

A LIFE

OF THE

RT. REV. EDWARD MAGINN,

COADJUTOR BISHOP OF DERRY,

WITH

Selections from His Correspondence.

BY

THOMAS D'ARCY M'GEE,

AUTHOR OF

"A HISTORY OF THE ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH THE REFORMATION IN IRELAND;"
DISCOURSES ON "THE CATHOLIC HISTORY OF NORTH AMERICA;"
"THE IRISH SETTLERS IN AMERICA," ETC., ETC.

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"It is the duty of a Bishop to judge, to interpret, to consecrate, to ordain, to offer, to baptize, and to confirm."—*Form of Consecration of a Bishop according to the Latin Rite.*

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TO

HIS SURVIVING RELATIVES AND FRIENDS,

"AT HOME" AND ABROAD.

I Respectfully Dedicate this Memoir

OF

THE LATE RIGHT REVEREND DR. MAGINN,

COADJUTOR BISHOP OF DERRY.



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1867, by
P. O'BHEA,
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for the Southern District of New York.

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CHAPTER VI

PONTIFICATE OF PIUS IX.—ENGLISH INTRIGUES IN ITALY—LORD MINTO'S MISSION—LORD SHREWSBURY'S VISIT TO ROME—LORD CLARENDON'S PROPOSITION TO ARCHBISHOP MURRAY—THE IRISH BISHOPS OPPOSED TO THE GOVERNMENT SCHEME OF ACADEMICAL EDUCATION, SEND TWO OF THEIR NUMBER TO ROME—THE AGENTS AND INFLUENCES EMPLOYED AGAINST THEM—SUCCESS OF THE MISSION OF DRS. MACHALE AND O'HIGGINS—DR. MAGINN'S PART IN IT—INSURRECTION IN ROME—THE POPE IN EXILE—ELOQUENT PASTORAL OF DR. MAGINN ON THAT EVENT—ITS RECEPTION AT ROME, AND BY THE HOLY FATHER.

WE have now to take a glance at the diplomacy of the Irish Church, as opposed to the Protestant state, and the part our subject was called upon to bear in it.

The accession of Pius IX. to the Pontificate and the first political acts of his reign were received with loud acclamations by the British press and people. One of his first acts was an amnesty to political offenders, granted on the sole condition that they should not "abuse this act of sovereign clemency" by undertaking thereafter anything against the State. This amnesty seems to have been accepted by the majority if not all of those

who availed themselves of it in anything but good faith. They made their very professions of attachment to the Holy Father occasions for marshalling and drilling their demagogic forces. They began by mingling cries of reform with their "vivas," and proceeded to threaten the ministers, the cardinals, and especially the Jesuits. Secret societies, those nurseries of every anti-social vice, undermined the Eternal City, and had their spies and tools about the very person of the Pontiff. Brunetti, Sterbini, and other chiefs of these sons of darkness, were the real rulers of Rome, and merely tolerated Pius IX., until their conspiracy was complete. The rising of Sicily against Neapolitan oppression, the insurrections of the Lombard cities against their Austrian garrisons, the propagandism of Gioberti and Mazzini—causes good, bad, and diabolical—were all at work to throw the peninsula into ferment and confusion.

This state of affairs presented to Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston too tempting a field for intrigue to be left unoccupied. The panegyrics of their press and their parliamentary orators on the Pope as a reformer, were preliminary to their experiments on the Pope as Head of the Church. The embassy at Florence was the cover for the first approaches, and as the dangers of the Papal government began to excite the hopes and fears of friends and enemies, Lord Minto, father-in-law to the British Prime Minister, was sent on a special secret mission,

nominally to all the Italian States, but principally to Rome. The alarm as to this mission was communicated to the Irish Hierarchy by an English Prelate—Dr. Briggs, the venerable Bishop of Beverly. Of all the hierarchy of the imperial island, he was the most constant in his friendship for the sister nation. Towards the close of the year '47, the visits of Lord Minto to Rome became known, and on the 16th of December, Lord Lansdowne, in reply to a question in the House of Lords, indicated very significantly the objects of that mission. "My Lords," he said, "I believe there is no court in Europe in which it would be more useful for the British Government to explain the nature of our transactions, or to induce that court to use its *peculiar sources of influence in certain parts of Her Majesty's dominions*." Immediately on the appearance of this declaration, Dr. Briggs addressed a circular letter to the Bishops of Ireland, proposing that they should join the Prelates of England and Scotland in a memorial to His Holiness, setting forth the true relations and intentions of the civil government to the Church, and preventing false impressions from being produced or *ex parte* suggestions adopted at Rome. At the same time the English Bishops appointed the Rev. Dr. Grant (since Bishop of Southwark) their agent at Rome, while the Rev. Dr. Cullen, the present Archbishop of Dublin, discharged similar duties for the Irish Hierarchy. The joint memorial proposed by Dr.

