



A caricature of Daniel O'Connell during the fight for Catholic Emancipation

HEATH, William.

A Sketch of the Great Agi-Tater.

London: Thomas McLean, 1829. Etching with original hand colour. 360 x 265mm, with good margins.

£380

An inflammatory caricature portrait of Irish campaigner for Catholic rights Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), standing in a rural setting, a barrister's wig on his head and his body a potato, with legs as 'Roots of Evil' marked 'Popery', 'Intolerance' and 'Bigotry'. One root with a barbed point pierces an empty throne; another topples a church. O'Connell urinates from a 'Popes Eye' onto 'Protestant Ground'. In 1828 O'Connell was elected to the British Parliament as M.P. for County Clare, the first Catholic to be returned since 1688. However he was barred from his seat because to take the 'Oath of Supremacy' (swearing allegiance to the British monarch as Supreme Governor of the Church of England) would contradict the Roman communion. Fearing civil disturbances if democracy was ignored, the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington (the hero of Waterloo) advocated the 'Catholic Relief Act', removing the need for the oath. This caricature was published a month before the Act was passed. This satire is signed with the 'Paul Pry' monogram of William Heath (1794-1840), a little figure with a top hat, leaning on an umbrella, based on actor John Liston in the role of Paul Pry, a character who interfered in other peoples' business in John Poole's eponymous comedy.



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