

government of Ireland, and which he called "a prophetic voice from the dead coming from beyond the Atlantic." And these were the last words he penned, and they were penned for Ireland. But that message of pleading,—the last fruit of his prolific pen, had scarce reached its destination before the soul in whose generous depths it had been conceived had passed from the scene of this world's wrongs and injustice, to that other "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

It was late on the night of April the 6th, 1868, and the Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee had the floor in the Canadian House of Commons. The question was the proposed repeal of the union between Canada and Nova Scotia. Strongly and fiercely he attacked the proposed repeal, and stoutly and manfully he defended the union, ending his magnificent oration on the early morning of the 7th with the following ever memorable words: "I, sir, who have been, and who am still the warm and earnest advocate of confederation, speak here, not as the representative of any race, or of any province, but as thoroughly and emphatically a Canadian, ready and bound to recognize the claims, if any, of my Canadian fellow-subjects from the farthest East to the farthest West, equally as those of my nearest neighbor, or of the friend who proposed me on the hustings." And these were the last words he spoke, and they were spoken for Canada, his adopted country, as his last writings had been penned for Ireland, his motherland. His speech being ended, he leaves the House, unattended, for his lodgings. The night is beautiful beyond the powers of description. The fair April moon hangs high in the blue cloudless vault of the heavens, and in virginal radiance smiles down on the slumbering city, now clothed in a garment of dazzling whiteness; not a being stirs but he; not a sound breaks the midnight stillness, save the dirge-like murmur of the waters that fall in the distance, now borne to his ear on the cold night air; the poet's heart is contented; all earth seems at peace, and the heavens to smile in approval. But see! a lurking assassin steals close behind the solitary pedestrian; one shot rings out on the still night air and startles the echoes around; the Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee falls foully murdered in his tracks, with his life-blood dyeing the snow around, and his poet's soul awakes from its pleasant reverie to find itself in another and better world.

When, my friends, in his journey through this vale of tears, the dread angel of death casts the destroying shadow of his great wings athwart some cheerful home, and snatches a loved member therefrom, the grief of the family is great, and the wail of their anguish ascends on high: but when, to glut his insatiable appetite, he takes the greatest in a nation of great men, and the best loved of all her sons, then the heart-strings of a people are touched. The flood-gates of a country's tears are opened, and a nation refuses to be comforted; and so it was when the report of Thomas D'Arcy McGee's assassination, like a flash, spread abroad in the land. For many days did Canada mourn her mighty dead, and then she buried him as kings are buried. Never in this country have funeral rites so grand and imposing been witnessed, and never have mortal remains been so honored. Monseigneur, Bishop, and Archbishop in tones of the most fervid eloquence sounded the praises and extolled the virtues of him who had been the foremost man of all his race in America. The wave of universal sorrow that swept over the land, first found echo in the strains of the Requiem Mass that were wafted heavenward from the Cathedral of the Dominion's capital; then here, in Montreal, the home of his grief-stricken family,

St. Patrick's aisles prolong  
The burden of his funeral song.  
Mid reverent pomp and sacred splendor,  
and mingled with the sobs of eight thousand mourners, it next reverberates through Notre Dame's vast edifice; till anon in far Nova Scotia the wail of grief is taken up, and from the Cathedral of Halifax, amid the roars of Atlantic's breakers and the wild seabird's cry, it ascends even to the very throne and cries out for vengeance to Him, unseen by Whom, not even a sparrow falls. Such then was his fitting end, and well may we say in his own words:—

"Well may they grieve who laid him there,  
Where shall they find his equal? Where?  
Naught can avail him now but prayer,  
Miserere Domine!"

And here I would willingly and lovingly leave him, feeling assured that you see in him, as I do, a worthy object for the emulation of all young Irish Canadians. But one thing more remains. Even around the lofty pedestal whereon reposes his stainless fame, calumny has twined its folds, leaving behind some marks of its foul embrace. It has been said, and doubtless many of you have heard it, that Mr. McGee was false to his native land; that he was a traitor to Ireland; and not thinking this enough to sufficiently blacken his character, or perhaps despairing of being able to force belief of such a heinous charge upon the minds of a credulous public, his enemies have added the lesser, though none the less false accusation, of having been fickle and insincere in his political views while engaged in Canadian public affairs. I will treat of the less important charge first, and will not take up your time by a tiresome *resumé* of the state of politics and the political parties of the period in question, but I will content myself with merely stating that for six years after his arrival in Canada, Mr. McGee followed one political party, and that then he changed that party for the other, of which he remained a conspicuous member till the hour of his death.

