

HON. THOMAS D'ARCY MCGEE,
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL, CANADA.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee, President of the Council and member of the House of Assembly for the Western Division of the City of Montreal, was born in Carlingford, County of Louth, Ireland, on the 13th of April, 1825. He went to the United States in June, 1842; remained there till May, 1845, and returning to Ireland in that year, was married. In 1846, and the two following years he joined the 'Young Ireland' section of political reformers in agitating for the repeal of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, and shared in some of its mistakes and all its misfortunes.

At this point we deem it requisite to be explicit as to what is now written, and why the present writer pens it. A memoir of the honorable gentleman having been promised by some of his friends to accompany the portrait in this issue of the 'Canadian Illustrated News,' but not being in hand when the paper is otherwise ready for press, the following recollections of 1848, and remarks on Mr. McGee as an author and orator, are presented to the reader, who is assumed to be a thinking, reasoning being, and one who can comprehend what is meant by sedition, and insurrection, and by the crime of inciting to insurrection and rebellion. The present writer has in various literary records, asserted that in no case can rebellion be justified under constitutional government, with a free press and free speech. He has insisted, in treating of the logic of revolutions, that in nations where the displaced roots and branches of political power remain, and must of necessity remain after a revolution, as in Britain and France, they retain vitality and may return to their place by the force of laws abundantly dispensed through human nature, and accomplish a result inexorable as destiny. That result is military despotism. Since this dogma was asserted, in a book written in Canada, a rebellion in America, alike unjustifiable and unnatural, a civil war horrible as it is unnatural, once more exemplifies its truth, and inspires sentiments of gratitude that for a long while past no rebellion has successfully distracted the British empire. This much it may be necessary to say in proceeding to notice some incidents in the life of Mr. McGee. No public man in this Province has done so much, as no other by force of true eloquence and logical reasoning probably can, to soften asperities between this side of the boundary line and the other. The present writer was, in 1847, sent to Ireland by the British government to observe and report privately on the width and depth of the misery of the Irish people in the famine, which followed the extinction of the potatoe—main article of their food. In 1848 he was again sent to watch and privately report on the progress of Smith O'Brien's agitations and threatened insurrection.

The year 1848 was the era of European revolutions. France exploded on the 22nd of February. The States of Germany and Hungary followed. The Chartists of England indulged in preparations for insurrection on the 10th of April. In Ireland, the beginning was to be 'when the harvest was ripe.' It began in August, at the homestead of Mrs. McCormack, near Ballingarry, in the county of Kilkenny. For months previously writers in the 'Nation' and 'United Irishman' newspapers had incited the Irish people to insurrection, by fierce denunciations of English rulers; by speeches of burning eloquence; by soul-stirring poetry; and lastly, by recommending the use of corrosive chemicals to be thrown on the military from roofs of city houses. It is known that Mr. McGee, though young and ardent, was not only more exalted than his coauthors in his poetry contributed to the newspapers, but more rational in his prose. He was not of the school of corrosive chemicals.

The London 'Times' in May 1832, when Britain, for a space of nine days, trembled on the balance between safety and civil war, the morrow promising any degree of catastrophe onward to revolution, contained incitements to insurrection as atrocious, more insidious, and vastly more dangerous than anything written by 'Meagher of the Sword,' or John Mitchel in the 'United Irishman.' The proprietors of the 'Times' were not prosecuted in 1832. There was then no government possessing political strength sufficient to dare such prosecution. But in 1848, the wind having changed, they spared no invective, no fact, no invention to overwhelm seditious Irishmen with vengeance and ridicule. The absurd story of Smith O'Brien hiding in a cabbage garden from the armed constabulary, was the invention partly of the 'Times' correspondent,

who has since written so largely and so graphically as a master of the picturesque, and partly of Mr. sub-constable Trant, of Callan, who met the correspondent at Kilkenny, and there recounted to him the events of the Ballingarry campaign. Mr. Trant told it in similar terms to the present writer, who, however, had examined the farm premises for himself; had seen that there were no cabbages to hide any one, and knew that cabbages could not cover a fugitive from a fire of musketry, the firelocks pointed through loop-holes in the barricaded house and commanding all parts of the garden.

Whatever was the measure of Mr. O'Brien's folly and crime, personal cowardice did not attach to him. Whatever poetry and enthusiasm Mr. D'Arcy McGee contributed to the fiery literature of young Ireland, he did not join in the coarser and more criminal sedition of writers less logical and reasonable.

