

My husband it is not too late. She turned and thought he might not see the blank misery in her face, then recovering herself, said, "Well, Henry, I must leave you now and go to Midnight Mass," and reached for her hat and warm coat.

done! It is good to think that this holy will, thus invoked has already resolved to reward him. We are convinced that this is so.

FOUR LECTURES ON McGEE

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

LECTURE ONE

A REVOLUTIONIST IN AMERICA

I am going with you, for I was to confession today for the first time in fifteen years. God gave me a hard lesson to learn, but, at last, I was not too blind to see it.

D'Arcy McGee landed in the United States for the second time in September, 1848, and a month later he established the New York Nation, a paper devoted to the establishment of an Irish Republic.

It must be remembered that the object of the Irish Confederation, as Dillon proclaimed anew as late as April, 1848, was not the establishment of an Irish Republic but the legislative independence of Ireland.

Four Years of Irish History, p. 382.

The Young Irelanders anticipated the original policy of the Irish Republic by claiming that the Act of Union was illegal.

Canada and Australia today enjoy an independence of this type. When England in 1848, calmly watching the starvation of Ireland, determined to arrest her leaders and disarm her Catholic population, the Young Irelanders determined to assert their nation's right to existence by a recourse to arms.

The aim of most of the leaders who took part in this abortive insurrection was not a Republic, but an Irish Free State.

By the time McGee reached New York, however, with a price upon his head, had not unnaturally, become a full fledged republican and proceeded at once to preach this doctrine to the Irish in America.

In later years when he had time to reflect, McGee admitted that the first duty of an Irishman who settles in the United States is to become an American citizen and to devote the greater part of his activities to the solution of American problems.

More effective work could be done for the Irish race by helping the hundreds of thousands of children of the Irish who had settled in the American Republic than by preaching Irish republicanism.

This did not exclude, however, helping the Irish in Ireland in such feasible ways as were compatible with American citizenship.

To McGee, and his New York friends of 1848 and 1849, can very aptly be applied the reproach which he, in 1886, made to the Irish-American Fenians:

"This very organization in the United States what does it really prove, but that the Irish are still an alien population, camped but not settled in America, with foreign hopes and aspirations unshared by the people among whom they lived.

If their new country was their true country, would they find time and money to spare in the construction of imaginary Republics beyond seas.

"I suppose it will be a mortal offence against the pride and vanity of your America-makers, to show, that so many of the Irish in New York city, the headquarters of the two Republics, are still mere 'tenantry and dependents'; that they are in 'hideous dens, sometimes 'six hundred' under one roof, 'in violation of all the laws of decency and morality.' Now, if these be facts—frankly as they are to contemplate,—what are we to think of those irrepressible patriots, whose love for Ireland is so ardent, that they are willing to cross the Lakes or the Atlantic to die for her, while they will not turn their steps aside down one of the dark lanes they pass daily on their walks where their countrymen and women perish by the hundred, body and soul!

There is an Ireland enslaved; there is a battle for Ireland to be fought in the New World; there is a glorious redeeming work to be done for her here; it is to be fought and wrought in the Fourth and Sixth Wards of New York, and in every large city south of the line, where our laboring population have suddenly been centralized with all their old peasant habits stripped rudely off, and no new habits of discipline and self-government, as yet, substituted in their stead."

(The Irish Position in British and Republican North America, pp. 6, 10-11.)

Another point of similarity between McGee and his New York friends of 1848 and the Fenians of twenty years later, was that each explained the failure of the physical force movement by the opposition of the priests thereto.

Needless to say, an essential difference between McGee and the Fenians was that the latter were an oath-bound secret society.

Bishop Hughes, the Irish born American prelate who ruled the See of New York, realized at once the danger it would be to the Catholic Church in the United States if McGee with his foreign and revolutionary ideas would gain a following.

The danger was all the greater on account of McGee's exceptional ability which was justly recognized by the Bishop of New York who stated at the time to his friend Archbishop Connolly of Halifax that McGee "had the biggest mind and was unques-

tionably the cleverest man and the greatest orator that Ireland had sent forth in modern times." (Archbishop Connolly: The Claims of Thomas D'Arcy McGee.) So Bishop Hughes, under nom de plume, wrote a series of newspaper articles against McGee's politics and policies showing that the former were not American, and that the latter, owing to the hazy revolutionary ideas they contained, were not always Catholic. McGee stoutly maintained his own opinion. Bishop Hughes ended by condemning the New York Nation which soon after failed. McGee, though not convinced by the merciless hammer blows of Bishop Hughes, desisted from writing against this great Irish American prelate and afterwards, when he realized his mistake, frequently expressed his regret, both publicly and privately, that he gave offense where he should have rendered obedience.

McGee had aspired to be "the Duffy of the emigrants," that is to place his great talent and energy at the disposal of the Irish in the United States.

Yet his controversy with Bishop Hughes ruined, he thought, his usefulness in America.

