



A View of the Present State of Ireland

Edmund Spenser



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Eudoxus:BUT if that country of Ireland whence you lately came, be so goodly and commodious a soyle as you report, I wounder that no course is taken for the tourning therof to good uses, and reducing that salvage nation to better goverment and civillity. Irenius: Mary, so ther have bin divers good plotts devised, and wise counsells cast alredy about reformation of that realme, but they say it is the fatall destiny of that land, that no purposes, whatsoever are meant for her good, wil prosper and take good effect: which, whether it proceede from the very genius of the soyle, or influence of the starrs, or that Almighty god hath not yet appoynted the time of her reformacion, or that he reserveth her in this unquiet state still, for some secret scourge, which shall by her come unto England, it is hard to be knowne, but yet much to be feared. Eudox: Surely I suppose this but a vaine conceipt of simple men, which judge things by ther effects, and not by ther causes; for I would rather think the cause of this evel, which hangeth upon that country, to proceede rather upon the unsoundnesse of the counsell, and plotts, which you say have bin oftentimes layd for her reformacon, or of fayntnesse in following and effecting the same, then of any such fatall course or appoyntment of god, as you misdeme; but it is the manner of men, that when they are fallen into any absurdity, or theyre actions succeede not as they would, they are ready alwayes to impute the blame therof unto the heavens, so to excuse ther own folly and imperfections: so have I also heard it often wished, (even of some whos great wisedome in [my] opinion should seme to judg more soundly of so weighty a consideracon) that all that land weare a sea-poole; which kind of speach, is the manner rather of desperate men far driven, to wish the utter ruine of that which they cannot redresse, then of grave counsellors, which ought to thinck nothing so hard, but that through wisdome it may be maistered and subdued; since the poet sayth, that the wiseman shall rule even over the starrs, much more over the earth: for were it not the part of a desperate physition to wish his diseased patient dead, rather then to imploy the best indevours of his skill for his recovery: but since we are so far entred, let us I pray you, devise of those evills, by which that country is held in this wretched case, that it cannot, as you say, be recured. And if it be not painfull to you, to tell us what things during your late continuance ther, you observed, to be most offensive, and impeachfull unto the good rule and government therof. Iren: Surely, Eudox., the evills which you desire to be recounted are very many, and almost countable with those which were hidden in the basket of Pandora: but since you so please, I will out of that infinit number, reckone but some that are most capitall, and commonly occurrent both in the life and condicions of private men, and also in the manage of publique affaires and pollicie

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