

IRELAND AND THE EMPIRE

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PRESENT IRISH QUESTIONS

BY

W. O'CONNOR MORRIS

Author of "The Campaign of 1815," etc.

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IRELAND AND THE EMPIRE

A REVIEW

1800—1900

BY

T. W. RUSSELL, M.P.

FOR SOUTH TYRONE

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INTRODUCTION

THIS volume, written amid absorbing public duties, is not intended for the student. It is written for that large class of busy men and women who have neither the time nor the facilities for close historical research, but who, nevertheless, have a keen interest in, and a real desire to attain to, the truth in regard to Irish affairs. For some years it has been the fashion to decry Ireland and Irish questions. After passing through a high fever which for many years consumed the energies of England and Ireland alike, the usual exhaustion has followed. As George Macdonald has somewhere finely said, "birds cannot always sing," and it was not to be expected that after the failure of Mr. Gladstone's great effort to solve the problem, Irish affairs should continue to occupy and to hold the public mind. It must also be admitted that by a squalid controversy around the name of Mr. Parnell, Irishmen themselves contributed in no slight degree to the effacement of the Irish question. But the temperature of the patient is once more normal. The fever has burned itself out. Men of all sections of the Nationalist party have agreed to forget their differences; and a solid body of over eighty Irish members, with a mission, once more occupy the Irish benches at Westminster. Their mission in that great assembly is apparent and admitted. Mr. John Redmond, the capable and accomplished leader of the party, has made everything quite plain. The Irish members, according to Mr. Redmond, represent "a foreign element" in the House of Commons. Their presence must cause inflammation in the body politic, and general derangement in the work of the Institution. And it is intended that this should be the result. Practically the Irishmen say to England—"You destroyed our Parliament in