Briggs, was duly signed and sent, and forwarded to the Pope by Dr. Grant, "through the proper ecclesiastical channel."

The Academical Education Act, as at first proposed, had been condemned at Rome in 1847, and the Hierarchy recommended to undertake, in imitation of Belgium, a Catholic university. The Prelates who opposed it throughout, rested content with their victory, many sinking into apathy towards all public affairs. The fearful famine of that year occupied almost exclusively the attention of the Episcopal Synod, which assembled in October. The Irish government, at the head of which was now placed the astute Lord Clarendon, seemed to suffer the public discussion to drop, but the college buildings at Belfast, at Cork and at Galway, gradually went up. It was apparent that, though baffled, the ministers did not consider themselves beaten, and looked forward to a renewal of their struggle with the Bishops. Lord Minto's mission naturally awakened anew the anxieties of the latter, especially when it was found that Lord Shrewsbury, a supposed favorer of the college scheme, and a person of the greatest influence at Rome, appeared simultaneously in the Eternal City. This conjunction of influences produced one effect; a letter from Cardinal Fransoni to the Irish Bishops recommending moderation and unity—thus apparently censuring their previous line of conduct. Dr. Crolly, Dr. Murray, and their friends chose to interpret

this "admonitory document" into an approbation of their views, and their interpretation was ostentatiously paraded in the government organs, the *World* and *Evening Post*.

A new combination of hopes and influences was now suddenly brought about by the French revolution of February, 1848. The sudden inflation of Young Ireland, and the threatening aspect of English and foreign affairs, obliged the viceregal administration to make fresh concessions and advances to the Hierarchy. On the 19th of March, 1848, Lord Clarendon addressed to the Archbishop of Dublin the following extraordinary letter, a copy of which found its way into the press, and created the liveliest sensation throughout the kingdom.

COPY OF THE LETTER OF LORD CLARENDON.

(Private.)

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin

My dear Lord,—Your Grace had the goodness to promise me that you would convey to Rome for the consideration of the Pope, the Amended Statutes of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland, as the British Government has no official organ of communication with the Holy See.

I was happy of having the opportunity to consult your Grace before any alteration was made, because, as a Catholic Prelate, you well knew what guarantees and provisions were requisite for ensuring religious instruction to the Catholic youths who might frequent those colleges, and I was anxious that such securities should be given with the most entire good faith, and in a manner perfectly satisfactory to the Irish Prelates, who, like yourself desired to see the true interests of morality and the Catholic religion promoted by these new Institutions.

I regret very much the delay that has taken place in the revision

of the statutes ; but I need hardly tell you that the attention of the Government was last year wholly devoted to alleviating the calamity with which it was the will of Providence that this country should be visited ; moreover, this delay was of no importance, as the colleges will not be ready for occupation before the end of the year 1849.

The whole of the statutes are at your disposal now or at any future period, that your Grace or any other Bishop may wish to see them ; but as they are very voluminous, and relate entirely to the course of instruction and the duties of the different officers of the colleges, I propose at present only to trouble you with the religious portion of them.

Accordingly I herewith send all that part of the statutes which affect, as to religious points, both professors and students, as well as an extract from the Report of the Board with reference to religious instruction.

The list of visitors is not yet settled, but I can have no hesitation in saying that it will include the Catholic Archbishop of the province, and Bishop of the diocese in which the college is situated, and that, moreover, in the council, professorships and other posts of each college, the Catholic religion will always be fully and appropriately represented ; for these colleges are instituted for the education of the middle classes, and the government would fail in its object of training up the youth of Ireland to be good men and loyal subjects, if their religious instruction and moral conduct were not duly provided for and guarded by every precaution that the most anxious solicitude can devise.

As I entertain a profound veneration for the character of the Pope, and implicitly rely upon his upright judgment, it is with pleasure that I now ask your Grace to submit these statutes to the consideration of his Holiness, believing, as I do, that they may be advantageously compared with those of any other similar institution in Europe, and that by exhibiting the care and the good faith with which they have been framed, they will furnish a simple but conclusive answer to those misrepresentations which have been so industriously circulated, and which, if they had been founded in truth, would have justly excited the alarm and called forth the reprobation of His Holiness.

I have the honor to be, with great esteem, my dear lord,
Your Grace's very faithful servant,

CLARENDON.

To His Grace Archbishop Murray, of Dublin.

