

IRELAND IN 1866-67.

A DETAILED ACCOUNT

OF THE

FENIAN CONFEDERATION,

FROM THE

SEIZURE AND SUPPRESSION

OF

"The Irish People" Newspaper

TO ITS

FINAL TERMINATION;

CONTAINING AMPLE REPORTS OF THE TRIALS, SPEECHES, &c.,

WITH

GLEANINGS FROM ALL AVAILABLE SOURCES BEARING ON THE CONSPIRACY.

VOL. I.

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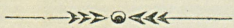
CONTAINING AMPLIFIED REPORTS OF THE TRIALS, SPEECHES, &c.

WITH

AND TESTIMONY OF THE WITNESSES IN THE TRIALS

VOL. I.

PREFACE.



ALTHOUGH the title to these Volumes sufficiently indicates their scope, the Compiler thinks he should briefly state the motives which induced him to make a collection of the numerous documents comprised in them.

However, some may be disposed to think lightly of a conspiracy which, if we may credit English and Irish journals, is now utterly extinguished, there can be little doubt that in years to come, and when this generation has passed away, many will be found to take a lively interest in the history of Fenianism, its origin, its objects, and the trials of its leaders.

When we look back at the period of 1641, and seek information concerning those who prominently identified themselves with the memorable insurrection which then commenced, the reasons which impelled them to put in peril, and to sacrifice high social position, large hereditary estates, and life itself, in fact, all that men of ancient lineage prize for themselves and for their posterity, we have to deplore the absence of anything like a fair and impartial history of that eventful period. Indeed the scattered notices—they cannot be called histories—of these remarkable men, must be sought in pages written by prejudiced and base wretches, unfaithful to the Sovereign whose servants they were, hating the very name of Irishman and Catholic, without religion or any moral principle, and whose only object was the possession of the estates of the Irish nobility and gentry, and the utter debasement, if not the extinction, of the Irish people. The Official Records of this country show to what an enormous extent they were able to effect this, with them, most absorbing and unholy object.

At the present moment nothing, surely, would be more interesting to the student of Irish history than a succinct and trustworthy account of the motives, the struggles, and the final failure of those honest and unselfish Irishmen, many of whom innured to war in the Spanish Netherlands and in France, returned to their own country to assist their friends and relations in obtaining from the Government toleration of religion and the undisturbed possession of the estates which remained to them after the confiscations in the reigns of Elizabeth and her contemptible and hypocritical successor, James I., for the greater and most influential portion of these men never dreamed of reclaiming confiscations, or of withdrawing their allegiance from the King of England.

We are now possessed of these privileges, one of which, religious toleration, was grudgingly granted; but the wars of 1641 and of 1688, deprived us, with very few exceptions, of all property, save what has been acquired by our own talent and industry, to which, even yet, full freedom has not been given; but moderate as those privileges appear to us now, and apparently indispensable to the very existence of a people. For eleven years the men of 1641 fought for them, and lost in their assertion all that they possessed, to be handed over to Cromwell's soldiers, to adventurers of all descriptions; in fact, to the rebels who murdered Charles I., and who were rewarded by his son with the estates of the nobility and gentry of the country.

Unfortunately, the little we know of the leaders in the war of 1641, is derived principally from most questionable sources, which may be said to be too deeply coloured, either by the animosity of those hostile to their views, or rather to their existence, or possibly by the praises of their avowed eulogists. Fifty years hence the same might be the fate of the history of the comparatively humble but earnest men, who played such a remarkable part in our days if some trouble had not been taken to collect official and other authentic reports of their proceedings, as well as of their trials, with copious extracts from the newspapers of the time, as well English as Irish, which dwelt so largely on those deeply interesting transactions.

This, probably unique, compilation embraces material for the entire history of the rise, progress, and suppression of the Fenian movement, with biographical notices of the parties principally engaged in it, their trials, their speeches at their trials, and their subsequent deportment after sentence had been passed.

The Compiler can safely state that he has employed the utmost diligence to collect every account of, even the most minute incident connected with Fenianism and its leaders in Ireland, as well as in England; and the reader, whoever he may be, into whose hands these Volumes may fall, need only glance at the Indexes to admit the correctness of this statement. In a word, nothing has been omitted which had relation to the conspiracy and its motives, or that could throw light on the private or political history and conduct of its leaders.

Before closing these not unnecessary observations, we may be permitted to state that, in addition to very ample Indexes, affording great facilities of reference, there is an alphabetical list of those who were tried, with their conviction or acquittal sentences, &c., and also the names of the jurors empannelled for each of the trials—the dates of each occurrence are carefully noted.

When the Compiler commenced the collection and arrangement of the numerous documents comprised in these Volumes, it was with the intention of giving such a history of the Fenian Insurrection as would leave little work for censure, if not for criticism, whether Liberal or Conservative, Irish or anti-Irish. But old age and its general adjuncts, disease, have compelled him to withdraw from a work which he earnestly hopes will be executed by a younger and more competent person. He must now be satisfied with the humble merit of having provided the materials.

July, 1868.

T. W.

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July, 1883.

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