

# **A TREATISE OF IRELAND**

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A Treatise of Ireland by Richard Butler John Dymmok

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**RICHARD BUTLER JOHN DYMMOK**

**A TREATISE  
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BY

JOHN DYMMOK.

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TO THE MOSTE HONORABLE KNIGHT

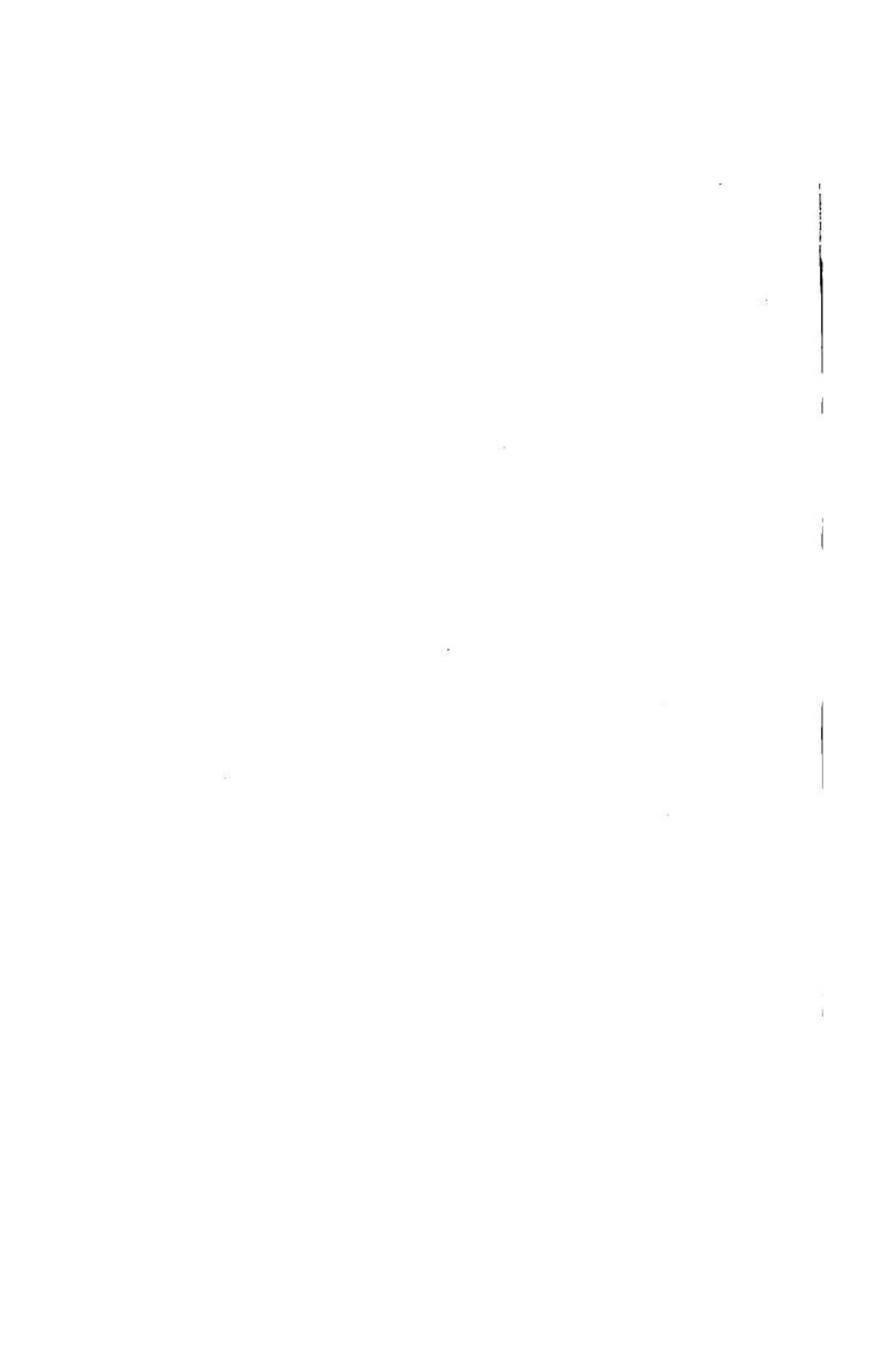
SIR EDMUNDE CARYE.

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*SIR,*

I PRESENT vnto you in the sincearnes of affection these rude leaves in their fullnes of imperfection, affirminge withall that as I have deformed them (beinge abortiue brought forth in an other shape) so doe I likewise reteine the power to transforme my selfe into any lykeness that you shall deuise wherin I may doe you seruice, at which I reste

Moste affectioned  
and deuoted  
JOHN DYMMOK.







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## TREATICE OF IRELAND.

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THE realme of Irelande conteineth, from the south forelande to the northe pointe called Thorsach, about 300 myles, and in breadthe, from Dublin to Saint Patriks mounte and the sea beating alongst Connaught, 140 miles Irish, which are somewhat larger then our Engleshe myles.

The cuntry lyeth very low, and therefore watrish, and full of marishes, boggs, and standing pooles, even in the highest mowntaynes, which causeth the inhabitants, but specially the sojorners there, to be very subiect to rhowmes, catarrs, and fixes, for remedy whereof they drinke great quantity of hott wyne, especially sackes, and a kinde of aqua vitæ, more drynge, and lesse inflamynge, then that which is made in Englande.

