

MR. JUSTICE KEOGH.

good family. Hé received his education in Dublin, and entered Trinity College, where he obtained honours. He possessed a taste for classical literature, and at an early period of his academical career applied himself, with an ardour which long survived his youth, to the study and practice of oratory. In the College Historical Society he found a field in which his cultivated gifts and acquirements had free scope and were stimulated by the excitement of debate and the successes which he achieved. He was also a member of another debating society connected with the Dublin Library. Both his argumentative skill and declamatory power won for him the highest distinction, and he soon rose to the foremost rank of spokesmen. On obtaining his degree he was called to the bar in 1847, and chose the Connaught circuit, with which he remained connected until his elevation to the bench. He did not devote his great abilities to the study of dry technical details, and never obtained distinction as a subtle pleader or profound lawyer; but he possessed the marvellous faculty of collecting the leading facts of a case and the salient points of law which might be applied to them with effect, and, above all the qualifications of an advocate, an eloquence which was always earnest and forcible, and at times so impassioned as to take the feelings if not the judgment of an audience by storm. He was appointed Solicitor-General in 1850. The pursuits of the bar did not afford sufficient employment for his oratorical abilities, and he conceived at an early period an ambition to enter Parliament. The desire was encouraged by friends connected with each of the two Government factions in the State; and it was no slight tribute to his popularity that he was wooed as a political ally by both. In 1850 the general election afforded an opportunity for gratifying his wish, and he offered himself as a candidate for the representation of Athlone, standing, it is said, as the *protégé* of Mr. Attwood, a wealthy English gentleman. He was opposed by Mr. Norton, the husband of Mrs. Norton, of literary fame; and there was a sharp encounter between them, which ended in Mr. Keogh's return. On that occasion he had a narrow

escape of meeting his fate. The place selected for the meeting was a large barn or outhouse; and he addressed the "free and independent" electors and non-electors from an open window space, the frames having been taken out for the purpose. A wooden bar was placed against the middle; and this was the only protection to the speaker. In the course of a vehement passage, in which he denounced his antagonism of the Government in a Demosthenic style—and, in fact, the words seemed to be translated from a philippic—he struck the bar with such vehemence as to displace it, and he was in imminent danger of falling into the yard below, when a reporter who was close beside him at once caught him by the arm and pulled him back. In the House of Commons his *prestige* as a speaker was great, and he delivered some impressive speeches which held the ear of the House. Among the most successful was an attack on Mr. Roebuck, and his denunciation of the Irish Ecclesiastical Titles Bill introduced by Lord John Russell. This won him great favour among the Roman Catholic clergy and people of Ireland, and he was regarded as a leading champion of the Church. This circumstance made their subsequent hostility the more bitter and implacable when he gave judgment in the Galway election case, unseating Captain Nolan and declaring Major Trench duly elected on the ground that the return of the former had been obtained by intimidation used by the Roman Catholic clergy, whose conduct he stigmatised with unsparing severity. His attack upon the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was followed by a speech in the Rotunda, delivered in the presence of Cardinal Cullen and other prelates, on the defeat of the Aberdeen Coalition Ministry and the return of Lord John Russell to power. He accepted office in 1855 as Attorney-General. This acceptance first destroyed his popularity and exposed him to great obloquy. He had been a member of the party of independent opposition, and is reported to have made a speech on a festive occasion in Athlone, in which he took a vow that he would never take office under the Government. This has been represented as a solemn oath, and