

SECRET SERVICE UNDER PITT

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BY

W. J. FITZPATRICK, F.S.A.

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'LIFE OF LORD CLONCURRY'

'CORRESPONDENCE AND MEMOIRS OF DANIEL O'CONNELL'

'IRELAND BEFORE THE UNION' ETC.

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PREFACE

THESE notes—begun long ago and continued at slow intervals—were put aside during the onerous task of editing for Mr. Murray the O'Connell Correspondence. The recent publication of Mr. Lecky's final volumes, awakening by their grasp a fixed interest in pre-Union times, and confirming much that by circumstantial evidence I had sought to establish, affords a reason, perhaps, that my later researches ought not to be wholly lost. Mr. Lecky's kindness in frequently quoting me¹ merits grateful acknowledgment, not less than his recognition of some things that I brought to light as explanatory of points to which the State Papers afford no clue. This and other circumstances encourage me in offering more.

My sole purpose at the outset was to expose a well-cloaked case of long-continued betrayal by one of whom Mr. Froude confesses that all efforts to identify him had failed;² but afterwards it seemed desirable to disclose to the reader a wider knowledge of an exciting time. In various instances a veil will be found lifted, or a visor unlocked, revealing features which may prove a surprise. Nor is the story without a moral. The organisers of illegal societies will see that, in spite of the apparent secrecy and ingenuity of their system, informers sit with them at the same council-board and dinner-table, ready at any moment to sell their blood; and that the wider the ramifications of conspiracy, the greater becomes the certainty of detection.

I felt that it was better to lay before the reader my facts

¹ Vide *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vii. 211; viii. 42-44, 45, 191, 240, etc.

² See Froude's *English in Ireland*, vol. iii. sec. vi.