

## MEMOIR OF THE LATE ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM.

(From the Dublin Freeman.)

His Grace was born on Sunday, 6th March, 1791, at Tubber (or Tobar) na-Vian, on the eastern side of the Hill of Nephin, in the county of Mayo. He was the fifth child of his parents, Patrick MacHale and Mary Mulhern. His birthplace is situated in the barony of Tyrrawley, and in the diocese of Killala. It is a somewhat wild, but not uninteresting district, and there are spots of much natural beauty and grandeur not a long way off. Writing of the spot long, long years after, when his pastoral duties brought him once again to the lovely place of his nativity, his Grace thus described it:—"Tobar-na-Vian has, like other ancient names, employed and divided skilful etymologists and antiquarians. Some have derived the name from the excellent quality of its waters, not inferior to the juice of the grape, whilst others, with more strict regard to the first rules of etymology, as well as the truth of history, have traced it to the old legends of the Fenian heroes. Its situation, as well as the tales connected with the scenery by which it is surrounded, gives additional force to this etymology. It is situated at the base of Nephin, the second of all the mountains of Connaught in elevation, and inferior to but few in Ireland. The south view is bounded by a portion of the Ox Mountains, stretching from the Atlantic in the form of an amphitheatre. Round the base of this circuitous range of hills is seen, as if to sleep, the peaceful surface of the beautiful lake of Lavalla, bordering on the woods of Massbrook. Directly to the east the large lake of Con stretches from the Pontoon to the north-west, a lofty hill intercepting the views of its surface, and again revealing to the eye, on the north side of the hill, another portion of the same sheet of waters. Beyond the extremity of the lake you can contemplate some of the most cultivated and picturesque portions of Tyrrawley stretching along in the distance as far as the Hill of Lacken, of which the view is animated by a fanciful tower of modern construction."

He was seven years old when the French landed in Killala Bay, under General Humbert, in their expedition from Rochelle, and began their march of invasion upon Ballina. Having captured Ballina, the French troops, to the number of over a thousand, pushed onwards towards Castlebar, and his Grace has often told how that he remembers gazing upon them with wonder, as they marched on their way to their town through Crosmolina, past his father's cottage door. The priest of his father's parish, with true Irish hospitality, gave a generous welcome to a couple of French officers who asked at his house for refreshment, and for this the kind-hearted sogarth was subsequently hanged in Castlebar, by order of Lord John Browne! It is not hard to imagine the character of the impression which such an atrocity would make upon the mind of the thoughtful and observant son of Patrick MacHale.

We need not remind our readers that at this time the inhuman—the sanguinary—penal code was still in partial though considerably relaxed vigour in Ireland, and that though "to educate" was not then a felony punishable by death or transportation to the Catholic teacher and the Catholic taught, yet the Catholic schoolmaster was still tracked with suspicion, jealousy, and dread. It was, therefore, only by stealth that the merest rudiments of knowledge could be acquired at home—under the shadow of a hedge, or in the most hidden nook of a cabin—with watchful eyes peering eagerly round, and sharp ears listening for the coming of a dreaded informer or official. And thus it was that John MacHale began his education, glad to get it in any way he could, and, child as he was, not unwilling to run a heavy risk for the sake of getting it. He continued a hedge schoolboy till his thirteenth year, when he was sent to learn classics in Castlebar, under the kindly and clever tuition of a classical teacher named Stanton, whose fame was wide-spread through all the kingdom of Connaught. He remained with Mr. Stanton till he was sixteen years of age, easily distancing all his school-fellows, and laying the foundation of that varied and intimate acquaintanceship with, and fondness for, classical literature that have only grown all the stronger with the progress of his life.

In the year 1807, being then in his sixteenth year, he entered Maynooth College as an ecclesiastical student. His course was an exceptionally brilliant one. He took the highest honours in his classes, and at the close of his collegiate career he was chosen to one of the prize places of the Dunboyne establishment. Whilst pursuing the advanced studies prescribed for that establishment, Dr. de la Hogue, a distinguished priest, who had to fly from his country during the brutalities of the Revolution, and had been appointed Professor of Dogmatic Theology in Maynooth, became seriously ill and unable to discharge his professorial duties. The young Dunboyne student was at once selected to be his deputy, and filled the chair with consummate ability and satisfaction. Dr. de la Hogue's illness proving fatal, the chair of dogmatical theology was declared to be vacant and the youthful deputy was unanimously chosen by the board of trustees to succeed to the position. Previously to this, in the year 1814, being then in his 23rd year, he had been called to the priesthood, and in June of that year, he received ordination from the hands of the Most Rev. Dr. Murray, who was then Coadjutor-Archbishop of Dublin, and Bishop of Hierapolis,—*in partibus infidelium*.

He acted as "lecturer" for Dr. de la Hogue for six years, and was professor for five. These eleven years were stirring times in the politico-ecclesiastical history of Ireland. They were the days of the Kildare-street Society Schools, of Archbishop Magee, of rampant Biblical agencies, of offensive intolerance of everything Catholic, of wilful misrepresentation of Catholic teachings, of unblushing perversions of Catholic morality, and, more than all, they were the days of the glorious struggle for Catholic Emancipation. They were the days of "J. K. L." and of O'Connell, and in saying this we say enough to indicate what manner of days they must have been. The spirit of the times made its way inside the gates of peaceful, tranquil Maynooth, and the Professor of Dogmatic Theology yielded himself a ready captive to its mighty influence.