Several weeks before the appearance of this letter of Lord Clarendon's, and perhaps as an improvement on Dr. Briggs' proposal, Dr. Maginn had circulated among his correspondents the suggestion of a deputation to Rome, and at a meeting of some of the Bishops and Clergy in Dublin, early in February, Dr. O'Higgins had been persuaded to act as one of the deputation. At that time Dr. MacHale positively declined, but after the appearance of Lord Clarendon's letter he consented. Both were anxious to have Dr. Maginn's company, but the poverty of his diocese, and the pressure of its long accumulating cares prevented his acceptance. The two patriot Bishops started after Easter, and on the 12th of April Dr. O'Higgins writes in high spirits, from Marseilles, that they had arrived safely the previous night, were to leave next day for Civita Vecchia, and hoped to be in Rome by the following Sunday afternoon. He pays a high compliment to Mr. Lucas of the Tablet, with whom they had dined in London, on the way, and who is pronounced by Dr. O'Higgins to be "real gold." The abettors of the government among the English and Irish clergy—and truth compels us to confess it—were not less energetic. Among them at that time, one reads with deep regret the illustrious name of Wiseman, whose personal treatment at their hands, a few years later, was but a new illustration of the old maxim, "put not your trust in princes." Acting with Dr. Wiseman, and ap-

parently under him was Dr. Nicholson, Archbishop of Corfu, the British capital of the Ionian Islands, whose annual income was derived from the British treasury The Irish Hierarchy beheld with special indignation the intermeddling of this foreign dignitary in their domestic affairs, and loudly complained of his officiousness to the Roman authorities. The Rev. Dr. Ennis, a highly respectable Parish Priest of the diocese of Dublin, reached Rome early in May, to represent the views and wishes of Dr. Murray and the minority of the Bishops. Thus there were present, knocking at the gates of the Propaganda, representatives of all classes of British and Irish Catholics, as well as of the civil government of the empire, each hanging with breathless suspense on the lips of the Sovereign Pontiff. The college question was the one then uppermost, but it was plainly one of a series; had the civil power succeeded in that, farther encroachments on the independence of the Church would have inevitably followed; hence, the wisdom of those who defended so desperately that first fortress on the line of attack. It is an inspiring and a glorious sight to see the Irish Bishops checkmate and defeat at Rome, to the edification of all Christendom, the wiliest plans of British diplomacy. In the natural order they were the sons of peasants; without any other wealth than the free-will offerings of their flocks; theologically educated indeed, but all untrained in those courtly arts by which even the good cause is

often best served; against them were the Russells, the Temples, the Elliotts, men in whose houses the lessons of diplomacy were taught from earliest youth; men who could speak with all the authority of the greatest modern empire; men who had grown grey and historical in the management of public affairs. And the Judges of this appeal were worthy to decide any cause. The new Pope, the very impersonation of benignity, charity and justice; the profound Lambruschini, the beneficent Gizzi, the venerable Frasoni, the sagacious Antonelli, were among his High Officers of State. Before these illustrious men and their colleagues, the case of the Irish Church against the British Government, of freedom of education against the intellectual despotism of state control, came in a form of appeal demanding decision, in the troubled and momentous year of 1848.

Rome is proverbially slow. The Church, says De Mais-
tre somewhere, being for all time, is never in a hurry—
or some such expression. The various parties to the
appeal were detained in Rome, or came and went, from
April till October. In this interval Dr. Maginn, Dr.
McNally and Dr. Cantwell, seem to have had the man-
agement of "the home department" of the opposition.
Dr. Maginn especially was the "chief secretary" through-
out this business. In the spring and early summer, while
engaged in a visitation of his diocese, during which he
confirmed about 6,000 souls, he found time for letter after

letter, to the authorities and the Irish agents at Rome. In one of his Latin letters to Cardinal Fransoni, he gave with his usual energy, a character of Dr. Nicholson, which was supposed to have some effect in procuring the order for that dignitary to withdraw from Rome to his own diocese. Writing in May, to the Bishop of Clogher, Dr. Maginn expresses great pleasure at the result of that skirmish. "I gave the Cardinal in my last letter," he says, "an account of that gentleman, which may have done some service in the way of having him ordered home to mind his own business." The contest proceeded during six months with various fortunes. A pamphlet printed in the Eternal City, containing some extracts from extreme speeches or writings of the Patriot Bishops—especially the two who were in Rome—was industriously circulated. A sharp correspondence between Dr. MacHale and Lord Shrewsbury, and a formal complaint of Mr. J. R. Corballis, of the Bequests and Education Boards, were also presented to the prejudice of their cause. Against these Dr. Brigg's address and Dr. Maginn's powerful letters, were chiefly relied on. In May, Dr. O'Higgins wrote in sanguine spirits to the Bishop of Clogher; in June the prospect was thought to be gloomy; finally, Dr. O'Higgins wrote on the 14th of September to Dr. Maginn: "we have at length left our final expose in print, with the Pope and the Cardinals." The case will be discussed on the 25th of this month, in

