

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF THOMAS D'ARCY MCGEE.

By W. H. Higgins.

It was so far back as 1847 that I first became acquainted with D'Arcy McGee. (I never knew any of his friends to call him by his christian name of Thomas). He was at that time assistant editor of the Nation. He had been for some years previously one of the galaxy of talented writers whose patriotic effusions in prose and verse, enriched the columns of that journal, and made it first amongst Irish national newspapers. McGee remained sub-editor under Charles Gavan Duffy, until the suppression of the Nation by the Government in 1848. A relative of mine, who was an intimate friend of his had called his attention to some boyish work of mine, and that led to his wishing to know personally the young author (I was then only sixteen) of "Ireland's Voice." From that date, down to the time of his sad, untimely death, I had enjoyed the coveted privilege of his personal friendship.

The first time I had heard him from the public platform was at the old music hall in Abbey Street, Dublin. There was an immense crowd both inside and outside the building; and I well remember—for it was the first time I had seen such a thing—there was a policeman occupying a prominent seat in front of the platform, with note-book and pencil in hand ready to take down any treasonable utterances of the speakers, and to report to the Castle any manifestations of disloyalty by the meeting. Amongst the principal speakers were Duffy, Meagher and Mc-

Gee. All were cheered heartily as they entered; and the Dublin Jackeen was not slow to discover some peculiarity of dress or otherwise, at which he would lustily bawl out, and call for an additional cheer. A white vest worn by Mr. McGee was too conspicuous a portion of his attire to escape the keen vision and smart jibe of the Jackeen, and so, before the echo of the "cheers for Mr. McGee" had been answered, a yell went up—"Three cheers for Misther McGee's white waikit!" And this was immediately followed by—"and three cheers for Misthress McGee!" Mr. McGee's marriage had taken place only a short time before, and the cheers were given in all kindness and with the best of good will by the good-natured gathering. But again, and without a pause, there went up another great shout to the call of—"and three cheers for his Irish wife!" The full meaning of this, many even of those present may not have understood, but the words were enough to arouse enthusiasm, and all joined in the cheers set up by the mighty throng.

In explanation, it may be told that McGee was the author of the ballad, "The Irish Wife," which commences with the lines:

I would not give my Irish wife
For all the dames of Saxon land—
I would not give my Irish wife
For the Queen of France's hand,
For she to me is dearer
Than castles strong, or land, or life;
An outlaw—so I'm near her
To love till death my Irish wife.

By what at that time was the