Mr. McGee was not arrested with the other members of the young Ireland party on their dispersion in August, 1848. He took ship to the United States and lived there eight years. The 'know nothing' societies which claimed for native Americans all privileges and dignities and prescribed Irishmen as aliens, offended his judgment and insulted his countrymen. He removed to Canada in 1856, and at Montreal conducted a journal named the 'New Era.' In 1857, he was returned to the House of Assembly as one of the members for the city. His correspondence written from Toronto to the 'New Era' during the parliamentary session evinced a generous liberality to opponents. At the general election of 1861, he was re-elected by acclamation. Having studied for the bar, he passed in 1860, as every one knowing him expected, a brilliant examination. The first cause committed to his care was one of deepest gravity, the defence of a person accused of murder. He obtained a verdict of acquittal, an omen his friends hoped, of a successful professional life. But in a few weeks afterwards, May 27, 1862, Mr. Sandfield Macdonald having been entrusted with the formation of a new cabinet submitted the name of Mr. McGee to His Excellency the Governor General, who was pleased to confer on him the office and dignity of President of the Council.

Mr. McGee has given much attention in parliament, and as chairman of a committee, to the subject of emigration. When it is known that he is likely to make a speech, Quebec crowds to the galleries. As a popular lecturer he is unequalled. His reading in history has been extensive; his judgment is acute and generous. In the eloquence which is poetical, yet in matter of fact and argument logical; quiet in tone; deep in thought; charming in expression; we are constrained to affirm after listening to all the best British and Irish speakers of the last thirty years, that in none of the arenas where intellectual giants assemble is there an orator who equals the Honourable Thomas D'Arcy McGee.

Any person sending us the names of ten subscribers for three, six, nine, or twelve months, will receive a copy, free of charge, for each of these periods, respectively. Should these subscribers, for any term less than a year, renew their subscriptions, the paper will be continued to the names of the club.

The 'Illustrated News' is forwarded to subscribers by mail, free of postage.

Subscribers will please bear in mind that the paper is stopped, whenever the period for which they have subscribed expires.

If any of our Agents have back Nos. 1, 2 and 8, on hand, they will confer a favor by returning them to this office.

THE CANADIAN Illustrated News.

HAMILTON, FEBRUARY 7, 1863.

THE POLITICAL ASPECT.

THE political calm which we have enjoyed for the last few months has been lately disturbed by the announcement of the meeting of Parliament, on the 12th inst. Party organs are busily speculating on the probable contingencies of the Session. Ministerialists are confident of a complete triumph for the Ministry, while the Opposition is quite sanguine of a Ministerial defeat within the first month of the Session. It is difficult for an unbiassed mind to make out which of these predictions is nearest the mark. On the Ministry taking office last year, a very general desire was manifested of giving them a fair trial of testing their claims to support by their official conduct. Some disappointment was ex-

pressed by the advocates of Representation by Population, that that measure had been ignored. It was wrong on moral grounds—so it was agreed—for those who had persistently pressed it on the previous Ministry, to take office with men who were not prepared to settle it. But, if there are other reforms required, which Mr. McDonald's administration can give, and if Representation by Population would have been no nearer settlement, by their refusal to take office, the question of abstract morality will no doubt be allowed to take care of itself. Such at least is the view taken of the matter by a large majority of the Reform Party, while the Conservatives cannot make this measure a weapon of attack without belying their own assertion, that it is not yet ripe for settlement. It does not seem probable then, that ministers have any reason to apprehend present trouble from this source. The 'Credit Foncier' scheme and the Inter-Colonial Railway, will not be introduced, we are told. Thus two other troublesome questions will be got rid of. Both would be sternly opposed in Upper Canada, the former especially. A Bankruptcy bill, it is said, will be submitted. This will require careful handling; for while there can be no doubt that such a measure is urgently required, there is much danger of its giving rise to abuses unless its provisions are unusually adapted to meet the wants of the case. The chief ground on which the administration must rely for support, is their economical management of the public finances. This was a prominent feature in the policy which they announced on taking office. It was a reform of more pressing importance than any other required at their hands. By the avowed and tacit admission of all parties there was much room for improvement in this matter. The internal economy of the various departments were in a state in which no establishment, not having the resources of a government to lean upon, could stand. It was proved that prices immeasurably higher than their value were paid for almost everything the government consumed, yet the responsibility could be traced to no one. In saying this, let it not be understood that we join in the wholesale charges of corruption made against preceding Ministers in consequence. We all know the effects of a vicious system which has gained the sanction of time; but the system evidently needed improvement. To this work the present Ministry addressed themselves, and by the testimony of their organs, have labored at it with unwearied assiduity. They have discharged useless servants, and instituted investigation into the condition of the various departments of the service with a view to their reform. The fruits of all this labor will appear when the annual reports come to be published. Should these reports shew the retrenchment which we are told they will, there is no doubt that the Ministry will occupy a position in public estimation which will give the Opposition great trouble to deprive them of.

