

he has left behind? The gladness with which he accepted the flattering proposal must have been heightened by the knowledge that his selection was largely due to the personal approbation of the great O'Connell. And so in 1845 we find McGee again in the Green Isle, prepared to battle with his voice and his pen for the cause which was so dear to him; ready to devote his talents and his life to the service of his beloved Ireland.

It is unnecessary for me to describe to you the condition of affairs in Ireland at this period, for every Irishman is familiar with the facts. All was excitement and turmoil. O'Connell, till then the acknowledged and unquestioned leader of the Repeal agitation, was beginning to find that the younger spirits of the party no longer accepted with implicit obedience the edicts which he promulgated, but chafed like restive steeds under the restraints which he sought to impose upon their methods.

McGee, impatient at what he considered the too Conservative policy of the *Freeman's Journal*, joined Charles Gavan Duffy, Mitchell, Davis and Reilly, and with them made the *Nation* the mouthpiece of the party, which finally broke loose from the Repealers and decided upon more precipitate measures. The Young Ireland party, which, like hot and impetuous recruits, dashing ahead of the main line of an army are eager—alas! too eager—for the sudden encounter, was composed, as you know, of a brilliant galaxy of young Irishmen. Some of these illustrious youths in after life rose to positions of eminence; others never discovered the portals of the Temple of Fame. In the words of one of them:

"Some on the shores of distant lands  
 Their weary hearts have laid,  
 And by the stranger's heedless hands  
 Their lonely graves were made.  
 The dust of some is Irish earth,  
 Among their own they rest;  
 And the same land that gave them birth  
 Has caught them to her breast."

And though historians, looking on the events of those days with the clearer light which is now shed upon them, are disposed to condemn their imprudence and rashness, none can deny the unselfishness of their motives, or the power and talent which they displayed in the conduct of their agitation. The *Nation*, as I have said, was the organ of the party, and its poetry and prose, to both of which McGee largely contributed, fired the minds of the people in a manner truly wonderful.

But the end was to come, and youth was to regret and mourn that it had not listened to the voice of age and the sage advice of the experienced. Need I tell you of the dangers they ran; of their mad exploit and its disastrous finale; how McGee was arrested and released; and then, when in Scotland on a vain errand to arouse the Scottish to assist the scheme, learned of the failure of the rising, and was forced to flee for