

The professed primary end and object of Fenianism is to ameliorate the condition of the Irish people, by wresting Ireland from the grasp of British power, and establishing there an independent government, republican in form.

How probable the attainment of this proposed end is, can be judged of, only by looking at facts as they exist, and paying due regard to "the logic of events," rather should I say to the logic of known circumstances.

Ireland is unquestionably, I think, a necessary part of the British empire. What I mean is, that without it, the British empire as such, cannot exist. Wrest Ireland from, and make it permanently independent of, Great Britain, and you virtually terminate the British empire. Furthermore, I say, establish a permanent republic in Ireland, acknowledged amongst the nations as a free, an independent sovereignty, and the subjugation of Great Britain by it must speedily follow. Because, in the circumstances and civilization of modern times, they must be politically connected, else neither can be an independent sovereignty. This is, I believe, an inevitable condition of their situation, relative position, and proximity—coupled with the character and tendency of governmental ideas in our day. Such, I apprehend, was the opinion of Pitt, when, at the beginning of this century, he, by the use of means anything but scrupulous, bound Ireland to Great Britain more closely than she had been, by the extinction of her Legislature.

Such, I doubt not, is the belief of the British people and Government. Therefore, when Great Britain is compelled to fight for the maintenance of her dominion in Ireland, she will fight for her own political existence. Consequently, when Fenianism undertakes to wrest Ireland from the grasp of British power, it undertakes the more than Herculean task of overcoming all the resistance which can be made by the great military and naval power of Britain, sustained by her vast resources, her immense wealth, her powerful alliances, and above all, by her millions of loyal people, impressed with the belief and animated by the consciousness that the struggle is not merely for the maintenance of supremacy in Ireland, but for the preservation of her own distinctive nationality—for the existence of British sovereignty. The accomplishment of this by any means within the power of an organization like Fenianism is, I venture to say, not within the range of what the human mind can regard as probable, I may even say, possible.

Empires as great, in their day, as that of Britain—some probably greater more powerful and more magnificent—have existed before, and passed away. The Babylonian, the Assyrian, the Macedonian, and the Roman empires existed in turn, and in turn vanished. The Turkish empire, once so powerful as to menace and jeopardise the liberties of all Europe, has dwindled into insignificance. But those mighty changes from magnificent existence and potency to nonentity or insignificance, were produced not by the direct agency of human power—not by means devised by human ingenuity for such results, but by a combination or succession of causes—human or providential, or partly both—the effect whereof the human mind could not foresee,—by means, therefore, which