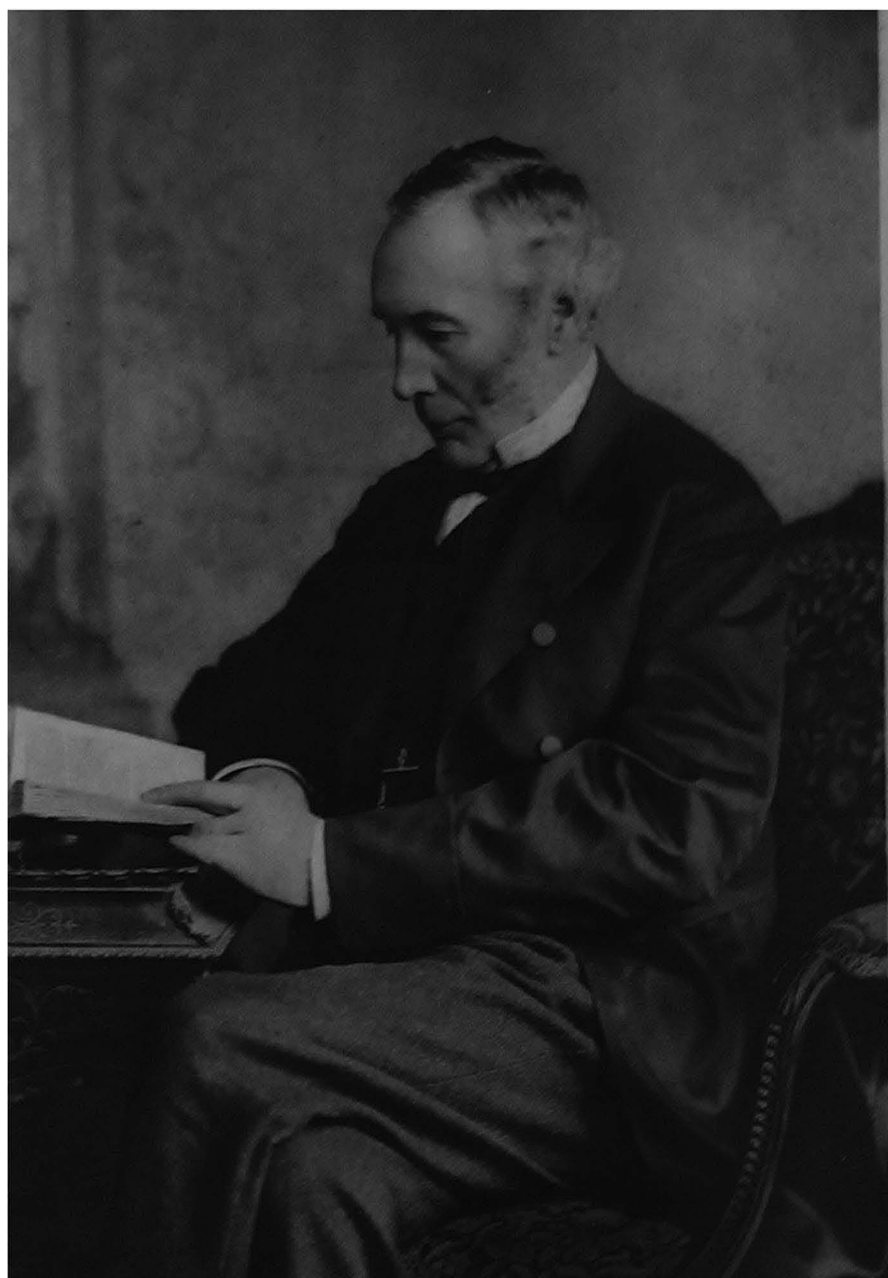


MEMORIES AND THOUGHTS
OF A LIFE





*James Clerk
Maxwell*

MEMORIES AND THOUGHTS
OF A LIFE

BY

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COUNTY COURT JUDGE AND CHAIRMAN OF QUARTER SESSIONS
FOR THE UNITED COUNTIES OF ROSCOMMON AND SLIGO
SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD

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P R E F A C E

I HAVE set down in this volume the reminiscences of a life not fruitful in personal incidents, but which has given me rather a large and varied experience of men and things. I have described social features of a generation that has passed away; have added sketches of the same kind belonging to my own time; have noticed much that I have seen and known in a long forensic and judicial career, and have glanced at the little I have done in the sphere of letters. But I have dwelt chiefly on the condition of Ireland, political, social, and economic, during the last half century, for it is a subject which has engaged my attention since boyhood, and it is of the gravest importance to every thinking person in the three kingdoms. Though always a Liberal, and a scion of a family true to the creed of Henry Grattan, I am a decided Unionist; but, while I believe that the unqualified maintenance of the Union is the only refuge Ireland can find from revolutionary anarchy, I am not blind to ills which the Union has—not caused, but brought in its train, and I have made suggestions for what, in my judgment, would be adequate remedies. If I have commented adversely on the agitation, which in different forms has convulsed parts of Ireland during the last fifteen

years, and if I have censured the conduct of certain public men, I am convinced I only express the opinion of the great body of educated intellect in England, Scotland, and Ireland on these subjects. I may anticipate an objection which may be made by critical purists and by heated partisans, that a judge has no right to meddle with these questions or to write upon them ; but a judge does not forfeit his title as a citizen to declare his views on politics and politicians, and, not to refer to illustrious examples in the past, eminent judicial personages have of late years placed on record the conclusions they have formed on Ireland and Irish affairs in language far more emphatic than any I have used. For the rest, my judicial conduct during nearly a quarter of a century would, I believe, be a sufficient protection from any aspersions of the above-named character.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR MORRIS.

GARTNAMONA, TULLAMORE,
August 19, 1894.

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