



Illustrations of Irish History and Topography, Mainly of the Seventeenth Century (Classic Reprint)

C. Litton Falkiner

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Excerpt from Illustrations of Irish History and Topography, Mainly of the Seventeenth Century

For the same reason the chapters 'Touching Religion' in the Fourth Part of Fynes Moryson's 'Itinerary' have been discarded. It is of course impossible that the impressions of seventeenth-century writers should fail to be coloured by the contentions of the time. Most if not all of these accounts reveal the prejudices of the writers. But of those which I have selected it can at least be said that the descriptive element predominates in all of them, and that the controversial motive is not the most conspicuous.

The systematic study of the social and topographical side of modern Irish history has not hitherto found many illustrators. And the materials for such a study are, with few exceptions, difficult of access to all but students, and little known to any but specialists in a department of inquiry in which specialists are few. For, though the importance of the local and antiquarian side of Irish history has been insisted on by more than one writer, not much has been done to exhibit the topography, the archæology, or the social development of the country in their proper relation to the general history of Ireland. To say this is not to ignore the value of the admirable work in both spheres which has enriched the publications of the various archæological and antiquarian societies. As the references throughout this volume will suffice to show, the Journals both of the Kilkenny and the Ulster Archæological Societies, to name only the two oldest of the provincial associations, abound in materials of real value and interest concerning the social state of Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But, with the exception of the admirable chapter on Elizabethan Ireland with which Mr. Bagwell concludes his 'Ireland under the Tudors,' not much has been done to utilise this information for historical as distinguished from strictly antiquarian purposes.

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