THY IRELAND WANTS HOME RULE:

Y COMBFELE HYNDBOOK

TEWS OF EMINENT ENGLISHMEN.

PAST AND PRESENT.

As a pressed in their Speech s and Writings:

FANDLANDING STATISTICS, MAP, AND A LARGE MASS OF TYPORMATION FROM OPERS ACTIONAL SOURCE.

ON THE IRISH QUESTION.

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J. A. FOX.



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ONAL PRESS AGENCY, LIMITED,
Whitefrian Store, London, E.C.

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ON THE IRISH QUESTION.

BY

J. A. FOX.

THE NATIONAL PRESS AGENCY, LIMITED,

In 1846, Lord, william hesitated not to say in the House of Lords that "Ird ad was a country of which Englishmen were exceedingly ignorant. It was a mirror in which England did not very well wish to look; but from which she ought not to shrink, although she might see in that mirror much cause of regret, and much cause of shame." (House of Lords, March 23rd, 1846.)

On January 27th, 1868, Mr. Bright wrote:—"The English people are in complete ignorance of Irish wrongs, and know little or nothing of the real condition of Ireland. This is a sad picture, but it is not coloured too darkly."

Mr. Gladstone, in a letter published in October, 1886, gives it as his opinion that the English constituencies, to a large extent, are, it is to be feared, still "deplorably ignorant of sound historical information" on the Irish Question.

PREFACE.

There probably never was a period in Anglo-Irish history when Englishmen and Scotchmen were so well disposed to consider any explanation of the Irish difficulty put before them as the present time. The story of British rule in Ireland is a painful one from beginning to end; so painful, indeed, in many of its incidents, that it had better be buried in oblivion. Ireland is not alone a conquered country, but a confiscated one,—confiscated three times over, and always in the interest of strangers or adventurers, and to the exceeding detriment of the natives. It is a conquered country, though this is stoutly denied by the Irish themselves, and the history of its conquest is often made up of a series of military barbarities, extending over many centuries, and not seldom practised on unarmed peasants, defenceless worken and innocent children. But every well-balanced mind is shocked by the recitals of these haracteristics of Anglo-Irish history now, and it is not a patriotic any more than it is a christian thing to recall, much less to dwell upon, such evil recollections, when the long standing quarrel between England and Ireland is on the point of being composed. I have on this account confined my pamphlet rather to the economic and social injuries from which Ireland still suffers—though the cause of these having had its origin in the last century, it was necessary to go so far back at least.

My object has been a very humble one; to compile a hand-book of information on those various Irish subjects which still puzzle and perplex the average English 'politician. And I have tried so to arrange them in separate chapters as to include, though of course

only in a condensed form, the independent opinion of eminen, English statesmen and publicists on these very various topics as they, arise. I wish here to disclaim responsibility for the oftentimes strong denunciatory language applied to the doings of Irish land. lords, past and present, and especially by a journal of such vas intelligence as well as influence as the Times. I venture to hole that the Irish landlords are now, and ever have been, the creature of the British Government and the British Parliament; unless indeed it can be absurdly set up that both Parliament and Govern ment are the creation of Irish landlords. It will not do in these days of enlightenment to endeavour to shift the responsibility; and whatever of evil has been worked in the past by unjust agrarian laws, and is being done at the present hour by the Crowbar Brigade, as the Times has called the "black armies" and the "red armies" with the evictors; for that, and much more than that, Parliament, and Parliament alone, should be held responsible. My readers will find in these pages innumerable admissions to this effect from the lips or the pen of the foremost of English statesmen, extending over a period of two generations. But, alas! it will also be found that these distinguished men have never, in the long interval, seriously combined, once for all, to get rid of the scandal; not at least to the day when Mr. Gladstone's axe was uplifted to cut at the Upas tree of Irish discontent and disaffection. So that there has been a perpetual aptness in a saying of Sir John Davis, an Englishman who was Attorney-General in Ireland in the reign of James I :--

"In a word, if the English would neither in peace govern them [the Irish] by the law, nor could in war root them out by the sword; must they not needs be pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides till the world's end?" (A Discoverie, p. 90).

The great body of Liberal Associations throughout England and Scotland appear to have, at length, happily realised the fact that English rule in Ireland has been, so far, no more than a dismal failure. Their Irish fellow subjects now look with longing and grateful hearts to the Liberal electors of Great Britain to act up to their convictions, by making to Ireland the only reparation for the sorrows and suffering of the past which it is in their power to make, viz., the restoration of her native Parliament, for the

Prefuce.

management henceforward of her own affairs; not only for Ireland's sake, but for the sake of England too.

J. A. Fox.

London, January 27th, 1887.

I wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging the assistance I have met with in compiling my pamphlet from the following very valuable works, viz.:—

A Word for Ireland (Gill and Son).

English Interference with Irish Industries (Cassell).

Ireland Under English Rule (Duffy).

The Irish Landlord Since the Revolution (Kelly).

History of the Irish Famine of 1847 (Gill and Son).

A Memoir on Ireland, Native and Saxon (Duffy).

The other works from which I have quoted are, I trust, sufficiently acknowledged in the course of the text. But I have also to thank the Registrar-General in Dublin, Dr. Grimshaw, for indicating to me the source of authentic emigration statistics; and last, but not least, I have to thank a young student in Anglo-Irish history, Mr. William Lancelot Fox, who has kindly favoured me with many interesting extracts, particularly from the writings and speeches of Lord Beaconsfield, which will be found in their appropriate chapters.

J. A. F.

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