OCTOBER 31, 1925

## FOUR LECTURES ON -McGEE

BY REV. JOHN J. O'GORMAN, D. C. L.

LECTURE I -MCGEE THE IRISHMAN (CONTINUED)

## THE VANQUISHER OF CANADIAN FENIANISM

McGee's greatest work for Ireland, while a Canadian, was his defeat of Fenianism in Canada. This is not a pleasant subject, yet it would be cowardly to pass it over. The utter futility of the constitu-tional movement in Ireland in 1855 when Sadleir and Keogh had sold themselves for office, Lucas died, Duffy emigrated and Archbishop Cullen sided with the Whigs rather than with the Canatta' Loggue and than with the Tenaots' League and independent Irish Party, led by an inevitable reaction to the revival of the physical force method of seeking to remedy Ireland's grievances. Fenianism was organized in Ireland and in the United States in 1858 by James Stevens and John O'Mahoney. Fenianism, as an oath bound secret society pledged to armed revolt, fell under the censure of the Catholic Church, which rightly objects to the transfer of the government of men to conspirators working in the dark, bound under oath to obey unknown superiors. McGee, while realizing the good intention of many individual Fenians, saw in the organization but folly in the mass and continental revolutionary doctrines in the leaders. While some of his condemnations of Fenianism are exaggerated and lack the serene statesmanlike patience with which he faced other contemporary Canadian questions, nevertheless, on the question of Fenian-ism in Canada posterity sides with McGee. He may at times have been unnecessarily personal in his criticism of Fenian leaders and unchar-itable in his estimate of their motives, but as to Fenianism itself, McGee saw clearly that as a military organization it was bound to failure and as an oath-bound secret society it was condemned by Rome. Hence he regarded it as opposed at once to the welfare of Ireland and the advancement of morality. In this, every bishop of Irish birth on descent in the world agreed with him. His third reason for opposing Fenianism was the determination of the majority of the American Fenian leaders to hit England by invading Canada. Canada, a country which had provided a happy home and a national opportunity for hundreds of thousands of Irish-men and which had never in all her history done anything but good to, Ireland, was now in the unauthorized name of Ireland to be invaded by Irish American Fenians, who invited the Irish Canadians to become traitors to their country, and join in a Civil War against their brother Canadians. The villainy of this policy is apparent once it is stated. Irishmen rightly object that a section of the colonists who settled in Ireland in the seven-

teenth century should still consider themselves alien to the nation, should view their fellow Irishmen with suspicion and hatred, and should seek to set up by armed force within Ireland's four seas a against a State. Therefore,

true Irishmen could not expect that the Irish settlers in Canada should

Lieutenant and, when he returned to Montreal, he urged in a public letter those who could remain in Ireland to "remain to remedy the unhappy past by all reasonable and just reforms; not as thieves of the night, conspiring for a chimerica Republic, but as frank, fearless sons of the soil, maafully and law-fully contending that whatever is wrong shall be righted and what-ever is necessary to Ireland's peace and prosperity shall be supplied." (The Irish Position in British and Republican North America.) The third criticism is that McGee gave too gloomy a picture of the position of the Irish in the United States. This is to a certain extent true. Yet McGee felt that the average This is to a certain extent true. Yet McGee felt that the average the picture of the degradation caused by the New York tenement houses burning in his brain, with his remembrance of the terrific influence of American materialism and of the periodical tidal waves of American Protestant bigotry, went to the other extreme and gave an unduly gloomy picture of the posi-tion of the Irish in America. Yet speaking as a Canadian Minister of Immigration he was surely not exceeding his rights by pointing out end of his life the lofty idealism a greater manner than did the United States. It is obvious that there were no great city slums in Canada; that in a country shout two fifths Catholic the Irish Catholic had a better chance of becom-ing a Cabinet Minister or Premier than he had of attaining the highest political positions in the United States; and that the government-aided Catholic schools of Upper and ower Canada had no counterpart in the American Republic where the undenominational public school alone received public taxes. These are some of the arguments by which McGee, in the pamphlet he published in Montreal in the following year, defended his criticism of the United States and preference for Canada. Yet it must be admitted that even in this pamphlet "The Irish position in the British and Republican North America," he gives too unfavourable a view of the position of the Irish Americans, though it does give a necessary record of some plain facts which it was the business of the Irish Amer-

indeed have since done There was a fourth criticism of McGee's Wexford speech and it concerned itself with his reference to the Young Irelanders. What McGee said was this :

