

of our history is left in the background,—the facts, even when told over, are presented to the reader in the driest and least attractive manner possible. What young person will think of reading the Four Masters, McGeorgegan, Lanigan, Keating, or O'Halloran? The very sight of those ponderous volumes would deter most people from opening them in search of "Irish story," and, even though they did summon courage to "look in," the formidable array of long (and apparently) unpronounceable Milesian names would be more than enough to damp their curiosity and give them a distaste for further research.\*

The annals of Ireland have been not inaptly likened to a skeleton; a heap of dry bones, which require the prophet's breath to infuse life into them, and clothe them with the vesture of humanity. To follow up the comparison—as the student of anatomy takes, bone by bone, and joint by joint, the wonderful piece of mechanism which forms our body, in order to arrive at a perfect knowledge of the whole, so would I endeavor to dissect the *corpus* of Irish history, and presenting it piece by piece to the reader, give a knowledge of each in detail. This is what I have done in the work now placed before the reader. I have taken the Religious War—commonly called the Great Rebellion—which convulsed Ireland from 1641 to 1652, and clothed the dry bones of the principal actors on both sides with the flesh of their mortality, and breathed into them the breath of life, so that they might speak and tell their own story to all who are disposed to listen. I have woven a thread of fiction—a slender thread, too—through the stirring events of that "hero-age," just enough to keep the *dramatis personæ* grouped together. In adhering so faithfully to the historical narrative, I may have rendered the book less interesting to those who love mystery and crave excitement, but it was not to pander to morbid and unhealthy appetites that I undertook a work requiring so much patient research; nor is it for the mere novel reader that I write now or at any other time. To those who love Ireland and can appreciate her fidelity to her ancient faith, the sufferings she has endured, and the heroic efforts which her children have made in times past to free her from civil and religious bondage, I make no apology for the undue proportion of historical matter in this story, they will value it all the more for being "an ower true tale."

\* The Popular History of Ireland now appearing from the pen of our distinguished countryman T. D. McGee, bids fair to supply this want.