ARTEMUS WARD.—Charles F. Brown, otherwise 'Artemus Ward,' the showman, according to the Lexington Observer, is about to lead to the altar one of the most beautiful girls in Kentucky. The young lady is very wealthy too, possessing in her own right no less than one hundred 'contrabands.'

SEMMES, the pirate of the 'Alabama,' turns up to be of Philadelphia origin. His mother was a native of that city; the daughter of James Peale, who was the son of Charles William Peale, the founder of the celebrated Museum. Her sister married Dr. Staughton, once famous as a Baptist preacher.

WHEN we rise in knowledge, as the prospect widens, the objects of our regard become more obscure; and the unlettered peasant, whose views are only directed to the narrow sphere around him, beholds nature with a finer relish, and tastes her blessings with keener appetite than the philosopher, whose mind attempts to grasp an universal system.

HOME ITEMS.

Dr. J. A. Sewell has been elected Dean of the Medical Faculty of Laval University.

Wesley Todd, merchant, Brampton, was tried on Tuesday, at York Assizes, for forging the names of John Mathewson and John Todd, to two promissory notes, and found guilty, with a recommendation to mercy.

Dr. Skeffington Connor, M.P.P. for South Oxford, has been appointed to the judgeship of the Queen's Bench, left vacant by the death of Mr. Justice Burns.

Wm. Smith O'Brien has sent four pounds for the relief of the French sufferers, accompanied by a letter, in which he deeply regrets that the British Government did not join the Emperor in his mediation scheme.

The art of writing consists in the art of pleasing.

Sir John Beverly Robinson, Bart., President of the Court of Appeals and late Chief Justice of Upper Canada, died at his residence, Toronto, on Saturday morning, at nine o'clock, at the age of 72. This event, though by no means unexpected, caused deep and general regret.

J. H. Wright has on his case a portrait of De Haas, the well-known 'marine painter.' It promises to be a lifelike and spirited portrait of this artist. In counting our best portrait-painters (and there are few of them) we always reckon Wright. His talents have earned for and placed him in the first rank.

A 'sensation book' has been written by Michelet, the 'L'Amour' man. It is called 'La Sorrows.' Victor Hugo calls it 'profound and touching,' and George Sand says it made her sick, and kept her awake the whole night with horror and indignation.

The Emperor of Morocco has just ordered from a brewery in Vienna one thousand bottles of Ale.

The Hon. H. M. Foley, Post Master General, was entertained at a lunch by his friends in Berlin on the 27th ult. The Hon. gentleman stated, in the course of his speech, a confident belief that the ministry would be sustained by a majority from both sections of the country. The chair was occupied by H. S. Huber, Esq., Warden of the county.

D. and J. Sadler & Co., have in press a History of Ireland, from the earliest period to the present time, by the Hon. Thomas D'Arcy McGee. The work will be ready about March, 1863. The popularity of the talented author will, no doubt, secure for it a large circulation.

Reid Sanders, Son of George N. Sanders, while attempting to escape with rebel despatches was captured and sent to Fort La Fayette.

JENNY JUNE, who gossips so charmingly on ladies, dresses, tells us of something new in bonnets, in these words:—'An elegant novelty in reception hats is exhibited at Madame Tilmann's establishment on Ninth street near Broadway. It is of white royal velvet, ornamented with black lace and single superb plume, or a half wreath of rare flowers, arranged in a novel manner. Very beautiful head-dresses are made of velvet, with a diadem front, and star wrought in the centre with steel, and white plumes arranged so as to curl gracefully over the left temple and extend down below the ear.'

THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.—The Society has the following Missions at present in the Canadas, Hudson's Bay and British Columbia: Domestic Missions, 127; Indian Missions, 25; French Missions, 5; German Missions, 2; Missionaries to destitute settlers, 168; Missionaries to Indians, 24; Missionaries to the French, 3; Missionaries to the Germans, 2; Indian day schools, 21; Industrial schools, 1; Printing establishment, 1; Teachers, 17; Interpreters, 14; Members on domestic Missions, 15,790; Members on Indian Missions, 1,861; Members on French Missions, 110; Members on German Missions, 115. Total Missions, 150; total Missionaries, (besides those under Chairman) 197; total members, 17,876.

It appears that the operations of the past two years have been eminently successful, although from the expansive nature of the work, expenditure has been somewhat in advance of income.

Total Canadian Receipts	\$48,751 45
Grants from Parent Society	4,866 60
	\$53,617 05
Total expenditure for 1861-2	51,933 08
	\$2,316 03