

filial affection, and becoming reverence for he was early taught "to honor his father and his mother." For the memory of the latter, whom he lost at a very early age, he entertained feelings of tender and enthusiastic admiration.

No doubt there were strong intellectual affinities between the mother and her son; and this sympathetic attraction created an indelible impression on the heart of the latter.

The subtle charm of divine poesy seems to have pervaded both; and this spell of fancy and feeling, of imagination and truth, may, in some sort, account for the magnetic attractions which governed the intercourse of the parent and child.

To talk about his mother was a source of unalloyed happiness to her son.

"My mother! at that holy name
Within my bosom there's a gush
Of feeling, which no time can tame,
A feeling which for years of fame
I would not, could not crush!"

According to his recollections of her, the subject of our sketch always alluded to his mother as a person of genius and acquirements, rare, in her own, or in any other class. She was endowed, as Mr. McGee was accustomed to say, with a fertile imagination as well as a cultivated mind.

Nature had given her a sweet voice and an exquisite ear, and the latter prescribed exact laws to the former when, bird-like, the owner thought fit to attune that voice to song. She was fond of music, as well as of its twin sister poetry. A diligent reader of the best books, she was also an intelligent lover of the best ballads, especially those of Scotland.

His mother, as we have said, was early removed from him by death. We may conjecture, since their natures and intellectual tastes were identical, that her death was like a severance of himself from himself.

We have no data that will enable us to bridge the time between his mother's death and his arrival on this continent at the age of seventeen."

On his arrival in Boston he became almost immediately connected with the press of that city. Kind fortune seemed to befriend him, and his industrious habits and fine talents soon gathered round him hosts of friends. He was in a short time placed on the editorial staff as a leading writer, and finally became editor of the *Pilot*. Boston was, then as perhaps it is still, the intellectual capital of the United States and the favored seats of its scholarship.

"Thus it was that D'Arcy McGee, the youth hungry and thirsty for knowledge and fame, found himself a resident of the New England States capital, with access to the best public libraries on this side of the Atlantic, and within reach of the best public lecturers on literary and scientific subjects. For at that day Emerson, Giles, (the county and countryman of the subject of our sketch,) Whipple, Chapin, and Brownson, lived in that city or in its vicinity. It was moreover the residence of Channing, Bancroft, Eastburn, Prescott, Ticknor, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and others, whose influence should have purified the moral atmosphere, and have made Boston to others, what we suppose it must have been to them, an appreciative and congenial home. It is not difficult to imagine, that D'Arcy McGee, the impulsive Irish lad, overflowing with exuberant good nature and untiring industry, with his full heart and active brain, soon found his way into meetings where learned men delivered lectures, or among the booksellers, whose shops such celebrities frequented. Neither is it a matter for surprise that he early attracted the notice of several of their number. Opportunities of speaking publicly are by no means uncommon in the United States, and we should imagine that Boston contained a great many nurseries, under different names, where the alphabet of the art could be acquired. Whether the scholar progresses beyond his letters depends very much on the furnishing of his

mind. The nerve and knack may be got by practice, but the prime condition,—having something to say,—must spring from exact thought, and severe study. We have every reason to believe that the subject of our sketch, even in his early youth, observed that condition; but we have no means of knowing where or in what way he acquired the fluent habit of graceful and polished oratory. For since he was enthroned on his mother's tea-table, and declared to listening friends that his name was "Norval," we have been unable to discover any intermediate audience between his select one at Carlingford, and his scientific one at Boston. Strange as it may seem, it is we believe, no less true than strange, that during his sojourn in Boston, between the years 1842 and 1845, when between the ages of seventeen and twenty, he had actually made his mark as a public speaker.

At the period we refer to, the "Lyceum System" as it has been termed, spread itself over the New England States. People desired to receive knowledge distilled though the brains of their neighbors. Lecturers were at a premium; and youth forestalled time by discoursing of wisdom, irrespective of experience. Thus it was that Mr. McGee, with a boy's down on his chin, and with whiskers in embryo, itinerated among our neighbors, and gave them the advantage of listening to a youthful lecturer, discoursing, we must be permitted to think, on aged subjects. What those subjects may have been we cannot conjecture; but we have little doubt that the reminiscences of Mr. McGee's lecturing life in those days are full of amusing as well as of instructive incident; for the period is, we think, coeval with a transition phase not only of the Irish, but of the American, mind.

Mixing, as he necessarily must have done, with all sorts and conditions of men, it was impossible that Mr. McGee should not have formed many acquaintances more or less valuable, and some friendships, it may be, beyond price. Among the latter it was his practice to make grateful mention of Mr. Grattan, then Her Majesty's Consul at Boston. Besides a name historically eloquent which he inherited, that gentlemen, it is said, possessed great intellectual acquirements as well as personal gifts. In the latter were included a kindly disposition and a cordial manner. It was therefore natural enough that he should have taken a warm interest in his enthusiastic countryman, and that from the treasury of his own experience he should have given the young writer and lecturer many valuable hints on the style and structure of literary work. Thus it chanced that the wise counsellor and the kind friend meeting in the same person, exerted no inconsiderable influence on the young enthusiast. Mr. Grattan's sympathies fell upon an appreciative mind; for Mr. McGee always spoke of his character with admiration and of his services with gratitude.

A new page in the eventful life of the subject of our sketch was however about to be opened. The obscure lad who had turned his back upon Ireland was about to be beckoned home again by the country he had left. The circumstances, apart from their political significance, were in the highest degree complimentary to one who at the time was not "out of his teens." An article, written by Mr. McGee, on an Irish subject, in the *Boston Pilot*, having attracted the attention of the late Mr. O'Connell, the former received, early in the year 1845, a very handsome offer from the proprietors of the "Freeman's Journal," a Dublin daily paper, for his editorial services."

This proposal he accepted and returned to Ireland, but shortly afterwards joined the staff of the *Nation* as associate editor, and became one of the "young Irishers." The political events which subsequently took place drove him out of Ireland and he escaped to America, where he again became associated with the Press, and between the end of '48 and beginning of '57, he published two newspapers, *The New York Nation* and the *American Celt*.

In 1857 Mr. McGee removed to Montreal, and at the general