

Port Hope, and could find no train for Toronto before four a.m. next morning.

When he reached Toronto he had a few hours of sleep. Friends and admirers soon invaded his rooms—(oh, who will save one from his friends?) They accompanied him to the County jail, to honor with a visit a fugitive slave then held in bondage. The slave owner had paid detectives and lawyers working for his extradition. Canadian sentiment arose up in protest against the extradition of the unfortunate. This was 1858, three years previous to the civil war which abolished slavery in the United States.

After ministering comfort and encouragement to the colored fugitive, and promising him all assistance to procure his liberty, Mr. McGee and friends were entertained with a sumptuous lunch by a fellow-countryman, who was then warden of the County Prison. Puns, anecdotes, champagne and unrestrained hilarity, made the banquet hours pass swiftly by. Mr. McGee was summoned from the "table d' hôte" to the rostrum in St. Lawrence Hall. Never was man in a worse predicament. He was not tipsy. He could walk steadily and converse most fluently and in all soberness of speech and argument. But he felt that there "was a bee in his bonnet," and he dreaded to appear before an audience such as might be expected to greet him in a public hall in Toronto. He feared that his normally extraordinary memory might fail him. And he was not far astray. He spoke very well and in his usual fascinating style of conciliatory exordium. Just one half hour, did memory do her functions happily and well; then she came and went, playing fantastic tricks, like Bottom in Mid-

summer Night's Dream. He wandered in his thoughts, and caught up again. This happened twice. "Mr. Chairman" said he, turning half round, "I must apologize for leading you over this wild goose chase to-night." Several in the audience began to have their own opinion about the wild goose chase.

The lecturer went on very well for another quarter of an hour, then he stopped suddenly and put his hand to his head, and said, "Mr. Chairman if you were up all night at Port Hope waiting to take the four o'clock train you would understand my position." He spoke beautifully for about twenty minutes longer, then came to another sudden stop. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "We have often heard that an Irishman is never at a loss for a word. But this evening, I am compelled to blush for my nationality." The cheers which greeted these words seemed to bring back the full tide of his memory and steady his nerves. He struck out into a most brilliant display of rhetorical argument and figures of speech, which he maintained unbroken and undiminished until his climatic peroration, which was followed by the genuine plaudits and hearty cheers of his entire audience.

Coming down from the platform he was first saluted by Mr. Oliver Mowat then M.P., who shook him warmly by the hand, and said he did very well indeed under the circumstances. About three weeks later Mr. McGee retrieved what he considered his disaster, by delivering in the Mechanic's Institute, one of the grandest, most eloquent and most successful lectures ever heard in Toronto, before the elite of Toronto's most highly educated and cultured citizens—subject, "John Milton, England's Greatest Poet."