

**THE IRISH REFORMATION, OR THE ALLEGED  
CONVERSION OF THE IRISH BISHOPS AT THE  
ACCESSION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH, AND THE  
ASSUMED DESCENT OF THE PRESENT  
ESTABLISHED HIERARCHY IN IRELAND FROM  
THE ANCIENT IRISH CHURCH, DISPROVED**

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The Irish Reformation, or the Alleged Conversion of the Irish Bishops at the Accession of Queen Elizabeth, and the Assumed Descent of the Present Established Hierarchy in Ireland from the Ancient Irish Church, Disproved by W. Maziere Brady & James Anthony Froude

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**W. MAZIERE BRADY & JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE**

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BY

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VICAR OF BONGHERRICK AND RECTOR OF KILMURPHY, DIOCESE OF MEATH; AND FORMERLY CHAPLAIN TO THE  
KINGS OF CLARENDOU, ST. GERMAIN, AND CARLES, LORDS LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND;  
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IRISH CHURCH REFORMATIONS;" ETC., ETC.

FIFTH EDITION:

CONTAINING ALSO A LETTER FROM

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A.;

NOTICES OF THE EARLY ELIZABETHAN PRELATES, AND OF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE  
ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS;

AND TABLES SHOWING, IN JUXTA-POSITION, THE ANGLICAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC  
SUCCESSIONS OF IRISH ARCHBISHOPS, WITH LIST OF ALL IRISH ROMAN  
CATHOLIC BISHOPS FROM 1683 TO THE PRESENT TIME.

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## PREFACE.

To men of candid minds it will not be necessary to offer an apology for speaking the truth. To some persons, however, the following pages may seem an attempt to undermine and demolish what they have hitherto regarded as one of the bulwarks of the Established Church in Ireland. It becomes necessary therefore to explain the reasons and motives which have induced the author to publish that which might appear hostile to the Church of which he is an ordained and beneficed minister. In collecting materials for the "Clerical and Parochial Records of Cork, Cloyne, and Ross," the writer was necessarily engaged, for many years, in examining the published works and unpublished archives relating to the Reformation period, and could not fail to remark that no documentary evidence was forthcoming to verify the received opinions touching the asserted conversion of the Irish Bishops, and the descent of the reformed episcopate from the ancient Irish Church. Failing to discover in this country any proofs of the asserted facts, and knowing that a search amongst Continental and especially Roman records, would be the most likely means of obtaining accurate information on the subject, the author resolved to seek admission to the archives at Rome, which he had reason to believe would supply many details relating to Irish bishops, in addition to what WARE, HARRIS, and COTTON have published, and might even fill up the too frequent interruptions which occur in the successions to the various sees, as recorded in the pages of those painstaking and judicious antiquaries. Upon making inquiries, with this object in view, he found that other persons, possessing far greater advantages for this purpose than himself, had already in part accomplished the work, and were likely to complete it satisfactorily. The results of the researches of one of these gentlemen, a distinguished archivist named Theiner, have lately been published. They come down to the date 1547. The other labourer in the same field, Dr. Moran—sometime Vice-Rector of the Irish College at Rome—kindly permitted the author to use his yet unpublished transcripts from the Roman archives, which exhibit the succession in the Irish sees during the remainder of the sixteenth century. It is presumed that the accuracy and fidelity of Theiner and Dr. Moran, in the matter of transcribing those records, are above

suspicion. If, however, any Protestants should be so prejudiced as to refuse to receive evidence derived from such sources, or should venture to disparage it, they ought to remember that upon them lies the *onus probandi*, and that, until they can themselves bring forward evidence in support of an assertion which is *prima facie* improbable they ought not to expect any rational man to believe that the Irish Established Church can fairly claim a more unbroken succession than that of the English Church.

To those who, without being prepared to impeach the good faith of the authorities adduced, wish for further information, it will be satisfactory to learn that in many instances their evidence is verified by independent and indirect testimony from manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and the State Paper Office. Such inquirers after truth will probably attach much weight to the deliberately pronounced decision of Mr. Froude, the historian of England, whose opportunities for forming an impartial judgment have been singularly favourable, and whose evidence, as quoted hereafter, fully bears out the conclusion at which the author had long since arrived.

It would be an unmanly and almost a dishonest course on the part of the writer to conceal the facts thus ascertained, and allow the stereotyped assertions to be any longer employed, without refutation, as weapons of party warfare. If the Church in Ireland is to be preserved, that cannot be done by stifling and suppressing the truth, and it is better that an admission of error should come from within the Church itself, than that the charge of its being upheld by falsehood should be hurled against it, with more damaging force, by hostile hands. Under these circumstances, the author hopes he may be pardoned for the part he now takes in contradicting what has been described to him, by perhaps the highest living authority, as "the most impudent falsehood in all history."

DONOGHPATRICK, NAVAN,  
July, 1866.

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