

THOMAS D'ARCY McGEE.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

It may seem strange that on an occasion like the present, when the Irish men and women of Sherbrooke, on this, the anniversary of their patron Saint—like thousands of their fellow-countrymen in all parts of the world—have assembled to have their hearts once more made glad by listening to the music which the bards of Erin have made immortal, and by hearing again the dear old songs crooned above their cradles anon by the voices of loving mothers ; to have their patriotism re-kindled by the recital of deeds of Irish chivalry which appeal to them and to all mankind ; to have the fervour of their piety awakened and renewed by those thoughts of self-sacrificing devotion and godliness which must, perforce, be re-called to-night,—it may seem strange, I say, that on such a night as this, in this distant land, far, far away from the sunny isle which all these precious memories invite you in imagination to re-visit, you should care, much less wish, to hear the voice of one in whose veins no drop of your own Irish blood courses, who kneels not at your altar, though he glories with you in all your cherished past.

It is this thought, sir, the reflection that I, a Canadian of Scotch and Protestant descent, have been by your courteous kindness invited to address you, the Irishmen of this beautiful city, which has moved me to select the subject upon which I would venture to speak, and to propose to offer a few remarks upon the life and character of probably the greatest of Irish Canadians, the late Thomas D'Arcy McGee.

In a recent speech, one of the most distinguished and polished members of the Canadian bench claimed for himself a truer and a more praiseworthy Canadianship than that of his sons, for, although it was the land of their nativity, it was the country of his adoption ; and if this be true, who, I would ask, was a better citizen of Canada, than he who, coming to these shores from the troubled, tempest-tossed Isle of Erin—hot from the conflicts which distracted her, found here a resting and abiding place, where he could forgive, if not forget, the animosities and strifes which had engaged him, and bend all his energies and abilities to the betterment of the new home which he loved and served so well.