

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

James Robert Gowan* was born at Cahore in the County of Wexford, Ireland, on the 22nd December, 1815. He was the third son of Henry Hatton Gowan and Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Robert Burkitt, who was descended from a well-known Lancashire family. The Gowan lineage is of high antiquity in Irish annals.†

James, as a child, gave promise of a rare intellect which his mother, a woman of strong character, and who was well read in the best literature of the day, did much to cultivate. At an early age he could recite long passages from Pope, Thomson, Goldsmith and other poets, now but seldom read; and, when he was past ninety years of age, he often entertained his friends by reciting, most impressively, what he had learned in youth; so indelibly had it been imprinted on his memory.

His brothers had died in infancy and, being the only son, he was somewhat over-indulged by his parents, and in after years suffered from that lack of careful training in youth, which, to one of his

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† The family history is given in appendix B.