

**THE EARLY YEARS
OF THE LATE
BISHOP HOBART**

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The early years of the late Bishop Hobart by John McVickar

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JOHN MCVICKAR

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BY JOHN McVICKAR, D.D.

'The boy is father of the man.'—*Wordsworth.*



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P R E F A C E.

THE perusal of the letters and papers of the late BISHOP HOBART, undertaken with a different view, has led to the following narrative. It may be that in the publication of it, the author, or rather the editor, for letters constitute the main portion, has overrated the interest of the reading public in a life already before them,* and a character which, whatever be its excellences, has long been familiar to the members of his own communion, while to those beyond, it can hardly be said to offer such claims as render the biography of public men at all times justifiable.

In the face of all these difficulties the editor has ventured to publish, and can now only

* To the biographies here alluded to, viz., 'A Memorial of Bishop Hobart,' by the Rev. J. F. Schroeder; and the larger 'Memoir' prefixed to his 'Works,' by the Rev. W. Berrian, D. D., the editor would take this opportunity of making his acknowledgments for several facts and statements, the original authorities for which were not in his possession.

state the feelings which have led him to it. When he began the perusal of these early letters, they seemed to him but as boyish effusions, of but little value, and no interest beyond the family circle to which they related ; but as he proceeded in his task, their number and minuteness began to give life to the picture they presented ; one by one the features of character came forth, until by degrees they embodied themselves into a beautiful portraiture of an affectionate and generous youth, full of ardor and native piety, and devoted to every noble and benevolent pursuit.

This is the editor's first apology, since if these impressions be just, such a picture faithfully given cannot be without both interest and value. Virtue and piety want no reflected lustre from a great name ; they are themselves the pure gold, and truth and sincerity the only stamp they need to give them currency.

The inclination thus excited to publish, a further consideration converted into resolution. It was this : Bishop Hobart's character was in one respect greatly misunderstood by those who knew him only in his public course. The

untiring energy with which he devoted himself to official duty, was reputed by many to be personal ambition ; and the unyielding firmness of his opinions as a Churchman, turned into an argument against his vital piety as a Christian. The native humility of his heart, the depth of his devotional feelings, the evangelical tone of his retired piety, were matters either wholly unknown, or else placed to the account of professional duties. Now the correction of such false opinion is a debt due alike to the reputation of Bishop Hobart, and to that of the Church over which he presided ; and in no way, perhaps, can it be more effectually done, than by the exhibition of him in the simplicity and open sincerity of youth ; in days when there were no ambitious ends to gain, or professional proprieties to support, and in which neither fear nor favor can be supposed to have operated, to blind the judgment of those around him as to his real character. If we then find him as a boy, what he afterward was as a man, active, ardent, fearless, and devoted ; fervent in feeling, but wise in action ; bold in duty, but childlike in piety ; yielding in