

Still, whatever be the difficulties to be encountered by the student of Irish history, arising from the causes just adverted to, sufficient facilities remain to enable any person competent, and willing to make use of them, to form an impartial idea of that ancient glory of the Irish people, from which, in later ages, having declined, they presented the aspect of civil anarchy, with its consequent social and religious results, as their normal condition. Numerous writers have, at different periods since the English conquest, carefully gathered up whatever remained either in the form of manuscript records or authenticated tradition [available as collateral proof.] that could, at their respective eras, be discovered. A mere list of their names would be too lengthened for our present purpose; nor indeed, is it quite necessary, since the readers of this volume will perceive that its lamented author has referred his statements on particular subjects to the authority of several amongst these writers. In the notes will be found an abundance of such references, made originally by the author before he left his native country, and when he had ample materials for this work at his command. A few of these authorities referred to, have been satisfactorily consulted by the editor since the manuscript of this history came into his hands, and the accuracy of the rest may, in his firm belief, be taken for granted. They will assuredly be so by those who were acquainted with the exact literary habits of the deceased author, as well as with the judicious and impartial character of his mind.

One of the difficulties to be encountered in writing history, at the present time, results from the general desire for a somewhat dramatic and sensational style. At this the author has not directly aimed; and yet, we think, that his book will be found eminently readable. If the most critical attention to the purest sources of information, an exact and logical method in his arrangement of historical facts and his deductions from them, an eloquence which occasionally scintillates its brightness even through dull