"I am not ashamed of Young Ire-land—why should I? Politically we were a pack of fools, but we were honest in our folly, and no man need blush at forty for the follies of one and twenty, unless indeed he still perseveres in them." This casual remark was very badly worded and only half expressed McGee's views. This The Nation pointed out at the time : was well qualified to judge—that

State against a State. Therefore, true Irishmen could not expect that the Irish settlers in Canada should iconsider themselves aliens in the land of their adoption or seek to destroy its unity by sectional hatred

## THE CATHOLIC RECORD

This is to a certain extent true. Yet McGee felt that the average American letter which the Irish in that country sent back to their rela-tives at home, gave a very false picture of the New World, as it usually omitted to give any real description of the brutzl conditions which so many Irish were obliged to face in the American Republic. There is no doubt that McGee, with the nicture of the degradation course taken, I plead the motive and intention to have been both honest and well-meaning.

"But to speak thus at Wexford May, 1865, did not occur to McGee. Fenianism was rampant, and it obsessed his mind. His one care was to give no shadow of countenance to any one still 'holding by the doctrine of the barricades.'" (Life

certain distinct advantages and safeguards which British North America offered the Irish emigrant from the poem which he published from the poem which he published in 1862 when Richard Dalton Williams, a former member of that noble group, died in the United States.

They were a band of brethren,

ceive that their (the Young Irelanders) first work was their wisest and best, and that Irish nationality would have fared better if there never had been a French Revolution of 1848. That transaction arrested cans to face and remedy, as they a work which was a necessary pre-liminary to social or political inde-pendence, the education of a people

long depressed by poverty or injus-tice, in fair play, public spirit and manliness. . It is a work which must be begun anew by another generation." Four Years of Irish History, pp. 778-779.)

ARCHBISHOP CONNOLLY'S TRIBUTE The greatness of McGee's service in opposing Fenianism in Canada and the grandeur of character and wisdom of statesmanship he therein was well qualified to judge-that

"They (nearly all the leaders of the Young Ireland party) now refer who ruled the See of Halifax Arch.

very commonplace ability and of no character whatever, might have earned any amount of Irish popular-ity by a similar process (to that adopted by the Fenian leaders.) He should deal largely in Irish grievances with fire, and thunder, and vengeance, as his stock in trade, and bid defiance in his own person medways mark you construct here

-always, mark you, carefully kept aways, mark you, carefully kept away from danger—and he becomes a hero and a chieftain, and any other grand personage you may please to call him from that hour. A man with the towering ability of McGee had but to hold his tongue and preserve ominous and signifi-cant silence, whilst in Canada as in Ireland his fellow-countrymen were blindly marching on to inevitable destruction, and, amid senseless and rabid men, his patriotism might be ensured at a small premium, and his popularity endure like that of faith.

O'Mahoney and Roberts and Stevens; but throughout British America as in Ireland, men of other creeds and nationalities would shout Traitor ! and the blood, the Traitor ! and the blood, the whitened bones and the devastated homesteads of Irishmen, the wail-ing and tears of Irish women and would bring malediction and cry shame upon him as the author of