a full congregation, and the opinions of their eminences will be laid before the Pope on the following Sunday."* Accordingly, on the expected day, the Pope issued his rescript to the Irish Prelates, renewing the condemnation of the Queen's colleges, exhorting them to erect a Catholic university, as the Belgians had done at Louvaine, directing that the meetings of the Prelates should be held in due synodical form, and requiring accurate reports of the state of each diocese. On the 10th of November, the Primate communicated the substance of these documents to Bishop Maginn, who seized on the occasion with his usual quickness of perception.

"I wrote him," he reports to Dr. McNally, "in reply to his favor, a rather ingenious letter, in which I congratulated him and the body on the prospect of perfect union of mind and purpose among us for the future. I insinuated the powerful effect it would produce upon the sectaries; the beneficial influence it would have upon religion and country, were his Grace to give his public approval of the decision of the Holy See by his laying in person amid the assembled prelacy and people the foundation stone of our new university. You will, I am sure, be surprised to hear—agreeably surprised to hear—that his Grace has consented, as soon as we can have the plans of our new university arranged, not only to assist at laying but to lay, *in propria persona et propriis manibus*, its foundation stone."

"This," he adds, "I think is a victory enhancing the triumph at Rome, and which will be the occasion of spreading consternation among our enemies."

Although Dr. Maginn did not live to see the actual commencement of that great work of which he had been

* For this and Dr. Maginn's other Roman correspondence, see Appendix.

so early and so judicious an advocate, it is due to his memory to give this extract—though evidently thrown off in a moment of private confidence—as entitling him to be reckoned among the founders of the Catholic University of Ireland.

While these affairs were occupying all minds in Ireland, the position of the Holy Father, who had thus rescued the cause of Catholic education from imminent danger, was becoming daily more intolerable at Rome. During the very days when the Irish Church was exulting over its great deliverance, the august Pontiff had to behold the assassination of Count Rossi, his minister, and of Monseigneur Palma, one of his secretaries. He himself remained a prisoner in the hands of the radical faction, from the 15th of November. His faithful Swiss were dismissed, and the Civic Guard, the creatures of the demagogue Sterbini, became his jailors. On the evening of the 24th, assisted by the Duke d'Harcourt, ambassador of France, and the Count Spaur, ambassador of Bavaria, he escaped from the Quirinal, in the disguise of an attaché of the Bavarian embassy, under the title of "doctor," and in a few hours was safely lodged in Gaeta. On the 16th of July following, his authority was restored in Rome by the French, under General Oudinot. His exile, therefore, may be said to have lasted precisely eight months.*

* For some interesting details of these events, consult Dr. Cullen's letter in the Appendix

The Bishop of Derry, duly informed of all that took place at Rome, rose from a sick bed on the intelligence of the Pope's flight reaching Ireland, to prepare that pastoral letter, which of itself would embalm his memory in the undying charity of all Catholic hearts. Hitherto he had addressed Rome on the wrongs of Ireland—now he was to address Ireland on the wrongs of Rome. And not only Ireland; for, since the admission of the Catholics to civil rights in the British empire, it is the privilege of the Irish Church to make her notes of challenge or of warning heard throughout the earth. There is, perhaps, no division of the Church militant whose word goes so far or strikes so deep. Her great living writers know this well; her Doyles and her Maginns also proved it in their day. We have seen in Roman newspapers long extracts from the letters to Lord Stanley; the Paris, Belgiar, American and Catholic journals spread the sentiments conceived in the quiet cottage at Buncrana over two continents. In his Pastoral on the Pope's exile, Dr. Maginn felt the height of his position, and his voice went forth with immense effect. His English is more smooth and compact than usual; his high heroic spirit soars above the *orbis in urbis*, like its own eagle, with an eye that penetrates to the east and the west, to the dawn and the sunset, through ancient days and modern events.*

* See Appendix for this Epistle entire

This pastoral conveyed and read to the Holy Father at Gaeta drew forth his warmest approbation. A previous letter of the Bishop's received before His Holiness' flight, had the honor of a direct acknowledgment from the illustrious object of it.* It is hardly too much to say that in those eventful days no Irish Prelate stood higher at Rome than Dr. Maginn, and that the personal influence thus honorably obtained promised the best results for the future relations of the Irish Church with the Holy See.

* See Dr. Cullen's letter of September 5, 1848. Appendix.