It is for this single change of opinion, then, that Mr. McGee is censured. As if that were a crime! It is this faculty of changing his mind that marks the difference between a man and a donkey. A man sometimes changes his opinions; a donkey never does. What man is there so senseless, so unprincipled, so lost to all sense of honor and duty, as to continue to follow a path when he discovers it is the wrong one? Do we blame a sinner for repenting? A Jew for becoming a Christian? A Protestant for embracing Catholicism? Who is there now who blames Mr. Gladstone for advocating Home Rule, although he formerly as strongly advocated coercion? Yet it is for exercising precisely this same human prerogative of changing one's mind that Mr. McGee is censured by some, although no false motives are shown, while, on the contrary, it is known that as soon as confederation was effected, he was offered a seat in the new cabinet, which he refused, in order to make way for his friend Mr. Kenny, and it is a well-known fact, too, that he died as he had lived, a poor, but honest man and politician.

Why then did he change? The only answer can be because his conscience directed him to do so, as it had previously done, in the matter of his Irish politics. That this was so is conclusively proved by the conduct of his parliamentary colleagues as soon as his assassination became known. Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir George E. Cartier, Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Chamberlin, Mr. Anglin, men of the most widely different political views, and many others of lesser note, all spoke of his lamentable death in the most sorrowful vein, and all seemed to vie with one another in showering praises upon the memory of him, who had long been an acknowledged leader in statecraft, a man among men, and a patriot.

But it is the other graver charge that we hear most frequently, i.e., that he was a traitor Irishman. To any one in the least acquainted with D'Arcy McGee's writings and public utterances nothing could appear more absurd than this monstrous accusation.

After quoting the words of the late Bishop O'Farrel, the lecturer said:

But let us ourselves cast a glance at the grounds upon which this baseless calumny rests. In the troubles of '48, when he was young and more impetuous than wise, he was a revolutionist; but when with later years he acquired wisdom, and experience and a calmer judgment he deplored the follies of his youth, and became a decided and uncompromising unionist. For this he is censured, and partly for this, too, he died. But where did he sin? In what did he shew himself false by following such a course of conduct? Is it not plain to every man of common sense that such Quixotic attempts as the '48 affair are the saddest folly; that nothing but defeat and death await the leaders and those who foolishly follow them, and that the only possible effect they can have on the English Government is to make it, if possible, more tyrannical than ever, and less and less likely to grant any remedial legislation whatever to suffering Ireland? This is what D'Arcy McGee saw in the light of his cooler reason, and it was this that he sought to impress on his countrymen. Now, in order to prove a man a traitor

to his country, you must first prove him a traitor to his God, for this crime, I take it, is the greatest of all crimes, and yet not even his worst enemy has laid this latter charge at the door of D'Arcy McGee. On the contrary, he shows us in a "Letter to a Friend," published in the columns of the *Celt*, in August, 1852, that it was the desire to remain true to his God and the teachings of His Holy Church that impelled him to take the step he did.

This letter, on what he aptly styled "The Recent Conspiracy against the Peace and Existence of Christendom," concludes thus:—

"Having discovered by close self-examination, that the reading chiefly of modern books, English and French, gave very superficial and false views of political science, I cheerfully said to myself: 'My friend, you are on the wrong track. You think you know something of human affairs, but you do not; you are ignorant, and very ignorant, of the primary principles that must govern the world. You can put sentences together, but what does that avail you, when perhaps those sentences are but the husks and pods of poisonous seeds. Beware! Look to it! You have a soul! What will all the fame and talents avail you if you lose that?' Thus I reasoned with myself, and then, setting my cherished opinions before me one by one, I tried, judged, and capitally executed everyone, save and except those which I found to be compatible with the following doctrines:

- "I. That there is a Christendom.
- "II. That this Christendom exists by and for the Catholic Church.
- "III. That there is in our own age one of the most dangerous and general conspiracies against Christendom that the world has yet seen.
- "IV. That this conspiracy is aided, abetted, and tolerated by many because of its stolen watchword—'Liberty.'
- "V. That it is the highest duty of a 'Catholic man' to go over cheerfully, heartily and at once to the side of Christendom—to the Catholic side, and to resist, with all his might, the conspirators who, under the name of 'Liberty,' make war upon all Christian institutions."