They were a band of brethren, richly graced
With all that most exaits the sons of men—
Youth, courage, honor, genius, wit, well-placed—
When shall we see their parallels again?
The very flower and fruitage of their age.
Destined for duty's cross or glory's page."
In this Wexford speech there were errors of judgment but no
their unparalleled misfortune. The great majority who are in a far better and far happier position here than elsewhere, might, no doubt. pursue the safer and more prudent course: but if Mr. McGee,—the Daniel O'Connell of this country— had not fearleesly come forward at the critical moment with genuine electrified the country with his matchlers eloquence, who is the man now living who could have their unparalleled misfortune. The were errors of judgment but no lessening nor lowering of Irish patriotism. (Even Duffy, who never forgave McGee for his Wexford speech, wrote: "We can now per-regive that their (the Young Ledund the conseduences for Irish-men and, above all, for Irish Cath-olics in British America? Like the unseen match, it might not have been heeded at the moment, nor the real danger understood by many to the present day, but if that match had been once ignited and if D'Arcy McGee had not been on the watch towers when all others were asleep, I, as an Irish Canadian Archbishop yielding to no man in my love to my fellow countrymen and my co-relig-ious at home and abroad. I distinctly state my conviction as Irishmen and Catholics in this country are concerned, it would have infallibly ended in nothing short of a disastrous conflagration. The single action of Mr. McGee in this instant has been of more signal service to Irishmen and their true interest in

three valiant champions of the general association of Chinese Cath-Cross, who went to heaven from olics in Europe. It already includes this former humble clearing in the forest. But while these hills seven sections, \_each headed .. by a iorest. But while these hills endure and the valleys are verdant and the river murmurs a requiem to their memory, the 'Mission of the Martyrs' shall be kept in perpetual remembrance and shall hold a secure place in the minds of the faithful and of all who admire valor and devotion, as the spot where three heroic souls gave to God their all, cheerfully, willingly, in prayer, in delegate

rationalism

cheerfully, willingly, in prayer, in service, in terments and in death itself."

CHINESE CATHOLICS IN EUROPE ORGANIZING By M. Massiani

(Paris Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

The movement started last year y the Chinese students in Europe bring together those professing the Catholic faith, is developing successfully. The Catholic Chinese Young Men's Association of Paris, founded a year ago, announces that it has made progress and accom-plished useful work. Its members already include 166-Chinese Catholic students of France and Belgium and each month this number is being increased through the baptism of students who adopt the Catholic

The Catholics also form distinct groups in other associations in which the Chinese students are organized by provinces, and form united and active minorities in this small circle. Thus, in the Associa-tion of the Natives of Hunan, there are 50 Catholics out of a total of 200 members.

The Chinese Catholic students have been publishing, since last January, a monthly bulletin written in excellent French. It gives evidence of a spirit of ardent and generous Catholicism and of true

patriotism. "Our motto," the bulletin says, "is 'God and Country.' But beside our own country, we love your countries also, and we shall have no rest until you too love China and unite your efforts with ours to save her. . . We suffer to see our country unknown, misunderstood, sometimes even despised by our brothers in the faith. . #' There has also been formed a



the new Dominion of Canada than what has been achieved by all other besider SAFETY TO BE CONTINUED

JESUIT MARTYRS HONORED

Auriesville, N. Y., Oct. 2 .- Ten thousand Catholics, coming from all parts of the East in special trains and buses and in small

groups, on Monday paid tribute at



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or armed force. The statesmanlike McGee saw the futility and immorality of the Fenian attack on Canada and determined to over-throw it. In this he succeeded,

throw it. In this he succeeded, thereby saving Canada from blood-shed and Irish Canadians from lasting disgrace. Whatever views the reader may hold as to the relative value during the past hundred years, of the two rival methods of helping Ireland, namely, physical force and consti-tutional agistation, there is no ques-tion as to the justice of McGee's resistance to Fenianism in Canada. Charles Gavan Duffy speaks for all hold as to the relative value during the past hundred years, of the two rival methods of helping Ireland, namely, physical force and consti-tutional agitation, there is no ques-tion as to the justice of McGee's resistance to Fenianism in Canada. Charles Gavan Duffy speaks for all when he said : "His resistance to a Fenian invasion of (Canada) a coun-try where Irishmen were generously received and fairly treated, was not Fenian invasion of (Canada) a coun-try where Irishmen were generously received and fairly treated, was not an offense but a merit. There was no leading member of the (Young Ireland) party from Davis to Meagher who would not have done the same." (Four years of Irish History, p. 778.)

