

JOSEPH IGNATIUS O'HALLORAN

Joseph Ignatius O'Halloran, a Jesuit priest, was born in the year 1726, the son of Michael O'Halloran and his wife, Mary MacDonnell, a relative of Sean Clarach MacDomhnaill, the Gaelic poet. He was the elder brother of Sylvester O'Halloran, the eminent doctor and antiquarian.

O'Halloran was educated at the Jesuit College, in Bordeaux, where, like his brother, he studied for the medical profession. However, having passed in philosophy he decided to become a Jesuit and entered their Novitiate there. Here he obtained all his degrees with the highest honours and was appointed Professor of Philosophy at Bordeaux University. He distinguished himself by being the first person on the Continent to accept publicly the philosophical theories of the new English writer, Isaac Newton, against those of the Frenchman, Descartes. His lectures in Latin became famous, and he also wrote many pieces of a fugitive nature which were much admired.

He was an all-round scholar and became successively Professor of Rhetoric and Professor of Divinity as well as of Philosophy.

When religious persecution became too severe in France and the Jesuit Order was suppressed, O'Halloran returned to Ireland with Dr. Butler, Lord Dunboyne, and spent several years with him in Cork. Here he was attached to the North Chapel, where thousands flocked to hear his sermons. He was much admired and loved for his saintly habits, as well as the spiritual care he exercised over the children of his parish.

O'Halloran died in Dublin in the year 1800, and was buried in the vaults of St. Michan's Church. In a quieter but none the less excellent way, he added lustre to the name of the great Clare family of O'Halloran.

Thomas Moore, in his *Travels of an Irish Gentleman*, tells of his experience of Father O'Halloran in the confessional:—
 "I used to set off early in the morning, trembling all over at the task that was before me, but finally resolved to tell the worst. How vividly do I, even at this moment, remember kneeling down by the confessional, and feeling my heart-beats quicken as the sliding panel in the side opened and I saw the meek and venerable form of Father O'Halloran stooping to hear my whispered list of sins. The paternal look of the old man, the gentleness of his voice, even in rebuke, the encouraging hopes he gave of mercy as the sure reward of contrition and reformation, all these recollections come freshly over my mind. Shade of my revered pastor! could thou have looked down on me in the midst of my follies, how it would have grieved thy meek spirit to see the humble little visitor of thy confessional, him whom thou hast

doomed for his sins to read the Seven Penitential Psalms every day, to see him forgetting so soon the docility of those undoubting days and setting himself up, God help him, as a controvertist and Protestant."

JOHN O'MAHONY

John O'Mahony, organiser of the Fenian Movement and its Head Centre in America for many years, was born in Kilbehenny, County Limerick, in the year 1816. He came from a family of strong farmers and was educated at a classical school in Cork and at Trinity College. Although never taking out his degree, he was a good classical and Irish scholar. In addition, he studied Hebrew and Sanscrit and knew sufficient French to be able to write articles on Ireland for the French newspapers during his exile in France. In 1857, he published in New York a translation of Geoffrey Keating's great History of Ireland, a work described by Dr. Todd as far superior to the earlier translation of O'Connor's.

But rebellion was in O'Mahony's blood, for both his father and his grandfather had taken part in the Rising of 1798, and it is as a man of action rather than an accomplished literateur that he will be remembered. As a young man he joined the O'Connell Repeal Movement, but as this moved too slowly for his impatient enthusiasm he seceded with Smith O'Brien in 1845, helped to form the Young Ireland Party, and took part in the abortive rebellion at Ballinacorney in the year 1848. On the arrest of O'Brien, O'Mahony took to the hills bordering on Kilkenny and Waterford and for some months kept up a guerilla warfare against the army.

He was eventually compelled to flee the country, escaped to France, and lived in great poverty in Paris for several years. In 1854, he joined Mitchel in New York and besides preparing his translation of Keating's history, occupied his time in assisting the various American-Irish organisations, while biding his time to renew the struggle against England. Four years later, in collaboration with James Stephens, he formed the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, or, as they are popularly known, the Fenians. At this time he occupied the post of Colonel in the American Army, but relinquished the post in order to give his whole time to the new movement.

Through his efforts, between £40,000 and £80,000 was sent to Ireland to help equip a rebel army, but he does not seem to have taken an active part in either the Canadian raids or the abortive Irish rebellion of 1867. The latter event temporarily exhausted the Fenian effort, and although the organisation dragged on for some time, with O'Mahony as its Head Centre, it achieved nothing. O'Mahony devoted his latter days almost entirely to literary pursuits and died in New York on 7th Feb.,