

not at all afraid this constitution errs on the side of too great conservatism. If it be found too conservative now, the downward tendency in political ideas which characterizes this democratic age is a sufficient guarantee for amendment. Its conservatism is the principle on which this instrument is strong and worthy of the support of every colonist, and through which it will secure the warm approbation of the Imperial authorities. We have here no traditions and venerable institutions; here there are no aristocratic elements, hallowed by time and bright deeds; here every one is the first settler of the land, or removed from the first settler one or two generations at the farthest; here we have no architectural monuments calling up old associations; here we have none of those old popular legends and stories which in other countries have exercised a powerful share in the government; here every man is the son of his own works. We have none of those influences about us, which, elsewhere, have their effect upon government just as much as the invisible atmosphere itself tends to influence life and animal and vegetable existence. This is a new land—a land of young pretensions because it is new; because classes and systems have not had that time to grow here naturally. We have no aristocracy but of virtue and talent, which is the best aristocracy, and is the old and true meaning of the term."

But were I to speak for hours and read you the most copious extracts I would needs fail to adequately express the universality of his genius, the breadth and generosity of his sentiments, or the wealth and sincerity of his patriotism. I have no hesitation in saying that the time has come when McGee's works should be collected and given to the public, and a complete edition of his writings, including his lectures, poems and speeches, should not longer be withheld by his literary executors.

We are told that best men are moulded out of faults, and McGee had his share, and may be said to have been in some respects his own worst enemy; but it is pleasant for us to remember that for some time anterior to his death, he had foresworn those excesses which beclouded, to some extent, the purity of his life. The most serious charge that was brought against him, next to the false and infamous accusation that he had betrayed Ireland and her cause, was in connection with his alteration of political allegiance in leaving John Sandfield Macdonald and allying himself with his adversaries. I trust, Sir, the time will never come in Canada when the mere act of changing one's political opinions will, in itself, be considered disgraceful. Any such doctrine places a premium upon bigotry, hypocrisy and obstinacy, and a stumbling block in the path of truth and progress. The motive gives the colour to the act; and, whilst one cannot too severely condemn the turncoat who is moved by sordid considerations, no censure can be too loud for those who hurl at the head of men who change their front from honest conviction, charges of base purpose and ignoble motives.

Throughout his life McGee was always the personal friend of the best classes in the literary and social circles of his home; and his kindly dis-