

researches and his unflagging zeal in the perfecting of his greatest historical achievement;—those were days of great exertion and of labor, when men had neither stenographers nor typewriters, nor any of the aids that we enjoy, when the pen had to trace every line of composition and the lively imagination and quickly conceived ideas had to be curbed and bridled while the mechanical task of transcription was being accomplished. It might also be made more brilliant and enthusiastic were I to speak of him as a poet and to quote from his splendid volume of historical, patriotic, sentimental and Canadian poems—a veritable casket of glittering gems, each one of priceless value in the storehouse of English literature. Again, it might be more attractive and powerful were I to dwell upon McGee as an orator, and, giving samples of his logical, polished and eloquent lectures and speeches, show how in a transcendent degree he possessed the sublime gift of silver speech. But all these phases of his personality are, in a way, merely accidents in the great purpose of his well-filled career. They are the sparkling ripples that add picturesqueness and beauty to the stream of his life; beneath them, broad, deep, and powerful, flows on the great current of his almost prophetic statesmanship; and it is to this seer-like gift that he owes the deserved title of an Empire Builder.

RAISING THE CURTAIN.

I simply seek this afternoon to raise a corner of the curtain that has long hung between the eyes of the great public and the secret of McGee's wonderful career of less than forty years, and to afford to the men of our day a glimpse of the real principles that actuated him, in common with other gifted souls of the same nationality and of the same school, in the work they had set so determinedly before them.

Misjudged by some, misunderstood by others, McGee at one time was the victim of prejudices as unreasonable as they were blind, and at another period he was the victim of a blindness that was as irrational as it was prejudiced. The better to appreciate his career and the presence of the same all-embracing principle that accompanied him through all its vicissitudes—it is necessary to divide his life into two parts: his early years in Ireland and America, then his closing years in Canada. And that we may see how McGee was no exception among the men of his generation and of his country, I will have to ask you to come for a few moments, in spirit, to the early "forties" of the nineteenth century, and to glance at the remarkable lives and still more remarkable