And this is precisely what he did. He went over from the side of the Revolutionary party, from those who held that even if the altar stood in the way of Ireland's freedom, it must be overthrown; he went over from this side to the side of Christendom—to the Catholic side. After arguing from the unhappy results of every action undertaken by the organizations whose efforts Mr. McGee opposed, proving the true patriotism of his stand, the speaker thus concluded: And was that dauntless spirit, which had maintained mistaken its independence before such opponents as the great O'Connell and the learned and saintly Bishop Hughes, to cower and quail now, and shirk its duty in the face of such antagonists as these? Was he, who had counted as naught the ties of party when conscience counselled, was he to fear the taunts, eye, or the weapons of such opponents when sacred duty called him? No; a thousand times, No! Not such the conduct we would expect from one who could write:—

"Rob me of all the joys of sense,  
Curse me with all but impotence,  
Fling me upon an ocean oar,  
Cast me upon a savage shore;  
Stay me! But own above my tier,  
The man now gone still held while here,  
The Jewel, Independence!"

And they did slay him, and D'Arcy McGee went down in the death of his dearest choice as true a martyr to Erin as ever fought in her endless fight, or bled in her sacred cause. And to-day he is calmly sleeping beneath the melting snows of old Mount Royal; the cheery smile, the kindly word, the helping hand are gone; the mighty mind is at last at rest, the silvery tongue is still. But the memory of them all still lives; and so, too, does his shining example still live, and point out to us young Irish Canadians the way of dutiful and true and virtuous patriotism. And long may it be so! That thus, when the scattered Gaels will have purged their minds forever of the shameful remembrance of those who visited him with such a cruel death, and when they will have consigned to deepest and darkest opinion the horrid deeds of them and all such enemies of their beloved land, still bright and glorious and ever green as the emerald turf of Ireland, will be the memory of her pure and stainless knight, her

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gifted son of song, her child of the mighty pen and magic tongue, the foremost man of all his race in America, the admired, the sought-after, the well-beloved Thomas D'Arcy McGee.

"Poet, historian, the Forum's bright glory—  
Light he the soul, noble D'Arcy, on thee;  
Blest be thy name till the ages are hoary—  
Honor'd, oft utter'd in prayer, song and story,  
O! deathless McGee!"

## Irish News.

The Mayor of Kilkenny town has summoned the people to help the starving.

Archbishop Walsh has followed the example of Archbishop Croke by sending a subscription of £20 to the Irish Parliamentary Fund.

Mr. Morley has written, in reply to Mr. T. D. Sullivan, intimating that the distressed condition of parts of Donegal will have careful attention.

At the last meeting of the Carlow Board of Guardians the resolution of the Waterford corporation in favor of the Christian Brothers' claims was unanimously adopted.

His numerous friends through Kerry will be glad to learn that Dr. T. Coffey, a talented and distinguished Taleaman, has been appointed fellow of the Royal University of Dublin.

The report and tables showing the number, ages, occupations and destinations of the emigrants from each country and province in Ireland during the year 1894 has been presented to Parliament. The number of emigrants who left Irish ports in 1894 was less by 12,387 than in 1893.

Last week Bishop O'Doherty forwarded a generous subscription of £25 to the superiors of the Nazareth nuns in Derry in aid of the building fund for the extension of the Home for the Aged and Infirm Poor. His lordship, in a letter accompanying the subscription, said the institution conducted by the Sisters was doing so much real good, and carrying out so nobly the principles of Christian charity, that it would be a pleasure to every member of the community to aid them.

The Irish National Amnesty Association of 41 York street, Dublin, has opened a fund for the benefit of Mr. Christopher Dowling (just released after an imprisonment of nearly thirteen years, during which he lost the sight of one of his eyes), and has contributed the sum of £10 as an inaugural subscription. The association appeals to all those sympathizing with Mr. Dowling's sufferings, irrespective of party differences, to generously subscribe to the fund.

A debate in the Dublin Council on the municipal franchise to the workingmen of the city concluded in a way that few expected, and which reflects but little credit on those concerned. The majority of the Town Councillors not only opposed the granting of the franchise to the working classes, but delivered speeches of a most reactionary kind. Why a corporation composed mainly of Nationalists should come to such a decision seems inexplicable. An idea of the restricted nature of the franchise may be formed from the fact that there are only eight thousand municipal voters in the whole city.