς ἐγγίξῃ τὰ βρετανικὰ χρώματα αὐτὸς εὐρίσκεται, ὅπου ὁ βωμὸς καὶ τὸ εἶδωλον ἔπεσαν ὁμοῦ κατὰ γῆς. Ἡ ψυχὴ του ἀναφαίνεται εἰς ὅλην αὐτῆς τὴν μεγαλειότητα· τὸ σῶμά του μεγαλυνόμενον πέραν τοῦ περιορισμοῦ τῶν ἀλύσεων του, διασπᾷ ταύτας τριγύρωθέν του, καὶ αὐτὸς μένει λελυτρωμένος, ἀναγεννημένος, καὶ λελυμένος, καὶ δυνάμει τίνος; Δυνάμει τοῦ τοσοῦτον καταψεγομένου τούτου Πνεύματος τῆς Καθολικῆς Ἀπελευθερώσεως.