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P R E F A C E.

It is a common saying, even amongst Irish people, that Irish history is about the driest history known to us. There may be some truth in the remark, for the fact is that Ireland of all countries, has never yet been fairly represented on the page of history. In this she has had reason to complain, for although her sons have done much for the historic fame of other countries, they have, for the most part, wholly neglected that of their own. If Goldsmith had but done for Ireland what he did for England, then the personages of Ireland's eventful drama would be as familiarly known as are those of English history,—our O'Neils and O'Donnells would bear comparison with the Russels and the Sidneys, and the Hampdens,—our Desmonds, and Geraldines, and Butlers would stand on a level with the Warwicks, the Percys, and the Douglasses of British story, and Brian Boromhe and Art MacMurrough would shine out from the darkness of their times with as true a lustre as that which glids the names of the English Alfred and the Scottish Bruce. The sons and daughters of Ireland in foreign countries would not then have to ask: "Who on earth is Owen Roe?—who is Hugh O'Neill?—who is Oliver Plunket?—What in the world did they do that people keep talking so about them?" Oh! what wonder is it that such ignorance prevails, such deplorable ignorance, with regard to the history of Ireland? What effort has ever been made to invest it with charms for the rising generation to whom history is of itself a dry study?

We of the Irish race owe a debt to our departed worthies which we cannot too soon set about paying. Their efforts to redeem the land of their love were unhappily for the most part unsuccessful, but the fault was not theirs—they were great and noble in their generation—they did great things for Ireland—they have left us their fame as a legacy—shall we not avail ourselves of it to ennoble our country and give her that place amongst the nations to which the glory of her sons entitles her? No country under heaven has had more heroic deeds done for her—no country holds a higher place in the martyrology of nations (so to speak)—no history more chequered than hers, or marked by more striking vicissitudes, more stirring events, deeper shadows or more radiant lights. How then is it so little known, and when partially known so little cared for? Precisely because the romance