

But the fame of the young writer spread to his native isle. Old Mother Ireland looked on her offspring with pride, and though it gave her pleasure to hear her son talked of and admired abroad in far off America, yet she felt she would rather have him home with her again to mingle with her affairs and take a lively interest in her politics. The great Daniel O'Connell, then in the very zenith of his power, feeling that the cause of the Irish reformation demanded the aid of all her best sons, and attracted by an article in a Boston paper written by Mr. McGee, used his influence with the proprietors of the *Freeman's Journal*, a Dublin daily paper, who wrote to McGee in 1845 offering him a handsome inducement for his editorial services.

McGee, as might be expected, accepted this proposal and returned to Ireland. O'Connell's ideas of working reforms for Ireland differed widely from McGee's. The former sought to accomplish his purpose by argument and legislation. In the House of Commons, in the presence of England's greatest Parliamentary celebrities, where a few short years before, Ireland's champion, Grattan, with the force of eloquence made the legislators listen to his earnest appeal, O'Connell's voice was heard. As an orator, with a strong fortress of invectives and witticisms, the great liberator stood unequalled. He could calm a multitude bristling with rage and indignation into a concourse of peaceable citizens, or he could make thousands of quiet peasantry grow into an army of savage soldiery with his great power of oratory. At times tears would course down the cheeks of men as he told them some sad and melancholy event, and at others roars of laughter would greet his sallies of wit and pleasantry. But although the "member for all Ireland," as O'Connell was called, had high command over his people, he was far from being what is termed a great statesman. A fluent debater, a learned scholar, a powerful rhetorician, a kind genial manner, were all the qualities O'Connell possessed and he used them without stint.

McGee on the other hand was young and inexperienced. His ready imagination, at one bound, cleared obstacles that obstinately presented themselves before the minds' eye of O'Connell. His impulsive nature "kicked against" the fetters that wedged in the opinions he must give vent to in the *Journal*. He could not say as much as he wished against England. He had to—as an American would say,—“draw it mild.” At this time a liberal party, consisting of young professional gentlemen of Ireland—lawyers, doctors, journalists, and collegemen—formed themselves into a *coterie* or rather a portion of a party, which was known as the “Young Ireland Party.” Of course McGee, with a temperament precisely similar to these mad-caps, at once associated himself with them and soon became a sort of leader among them. Their first project was the formation of a “Library of Ireland” which was to consist of a number of Shilling novels, in which the nationality of Erin was to shine conspicuously. The famine of 1847 “nipped in the bud” this idea; but about twenty volumes had been issued. They were immensely popular and sold readily. McGee wrote two of the works: “Art McMurrrough,” a memoir of an Irish King of the fourteenth century, and the other a series of biographical sketches of illustrious Irishmen who flourished in the seventeenth century. The “Young Irelanders” formed themselves into a party for the accomplishment of the measures advocated by O'Connell; but the “Liberator” was altogether too slow in his movements to satisfy them. They were young, hot-blooded and eager for the fray, and looked upon O'Connell as a machine too old and rusty to be of any service.

In 1848, feeling bitter towards England for real or imaginary wrongs, the