

"British precedent and American examples," he said; "are the landmarks for us; by and beyond them we must go, but it is still within our power to say on which shore we shall sacrifice, and under what auspices we shall elect to prosecute our destined course. The American example has, for me, the fatal defect of instability and inconstancy." Be it remembered that McGee was then fresh from a lengthy and close study of the American constitutional system in all its phases, and that he was speaking in Canada while the first shots of the great struggle between the North and South resounded across the line. "As to the other original of a free state," he said, "the British Constitution, it will at least be allowed, even by its enemies, the merit of stability. As it exists to-day it has existed for 800—for 1,000 years. Here, then, is a form of government that has lasted, with modifications to suit the spirit of the age, for a period of 800 years, and here is another that has lasted 80 years; one has a career of eight centuries, and the other a life of two and a half generations. In this country there are no ancient ruins, no time honored relics of antiquity—mementos and grand indicators of the past—to influence the minds of the people, give tone to their morals and their manners, and remind them that they have something to preserve—here, therefore, do we need an olden, a time-defying, a liberty imparting constitution, that has been in process of preparation for us through all the changes and improvements of the centuries that are gone."

### THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

Were I to quote further it might be said that my entire address consisted of McGee's great lecture; these passages suffice to indicate the trend of his ideas and the solidity of the principles that fashioned his course. If you look closely into it you will find that the British constitutional system is a powerful unity composed of reciprocally necessary parts that form a trinity of powers. Tyranny is rendered practically impossible by the fact that all legislation must either emanate from the people through their duly elected representatives in the Commons, or be concurred in by them. Anarchy and revolutionary tendencies are held in check by the necessary passage of that legislation through the crucible of the House of Lords—exponents and representatives of vested rights. And all danger to the social edifice is obviated by the veto power of the monarch, who is the highest and final tribunal and whose power is consecrated in the olden legend that "the King can do no wrong." Thus the monarch cannot impose a law on the people that the latter section of that trinity has not accepted and even originated, while the masses cannot undermine constitutional authority, nor shake the fabric of the state without