

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF AODH O'NEILL,  
PRINCE OF ULSTER: CALLED BY THE  
ENGLISH, HUGH, EARL OF TYRONE, WITH  
SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS PREDECESSORS,  
CON, SHANE, AND TIRLOUGH**

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The Life and Times of Aodh O'Neill, Prince of Ulster: Called by the English, Hugh, Earl of Tyrone, with Some Account of His Predecessors, Con, Shane, and Tirlough by John Mitchel

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**JOHN MITCHEL**

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BY JOHN MITCHEL.

"Cu mair cronie do cloin. Beir."  
"Come let us make a chronicle for the O'Neills."

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1879.

TO THE MEMORY

OF

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THOMAS DAVIS,

WITH DEEP REVERENCE

I INSCRIBE

THIS BOOK.

JOHN MITCHELL

*Cambridge, Sept. 22, 1845.*

*\* Recd. W. Smith, 3 May 1916.*

## PREFACE

### TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

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TWENTY-THREE years have gone by since the writer composed this small volume. It was undertaken at the suggestion of Thomas Davis for the series called "Library of Ireland," and has had quite as much popularity as it deserved.

Since the time of its publication, a very large mass of historic material, then inaccessible to the writer, has been for the first time brought to light, specially illustrative of the very period of our annals wherein O'Neill and O'Donnell flourished; so that now, to do justice to the subject, the "Life of Hugh O'Neill" ought to be rewritten, and at far greater length than could be attempted in a slight popular sketch like the present. Not having leisure to undertake this agreeable task, which would otherwise please me well, I am obliged to let it go with all its imperfections on its head.

But to many readers it may be desirable and useful that some slight account should be given of the actual materials which have now, by the zealous labours of many eminent scholars, become available for the due understanding of that deeply interesting era which saw the "Reformation," the great struggle between Irish clanship and English feudalism, and the beginning of the religious wars in our island. First in importance is the great work of John O'Donovan—his edition of the *Annals of the Four Masters*, with copious and learned notes, topographical, historical, exegetical. It is true that the portion of those annals relating to the period embraced in this work was substantially accessible to me in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, in the shape of the "M. S. Life of O'Donnell," often cited in the following pages. This Life of Hugh Roe O'Donnell had been written by one of the venerable Four Masters themselves, Franciscans of Donegal Abbey, who indeed were not only Annalists of the Island, but especially historiographers to the great house of O'Donnell; and it had afterwards been incorporated almost entirely in the "Annals." This old M. S. however, was but poor compensation for the want of that magnificent repertory of Irish historic lore, which can now be read



(amply annotated) by every body, in the volumes of Doctor O'Donovan, and without the study of which no writer should undertake a piece of Irish history.

Another indispensable Irish authority for the period in question is the *Historia Catholica* of Don Phillip O'Sullivan (Beare). A copy of the old Latin edition of this book existed in the library of Trinity College, where I could consult it any length; but since then the work of O'Sullivan also, (which had become very rare) has been handsomely reproduced in Ireland. These two, besides the History of the Abbe Mac-Geoghegan (in French), which though not contemporary, is an authority for that time, were the only strictly *Irish* sources from whence I could draw.

Of authorities upon the English side, there was abundance. The most useful of these is Camden,—“History of Queen Elizabeth,”—who has narrated at great length from his own point of view, and not with very gross unfairness, the whole of the transactions in Ireland during the life of Hugh O'Neill. Two exceedingly valuable books are Edmund Spencer's “View of the State of Ireland,” and Sir John Davies' “Historical Tracts.” Each of these books, though composed with the most virulent hatred and in-

solence towards the Irish nation, yet casts a flood of light upon the social condition of the people, and the policy of the British Government about the time of that sad revolution which transformed chieftain and clansman into landlord and tenant. The most singular English authority, however, is the *Pacata Hibernia*, written by Sir George Carew, but ostensibly by Stafford, his secretary. This work is valuable not only for its documents and maps, but also for the very open and shameless avowal of the system of treachery, fraud, and assassination set on foot by the writer himself, and by which he was enabled to break up the confederacy of the Munster lords.

The work of Fynes Moryson must not be omitted, as his narrative covers almost the whole of O'Neill's wars: but he, though a contemporary writer, residing in Ireland, and witness of many of the transactions he undertakes to narrate, is extremely untrustworthy, and needs corroboration often, oftener contradiction. These books, with occasional reference to Cartes' Life of Ormond, Captain Lee's "Memorial," and Bishop Mant's History of the Irish Church, constituted the rather imperfect stock of authorities on which I was bold enough to venture upon the narrative of the Life of the last

of the Princes of Tyrone. Those who may hereafter undertake to give a fuller and better account of Hugh O'Neill and his desperate struggle against English "civilization," will have a much more extensive course of reading to go through.

Besides the mighty tomes of O'Donovan's *Four Masters*, there are numerous family histories lately published, containing innumerable documents and letters, which, though not perhaps worth reading for their own sake, yet often give a vivid glimpse into the interior of some Franco-Hibernian Castle or Scotie chieftain's stronghold, shewing us the inmates as they lived and moved in those wild times. One of the most voluminous of these is "*The Life and Letters of Florence MacCarthy Mor*"—who was O'Neill's slippery lieutenant in Munster. This is an octavo volume of over 500 pages; written of course by one of the Clan-Caura, and certainly giving all the details concerning that able but treacherous chief, which the world will ever wish to know. Of other family histories may be named: "*The Earls of Kildare*," *History of the O'Briens of Thomond*, by O'Donoghue; A "*Selection from the Family Archives of the MacGillicuddy of the Reeks*," by Maziere Brady, Vicar of Donoghpatrick, &c.