The ayre is thicke, and nothinge soe piercyng as here in Englande.

The soile is generally fertill, but litle and badly manured, by reason of the great exactions of the lordes vpon their tenants. For the tenant dothe not holde his lands by any assurance for tearme of yeares, or lyfe, but only *ad voluntatem domini*, so that he never buildeth, reparcth or enclosethe the grownde; but whensoever the lord listeth, is turned out, or departeth at his most advantage, which, besides the great want of graine to suffice that cuntrye, breadeth also a generall weakenes, for want of inhabiting and plantynge the people in places certain, beinge of themselves geven to a wanderinge and idle lyfe.

The cuntry yeeldeth great store of beeffes and porkes, excellent horses of a fine feature and wonderfull swyftnes, and are thought to be a kinde of the race of the Spanish Genetts.

There

There ar many and those very good hawkes, but yt aboundeth cheefly in fysh and fowle, some store of sheepe, but small, and those bearinge a longe course fleze, whereof the rugges are made. Great plenty of woode, except in Leinster, where for the great inconveniences finding them to be ready harboures for the Irish rebell, they have beene cutt downe.

There are also many mynes, especially iron and lead, and some copper, but of what riches and goodnes I finde not.

The cheeffe thinge wantinge in that cuntrye is cyvillitye, and dutyfull obedience of the people to their soveraigne, which groweth partly through a desyre in the principall kindreds and septes to shake of all forreine obedience, and to governe accordinge to their owne lawes, which is their owne willes, partly through the inclination of the common sorte to wildenes, being ledd by the superiours vpon whose willes they must of force depend; but generally for lacke of execution of such good lawes as tende to the preservation of the Englishrye, in restreyninge them from marrynge, fosteringe, and allyinge with the Irish, and takinge of coynye and livery, which hath beene, and yet is, the only cause of weakninge the English pale, and of so many degenerate English at this present.

The people are of nature very glorious, francke, irefull, good horsemen, able to endure great paynes, delighted in warr, great hospitallitye, of religion for the most parte Papists, great gluttons, and of a sensuall and vitious lyfe, deepe dissemblers, secret in displeasure, of a crewell revenginge minde, and irreconciliable. Of witt they are quicke and capable, kinde harted where they take, and of exceedinge love towards their foster bretheren.

Of complexion they are cleare, and wellfavored, both men and weomen, tall and corpulent bodies, and of hemselves careles and bestiall.

Theire principallitie or inheritance descendeth not to them by succession, but they attein therevnto by election, makinge choice of one out of the principall familyes or septes, amongst whome he that hath shewed himselfe most valiant in all barbarous creweltie, shall sonest be preferred, first to be Thamist, which is lieuutenant generall, and next in succession, and is followed of the captaynes and forces of the cuntry. And this custome remayneth yet to this daye amonge the Irish, where no man is lorde of his owne any longer then he can defend yt against others.

The Government of the Irish is neither pollicicke nor cyvill, but meare tyrannicall, as may appeare by their auncient lawes, as Brehon law, Coyny, Lyuery, &c.

&c. which had course there before the conquest. For the prince or lorde vse at their pleasure their tenantes, spend vpon them with their traynes, rule after their owne lustes, commaunding all, and not to be gaynesaide by any; so that the mightiest oppresse the poorest, and justice is ministred accordinge to the affection they beare to the parties offendinge or offended.

The inhabitantes generally are of fowre sortes. English Irish, meer Irish, degenerate English, and wilde Scotts.

The meer Irish, degenerate English, and Scott are growen into one faction, by reason of the devison of the English race, contynewinge till within these few yeares: by which meanes the Irishrye grew to such strength, that the English, for their owne defence, were gladd to ally themselves with the Irish of contrary factions, to make them to be followed after the Irish order, and so became wholly Irish, or at the least scant good English.

Their forces consist of thre sortes, Horsemen, Galloglass, and Kerne.

The horsemen are armed with headpeeces, shirtes of mayle or jackes, a sworde, a skayne, and a speare. They ryde vpon paddes, or pillowes without styrvps, and in this differ from ours; that in joyninge with the enemy, they beare not their staves or launces vnder arme, and so put it to the reste, but takinge yt by the middle, beare yt aboue arme, and soe encounter.

Every Horsman hath two or thre horses, and to euery horse a knave: his horse of service is allwaies led spare, and his knave, which caryeth his barnes and speare, rydeth vpon the other, or els vpon a hackeney.

The Galloglass ar pycked and scolected men of great and mightie bodies, crewell without compassion. The greatest force of the battell consisteth in them, choosinge rather to dye then to yeelde, so that when yt cometh to handy blowes they are quickly slayne or win the feilde. They are armed with a shert of maile, a skull, and a skeine: the weapon they most vse is a batle axe, or halberd, six foote long, the blade whereof is somewhat like a shomakers knyfe, and without pyke; the stroake whereof is deadly where yt lighteth. And beinge thus armed, reckoninge to him a man for his harness bearer, and a boye to carry his provision, he is named a spare of his weapon so called, 80 of which spares make a battell of Galloglass.

The kerne is a kinde of footeman, sleightly armed with a sworde, a targett of woode, or a bow and sheafe of arrows with barbed heades, or els 3 dartes, which they cast with a wonderfull facillity and nearnes, a weapon more noysom to the enemy,