With great joy, therefore, he accepted in 1850 Duffy's renewed invitation to return to Dublin and edit the Nation, an invitation which he had refused a year before out of loyalty to the men who had financed his own paper.

He went to Boston and was prepared to sail, when he learned that his liberty if not his life, would be forfeited if he returned to Ireland. His work was with the Irish in America after all.

With the assistance of some friends he succeeded in establishing in Boston in August, 1850, the American Celt which at first was a rather revolutionary in politics. It is difficult to be an advocate of constitutional methods and of a conservative policy when you are accounted a felon with the price on your head.

Yet, nevertheless, McGee was not long to remain a revolutionist. A new period in his life was about to begin.

THE LITERARY SENTINEL OF THE IRISH AMERICANS

While McGee was editing the American Celt in Boston in 1850, he fell under the benign influence of Bishop Fitzgerald, who, by his sympathetic understanding, was able to guide this brilliant Irish journalist and orator into the rich truths of Catholic faith.

McGee began to study Balmye, Brownson, the latter of whom became his personal friend, and Burke, and thus to become acquainted with Catholic apologetics and philosophy and with the science of politics.

By the end of 1851 his intellectual novitiate was over and his orientation was complete. He had now a firm grasp on the sound Catholic and conservative principles which should govern society.

He, therefore, proceeded to educate his fellow Irish Catholics in America through his newspaper and his lectures. The American Celt became the leading Irish Catholic newspaper in the United States.

At the urgent request of Bishop Timon, McGee transferred it to Buffalo, and then, as his friends considered this too small a centre, he was induced to return to New York in 1852.

One pleasing effect of his prior stay in New York city had in his absence increased and multiplied—the night schools which he had established in 1849. These, which were then a novelty, are now of course a recognized institution.

McGee's successful establishment of night schools in Boston in 1844 and in New York in 1848 ranks him as a founder of this movement.

From 1852 to 1857 McGee's paper, the American Celt, was the leading Catholic Weekly in the United States and McGee himself was with Brownson, the leading Catholic publicist and lecturer.

Curiously enough he never became an American citizen, though he advised the Irish in the United States to take out their naturalization papers. He had not altogether given up the idea of returning to Ireland. But while McGee took no part in American politics, his influence as a Catholic lay leader in the United States from 1852 to 1857 can scarcely be exaggerated.

However that is an aspect of his life with which we shall deal in another lecture. How hard McGee worked to increase in the Irish Americans a just pride in the history of their ancestral race and Catholic religion may be seen by an examination of the books he published at this period, especially, The History of the Irish Settlers in North America, (1851-2) the pioneer work of its kind; A History of the attempts to establish the Protestant Reformation in Ireland and the successful resistance of that People (1852-3), The Catholic History of North America (1855) and The Life of Bishop Maginn (1857).

Great as was McGee's admiration for the American Republic when he reached its shores for the second time in 1848—witness his poems, "Flag of the Free" and "Hail to the Land," he never attained a real understanding of the genius of that young giant among the nations.

The American Republic in the fifties was in a state of awkward adolescence, like the youth who is growing so rapidly that he is ungainly. What was true of the American nation as a whole, was true likewise of its Irish and Catholic community.

McGee shocked by the outspokenness of the American child and driven wild by the suffering of those Irish who became submerged

in the slums of the great American cities, failed to perceive that all this, regrettable and unnecessary though it was, was largely but a passing stage. There is no doubt that had McGee lived to see three score and ten he would have modified his pessimistic judgment of the body of the Irish Americans and of the genius of the American Republic. In his desire to seek stabilizing factors in society, he began to realize the value of a constitutional monarchy and, in spite of himself, began to admire the British constitution. He again contemplated returning to Ireland to work, as in his earlier days, in a constitutional way for her national regeneration. To see if there was still danger of his arrest as a rebel, he determined in 1858-54 to undertake a lecture tour in Canada.

Here he received a cordial welcome and made many friends. The high position which the Irish had attained in the legislatures, judiciary and big business of the British North American Colonies, the absence of anything corresponding to the slums of the great American cities, and the numerous well organized Irish Canadian rural parishes, all made an enormous impression on McGee, and with his usual frankness, he described what he found in the American Celt.

The Irish American extremists had viewed with extreme disfavor McGee's abandonment of revolutionary politics in 1852 and his former Young Ireland comrades, Meagher, Mitchell and, bitterest of all, Devin Reilly, through their newspapers, the Citizen of New York, denounced McGee as a traitor to Ireland. McGee's friendly feeling for Canada, a British Colony, was, in their eyes, a sufficient proof of his treason.

