

GENERAL EDWARD ROCHE'S PROCLAMATION TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

From *The History of the Insurrection in the County of Wexford*
by Edward Hay, 1842.

TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

Countrymen and fellow-soldiers! Your patriotic exertions in the cause of your country have hitherto exceeded our most sanguine expectations, and in a short time must ultimately be crowned with success. Liberty has raised her drooping head; thousands daily flock to her standard; the voice of her children everywhere prevails. Let us then, in the moment of triumph, return thanks to the Almighty Ruler of the universe, that a total stop has been put to those sanguinary measures which of late were but too often restored to by the creatures of government, to keep the people in slavery.

Nothing now, my countrymen, appears necessary to secure the conquests you have already won, but an implicit obedience to the commands of your chiefs; for through a want of proper subordination and discipline, all may be endangered.

At this eventful period, all Europe must admire, and posterity will read with astonishment, the heroic acts achieved by people strangers to military tactics, and having few professional commanders – but what power can resist men fighting for liberty!

In the moment of triumph, my countrymen, let not your victories be tarnished with any wanton act of cruelty; many of those unfortunate men now in prison were not your enemies from principle; most of them, compelled by necessity, were obliged to oppose you; neither let a difference in religious sentiments cause a difference among the people. Recur to the debates in the Irish house of lords on the 19th of February last; you will there see a patriotic and enlightened Protestant bishop, (Down) and many of the lay lords, with manly eloquence pleading for Catholic emancipation and parliamentary

reform, in opposition to the haughty arguments of the lord chancellor, and the powerful opposition of his fellow-courtiers.

To promote a union of brotherhood and affection among our countrymen of all religious persuasions, has been our principal object; we have sworn in the most solemn manner – have associated for this laudable purpose, and no power on earth shall shake our resolution.

To my Protestant soldiers I feel much indebted for their gallant behaviour in the field, where they exhibited signal proofs of bravery in the cause.

EDWARD ROCHE.

Wexford, June 7, 1798.