

**UNDER THE
ENGLISH CROWN**

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Under the English crown by Firmin Roz

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BY

FIRMIN ROZ
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PREFACE

THE prevailing custom of calling the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland simply *England* shows clearly enough which is considered the dominating element in the Union. Under the English Crown the formerly independent nations of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have now been formed into a single complex monarchy, the predominance of Celtic blood in the three last producing political forms bound by their very nature sooner or later to be superseded.

Happily the spirit of a nation will survive its independence, and after long and painful struggles will stamp its own individuality upon all customs, laws, and institutions. Each of the above-mentioned countries has ceased to be a state—all three have continued to remain nations. The first thing a traveller is conscious of in any one of them is the national spirit, such as soil, climate, and the vicissitudes of its destiny have

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made it. The very landscapes—so closely associated always with a country's history—seem to whisper of it, while behind the life of to-day one is always conscious of its presence, invisible but undeniable. It has the charm indeed of some mysterious and veiled figure, which lures us through the desire to penetrate its secret.

I have visited in this fashion the fascinating wildness of Scotland, peacefully united to England through the accession of James VI. to Elizabeth's throne,—then Wales, last refuge of the ancient Britons, where as behind a fortress they made their final stand before defeat, and where they now remain, hidden and as if half asleep, awaiting the moment when, loyal subjects still, they will be granted an independent legislative existence,—and finally Ireland, oppressed and rebellious Ireland, true "Ireland of Sorrow," whose long and tragic confusions promise at last to solve themselves without further catastrophe, the last act of the drama ringing down upon the dawn of a new and happier era.

Nowhere is it more interesting than in Ireland to see how the present has issued from the past. The two, in fact, are so closely united that it is

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often difficult to separate one from the other. But when the mind grows dubious, the curious harmony which exists between the country, the ruins, and the people helps one to reach, across the poetry of its past destiny, to the very essence of its national life. For it is, after all, life, with all its conditions, exigences, changes, and political and economical complexities, that a country lays bare. And the true traveller suddenly realises that he should know everything and understand everything, and along with much special knowledge possess the artist's, the historian's, and the psychologist's temperament.

I need hardly say how far I have fallen short of this ambition. In my impressions of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland I have merely tried to penetrate sufficiently far into the interior of things as to realise in some degree their unity. If in so doing I have mingled history and impressions of travel, sight-seeing and reflections upon that sight-seeing, psychology and a sense of the picturesque, it is because in the little I was able to convey of each I had only even then just enough material for the composition of this small volume.

F. R.



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