

REPORT OF GENERAL JOHN O'NEILL,

PRESIDENT OF THE FENIAN BROTHERHOOD,

On the attempt to invade Canada, May 25th, 1870, the preparations therefor, and the cause of its failure, with a sketch of his connection with the Organization, and the motives which led him to join it.

IN JAIL AT BURLINGTON, VT., June 25th, 1870.

To the officers and members of the Fenian Brotherhood, and the friends of Irish liberty generally:

GENTLEMEN:—Since I last had the honor to address you, an important event in the history of the Organization has occurred: and judging from the general tenor of newspaper reports, the man whom you then most trusted, has, for the time, lost your confidence. While I may be grieved at this, still, conscious of having performed my whole duty as far as in me lay, I have nothing to regret in the past, excepting that those whose co-operation I had looked for, so utterly failed to keep their solemn pledges. Whatever I have done in connection with the Fenian Brotherhood, was done for Ireland, from conviction, and not to please any particular class of persons. If, under similar circumstances, another leader would have done better, I have only to regret that I, and not he, had been selected. You are well aware that far from seeking official position in the Brotherhood, it was thrust upon me in violence to my wishes. Having often received your applause for an act possessing little intrinsic merit, perhaps it is not strange that my acts of real merit should be misunderstood and condemned. Of this, however, you may be assured, I labored arduously and successfully in preparing the Organization for the field, had the arms and war material in the proper place at the proper time, and if the men were not on hand to do the fighting, the fault was not mine. Success or failure is not a fair criterion on which to form one's judgment, and yet you must own that it is thus you have formed your unfavorable opinion of me in relation to the late attempted invasion of Canada.

A firm believer in steel as the cure of Irish grievances, I was attracted to the ranks of the Organization for no other reason than it proposed such a remedy. It was not, however, until the plan of invading Canada was adopted, that I