One morning there came from out the College walls a letter that had about it a ring as of the truest metal. It bore the name of "Hierophilos" and was a brief but trenchant vindication of Catholicity against a scurrilous article that had been written about it in a Dublin Journal that has long since vanished from life and memory. Another letter followed, and yet another, and so on, until the "Hierophilos" became a familiar name in every Catholic household, and his letters were looked for day after day till the publication of a fresh one with eager expectancy. They were replied to in various periodicals of the time, but "Hierophilos" was more than a match for every antagonist, and came with increased renown out of every encounter. Peruse them now, after the lapse of more than half a century, and they will be found to have lost nothing of their wonderful fascination. Clear, eloquent, argumentative overflowing with theological and historical information—caustic when occasion required, incisive, bold, and outspoken—they will bear to be read and re-read a dozen times over and the oftener they are read the more highly they will be prized. As might naturally be expected, they created many enemies for their writer, and his name soon got noised abroad. They were openly attributed to Professor MacHale, of Maynooth, and Professor MacHale, of Maynooth, was not afraid or ashamed to plead guilty to the soft impeachment. It was endeavoured to use his avowal of the authorship of the letters as a means of doing an injury to his high reputation, on the ground that the statutes of the College forbade any official of the establishment to print or publish any document without having first submitted it to the President of the College, and obtained his permission to do so; and that, therefore, unless he had obtained such leave (which, it was surmised, he had not asked for), he had been guilty of a gross insubordination. More than once the charge was levelled against him, but it was not till some years afterwards, when he was summoned to give evidence before the Royal Commission on Education, in 1825, and was rather insolently questioned as to the violation of the College statutes, that Dr. MacHale condescended to notice the accusation, and finally disposed of it in the memorable explanation and vindication of his conduct delivered to the Commissioners.

It was instinctively felt throughout the Irish Church, that such a man as "Hierophilos" was destined for a more prominent place in the polemics and politics of the time than could be filled by him in his comparative retirement in Maynooth. Accordingly, when, early in 1825, the failing health of the Right Rev. Dr. Waldron, the Bishop of Killala, rendered it necessary that a coadjutor should be appointed to him, every finger pointed to "Hierophilos" as the person most fitted and most worthy to receive the great but responsible charge. And so, in that year Professor MacHale was brought forth from Maynooth, and under the title of Bishop of Maronia, was consecrated to the coadjutorship (with the right of succession) of the See of St. Murtagh. The date of the consecration was the 5th June.

Fresh energy and fresh zeal seem to have accompanied the new responsibility. "John, Bishop of Maronia," became even more famous than "Hierophilos" of Maynooth, and the Catholics of Ireland were rejoiced that one so qualified to sit amongst the venerable body had been added to the splendid roll of the prelates of their Church. His pen was a powerful adjunct to the labours of O'Connell in the work of the Catholic Association, and an affectionate friendship sprang up between them which held on fast and without a break through many long years, till the death of the Irish Tribune at Genoa in '47, dissolved it with its merciless blow.

In the autumn of 1831 his Lordship set out for Rome to pay his homage to the Sovereign Pontiff and to take that temporary rest from almost incessant labour which he had so well and so laboriously earned. But even then he was not idle. He wrote his impressions of the journey at every step he took, and he has given us in a series of letters written during his trip, a beautifully graphic narrative of his travels which cannot be read but with delight and which to those who may be travelling the way will more than serve the purpose of a most interesting and instructive guide-book.

But with the strong love of Fatherland that began with his birth and has never known change from that moment to the present, his native land was always the thought, which, next to that of religion, was uppermost in his mind. And hence, wherever he is—whether amidst the bright and bursting vineyards of France and the Rhine, climbing the rocky passes of Switzerland, or treading the hallowed dust of Rome, we find that Ireland is always closest to his heart. In the well-known language of a countryman who was not unfamiliar with most of the ground over which he was going, Dr. MacHale might have written of his dear native land:—

Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,  
My heart, untravelled, fondly turns to thee.

In 1834 the Bishop of Killala was appointed to the See of Tuam, and thenceforward we have the series of memorable and historical letters that have won such renown for the name of "John, Archbishop of Tuam." In a necessarily brief sketch it would be simply impossible that we could deal with anything approaching to reasonable accuracy, fulness, or justice with the momentous questions treated of in them or with the part taken by the Archbishop in the discussion of them. The utmost we can do is barely to indicate them. There were the questions of the Irish Poor Law, of National Education (against which from the first he took a decided, unflinching, and uncompromising part, and about which there were many bitter and painful controversies), the awful Famine of '47, the Endowment of Maynooth the Godless Colleges, the Charitable Bequests Act, the Repeal Movement, the differences and divisions in the National party subsequently to the death of the Liberator, the Tenant-right agitation, the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and many other subjects of pressing importance at the time, but about which the national mind has not given itself much concern since then. In all these discussions the Archbishop of Tuam was always a prominent figure—next in importance to O'Connell himself whilst he lived, and second to none after the Liberator's death. During the monster Appeal meetings of '47 the name of John of Tuam was often on O'Connell's lips and it was at one of these marvellous demonstrations that he gave him his honoured, and now