The slanderous accusations thus broadcast against McGee began to undermine his influence with a large body of the Irish Catholic Americans at the very time when he was their literary sentinel in the fight against Know-nothingism. It was at this opportune moment in 1854, that Charles Gavan Duffy published an open letter to T. F. Meagher, which contains a tribute to McGee well worth remembering:

"With McGee I see with deepest concern that you are at open and angry war. What feud in our history is more disastrous? To forty political prisoners in Newgate, when the world seemed shut out to me forever, I estimated him as I do today. I said, if we were about to begin our work anew, I would rather have his help than any man's of all our confederates. I said that he could do more things like a master than the best amongst us since Thomas Davis; that for two or three years I had seen him daily and found him still swarming with new thoughts on the one eternal theme (like a lover's or a devotee's); that he had been sent at the last hour, on a perilous mission, and performed it not only with unflinching courage, but with a success that had no parallel in that era; and above all, that he had been systematically slandered by the Jacobins to an extent that would have blackened a saint of God. Since he has been in America, I have watched his career, and one thing it has never wanted—a fixed devotion to Irish interests. Who has served them with such fascinating genius? His poetry and his essays touch me like the breath of spring and revive the buoyancy and cheerfulness of youth plunging into them like a refreshing stream of Irish undefiled. What other man has the subtle charm to evoke our past history and make it live before us? If he has not loved and served his mistress, Ireland, with the fidelity of a true knight, I cannot name any man who has."

(This letter on "The Principles and Policy of the Irish Race" was cited by the Canadian Freeman of Toronto, 13 August, 1889, when the Irish American extremists' slanders against McGee were recited in Canada.)

IRELAND REVISITED

In 1855 McGee carried out his plan of revisiting Ireland. According to Mr. J. J. McGee, who then met for the first time his illustrious half-brother, the thousand miles of Irish of Liverpool who lined up to welcome him convinced the British Government that it would be unwise to place him under arrest.

An amnesty to those leaders of 1848 who had not previously been pardoned was granted the following year. One of the purposes of McGee's visit was to erect a tombstone over his mother's grave. He next consulted with Charles Gavan Duffy as regards the prospects of the Nation which he thought of acquiring and editing, now that Duffy was leaving for Australia. He was, however, informed there was no room in Ireland of that generation for a newspaper such as the Nation.

As a matter of fact, 1856 was politically one of the most dismal years in Ireland in the 19th century. He lectured under the auspices of the "Young Men's Society," a chain of societies which had been founded by an Irish priest, in Cork, Limerick and in London. He pointed out in these lectures some of the advantages which Canada possessed as a home for those Irish who must emigrate. He pictured the dangers, trials and tolls of the emigrants in the American Republic. After having thus discouraged unnecessary emigration and warned against a utopian view of the wonderful United States, McGee returned to America.

TO BE CONTINUED

BAZIN'S TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN SOLDIER

By M. Massiani

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

Paris, Sept. 13.—An American Catholic officer, who made a brilliant record during the War, has just died in Anjou, where he had been living for some years. His funeral drew the aristocracy of the entire district, where he was held in high esteem, and a touching oration was delivered at his grave by the great Christian writer Rene Bazin, member of the French Academy, who was his personal friend.

Robert Edward MacDonald was born in Peoria, Illinois, of a Scotch family. He owned a great deal of property in that State. He enlisted in the American army before the declaration of war and had just attained to the rank of officer when the United States joined in the hostilities. He was one of the first 300 Americans to land in France, arriving with the first contingent of the 23rd Division, which distinguished itself at Chateau-Thierry.

Soon afterwards he transferred to the aviation branch which, as M. Bazin remarked, "was marvelously suited to his passionate nature, intrepid and logical spirit and to his love of useful risks." So remarkable were his achievements that twice he was sent to the rear as an instructor and it was with difficulty that he obtained permission to return to the front. It was there that he contracted the first attack of pneumonia, from which he thought he had recovered, but which was to reappear several years later and end his life on the very day when he was entering upon his thirtieth year.

Lieutenant MacDonald, after the War, married a Frenchwoman, Mademoiselle Jacqueline de Gennevray. They had three children. He lived with his family at the Chateau de la Marmitiere, not far from Angers, and his body has been laid to rest in the chapel of the chateau.

The last months of his life were described as follows by M. Rene Bazin: "He knew that he was condemned to die. He knew the cause and the occasion of his illness. He felt sorrow but no regret. On Good Friday, 1925, he said to his young wife: 'Jacqueline, if I die, it will be for you and for this beautiful France which I love. There is no greater honor for a man than to give his life for so great a country.'"

"It takes a great and strong soul to say these things, not before, but during the period of suffering. Two days before his death he repeated them. He gave his life for us. He loved us all. We owe him our prayers and faithfulness to his memory. His faith was ours and his resignation was something we might all desire for ourselves. He died saying: 'My God, Thy will be

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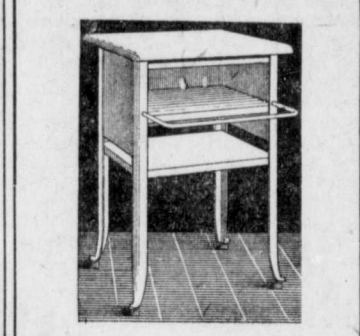
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