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## Cambridge Historical Series

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# IRELAND

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# IRELAND

1494—1905

BY

WILLIAM O'CONNOR MORRIS

REVISED, WITH AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER  
(1868—1905), NOTES, ETC.

BY

ROBERT DUNLOP, M.A.

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## GENERAL PREFACE.

*The aim of this series is to sketch the history of Modern Europe, with that of its chief colonies and conquests, from about the end of the fifteenth century down to the present time. In one or two cases the story commences at an earlier date: in the case of the colonies it generally begins later. The histories of the different countries are described, as a rule, separately; for it is believed that, except in epochs like that of the French Revolution and Napoleon I, the connection of events will thus be better understood and the continuity of historical development more clearly displayed.*

*The series is intended for the use of all persons anxious to understand the nature of existing political conditions. "The roots of the present lie deep in the past"; and the real significance of contemporary events cannot be grasped unless the historical causes which have led to them are known. The plan adopted makes it possible to treat the history of the last four centuries in considerable detail, and to embody the most important results of modern research. It is hoped therefore that the series will be useful not only to beginners but to students who have already acquired some general knowledge of European History. For those who wish to carry their studies further, the bibliography appended to each volume will act as a guide to original sources of information and works more detailed and authoritative.*

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## PREFACE.

IT is hardly correct to say that Irish History is deficient in dramatic passages, and in scenes that lend themselves to picturesque description. A Froissart would have given life and beauty to the exploits of many of the Anglo-Norman warriors; a native chronicler of poetic genius would have made the deeds of more than one of the Celtic Princes, especially of Shane O'Neill and of the illustrious Tyrone, shine out in brilliant significance. The story of the sieges of Londonderry and of Limerick, and of the battles of the Boyne and of Aghrim has been told by eminent writers; but these have belonged to the conquering race; and the works of writers of the conquered race on these events are dull and imperfect. Irish History contains episodes that a Walter Scott would have animated and made striking; but they have not been treated by a master hand; a "vates sacer" has not appeared to give them attractive form and colouring.

This side, however, of Irish History is not that which possesses the greatest interest. The march of Irish affairs after the Anglo-Norman conquest has been, for the most part, outside the great movements of the European World; there has been no Irish Bannockburn and no Irish Flodden; many eminent Irishmen have been more conspicuous in foreign lands than their own. Irish History is most valuable on its internal side, that is, as it unfolds the conditions and circumstances under which the Irish People has existed through many centuries, and has become what it is. The story to a superficial mind may appear "a tale of little

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meaning," a wearisome account of the long and hopeless struggle of a weak dependency with an infinitely more powerful nation and state. But the series of events which constitutes Irish History is of no ordinary interest to the true historical student and to thinkers and statesmen worthy of the name. The annals of few countries so clearly illustrate the evident sequence of cause and effect in the evolution of the life and the fortunes of a misruled, backward, and most ill fated community. Irish History, especially when contrasted with that of England, shows most strikingly how calamitous were the effects, in the Middle Ages, of the complete absence of a strong monarchy and a strong central government from a land abandoned to feudal oppression and to Celtic tribal disorder and discord. It shows very plainly how ill it may be when a people much superior in civilisation and wealth tries to rule a people inferior in these respects; how misconceptions and fatal mistakes may follow; how efforts to extend the domain of good government may lead to gross and far-spreading injustice. It illustrates only too vividly how terrible may be the results of conquest carried out piecemeal, through long spaces of time, and of wholesale confiscation following in its train; and it signally proves how dreadful may be the issue of conflicts in which a feeble subject race defies the power of a great ruling State, in times of fierce religious and national passion. It indicates, on the other hand, how infatuated are attempts such as these; especially when the weaker people is torn by intestine broils and divisions, and, while it beards an enemy tenfold in strength, throws its chances away in its insensate quarrels. Irish History places in the fullest light the evils of wrong done in the name of religion; of a system of government framed on the principle of the ascendancy of a mere sect; of society formed, in all its parts, on the domination of a small caste, and on the denial of right to a conquered people; of the divisions of race and faith rending a community



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in twain, and forbidding the fusion of classes kept apart, and of commercial restrictions of extreme harshness; and it teaches a whole series of economic lessons, throughout its long course, of the greatest value. It must be added that it bears witness to the truth, that it is difficult for a Teutonic people to manage, or even to understand, a Celtic, particularly when the latter is on a plane of life, usages, and habits completely different; and that British policy for Ireland, however well-meaning, has often been mistaken, owing to sheer ignorance, and has been repeatedly and most unfortunately too late, even in its best and wisest remedial measures.

The History of Ireland, besides, if I do not err, is deeply interesting for another general reason. Philosophy attests the moral government of the Universe, and rightly asserts the freedom of the will of man. But History recognises and teaches how immense is the power of circumstance in shaping the fortunes of states and nations; and points out that these repeatedly have seemed to depend on what we in our ignorance call accidents. This has especially been the case in the course of the affairs of Ireland; and it cannot fail to attract the attention of a thoughtful mind. Over and over again it has seemed as if Irish History would have been completely changed, with happy results, but for slight incidents that appear but the freaks of Fortune. To refer to a few instances only—how different it would have been if Henry of Anjou had not turned aside from the conquest in his power; had Edward I done for Ireland what he did for Wales; had Henry VIII lived a few years longer; had William III been true to his nature in the affair of the Treaty of Limerick; had not Lord Fitzwilliam been recalled by a petty intrigue; had Pitt, on the occasion of the Union, compelled George III to bow to his will, as he had compelled him before; had Catholic Emancipation been accomplished with “the wings” in 1825! In these, and many other important passages of

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*Preface.*

Irish History, circumstance, that seems almost fortuitous, has played a decisive and an adverse part; and a kind of dark and mournful fatality, like the song of the chorus in the Greek Drama, appears to play over a protracted and unhappy tragedy. This is given to us as an ensample, and affords matter for reflection.

I have written this work on Irish History with a reference to these leading ideas and from these points of view. I have, I hope, composed the narrative in the spirit in which every narrative of the kind should be composed. I have endeavoured to trace the causes of events, to show their connection and relations, to tell the truth fearlessly, to be strictly impartial, and yet always to make allowance for the stress of circumstance, and for the frailties, the passions, and the ignorance of humanity. I shall have gained my object if I shall have directed the attention of thoughtful minds in Great Britain and Ireland to Irish History. The subject, for various reasons, is of supreme importance to the people of both countries.

As I have been confined within rather narrow limits of space, I have been obliged to be chary of notes. I have enumerated in the Appendix the authorities, to which the reader may be referred.

I have to thank the Treasurer and Librarian of the King's Inns, Dublin, for much valuable information.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR MORRIS.

GARTNAMONA, TULLAMORE.  
*December 17th, 1895.*

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## NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

I N undertaking the revision of this little book, I have had to bear in mind that I had a duty to fulfil towards the author as well as towards the public. The late Judge O'Connor Morris held strong views on certain points (see particularly pp. 309, 315, 325, 330, 333), with which I either do not or only partly agree; but it would have been manifestly unfair to tamper with the tone of a book which bears his name on the title page. I have therefore, in the corrections I have found it necessary to make, restricted myself to matters of fact. I believe that the author would have entirely concurred in these corrections.

With the permission of the Editor, I have added a few notes and extended the list of authorities, marking with an asterisk those books which I thought would prove most useful to readers beginning their study of Irish history. As for the additional chapter, bringing the narrative down to the General Election in 1905, I have endeavoured, I trust not unsuccessfully, to maintain the attitude of an impartial observer.

R. D.

MANCHESTER.

*Ostober, 1909.*

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