## THE WEXFORD SPEECH AND THE IRISH POSITION

While today no one criticizes McGee's Canadian opposition to Fenianism, many are less enthusiastic about the manner in which he denounced physical force in Ireland in his famous Wexford speech in 1865. In fact there are four lines of

Europe, and momentarily bore away the strongest minds with irresistible force. A few of those leaders, it is true, still hold by the doctrine of the barricades; but they

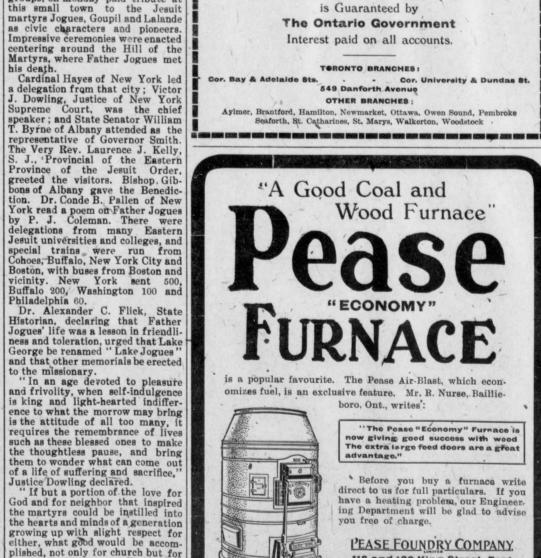
Ireland Party." "This," continues Mrs. Skel-ton, from whom we have cited the above words, "was the usual point of attack of the Iriah press. As The Wexford People put it, they interpreted him as anxious to justify his Canadian loyalty and equally anxious to leave his Irish disloyalty unjus-tified. Fortunately for McGee's lasting reputation, this brief dismissal of the politics and deeds of '48 is not the only record he left of his mature estimation of them. No doubt it would have been wise for him in this speech to have enlarged a little on his reasons as he did in 1860 on the floor of the Cana-dian Parliament when twitted

statesman wrote in part as follows "At a crisis like the present I feel it a duty to raise my humble voice in behalf of an Irishman, who under a kind Providence, has been mainly instrumental in lifting up his fellow countrymen and co-relig-ious to a position which, I believe

in my heart, they never attained in this or perhaps any other country. "Thomas D'Arcy McGee, as an individual, may have his faults and his shortcomings-from which no mere human being, however great and good, can be entirely exempt; but as a public man, whose career I have narrowly watched with deepest interest since he first touched the soil of Canada, I unhesitatingly

by P. J. Coleman. There were delegations from many Eastern Jesuit universities and colleges, and special trains were run from Cohoes, Buffalo, New York City and special trains were run from Cohoes, Buffalo, New York City and baston, with buses from Boston and vicinity. New York sent 500, Buffalo 200, Washington 100 and Philadelphia 60. Dr. Alexander C. Flick, State Historian, declaring that Father Jogues' life was a lesson in friendli-ness and toleration, urged that Lake had the biggest mind and was unquestionably the cleverest man and the greatest orator that Ireland had sent forth in modern times.'

logalty and equally anxious to laster there are four lines of criticism against the speech which he delivered on that occasion on "Twenty Years' Experience in Amer-ica." First, it is claimed that he un-necessarily condemned Fenianism in freiand. The answer ta this is that McGee believed Fenianism in and that he was perfectly justified in saying so. Secondly, it is urged that McGee in this speech this to call attention to the real Iriah grievances that require to be dealt with, if not by physical force, the ertainly by a constitutional agita-tion. The answer is that 'McGee spoke as a Canadian cahinet minis-ter and could scarcely appropriately discuss merely political matters publicly in Ireland. However, privately he polited and the perpendent for the sat-grievances quite plainly to the Lord



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