

MCGEE'S TRIUMPHS AND MISHAPS.

By Rev. W. Flannery, D.D.

THE fame of Thomas D'Arcy McGee's eloquence soon became wide-spread. His utterances in the House of Legislature were not merely glossed over by the dailies of Montreal or Toronto, nor were his speeches in Parliament presented to the public in synoptic form like the oratorical attempts of other members. They were reported verbatim—and copied into every village weekly of the province. Needless to remark, when it was bruited either in Toronto, Quebec, or later in Ottawa, that Mr. McGee was expected to address the House, tickets of admission were eagerly sought for by the people of those cities; all available seats were occupied; members crowded in from the library and smoking committee rooms, and before a packed house, seated in breathless silence, the orator arose. Every ear was strained, and the closest attention was paid to every well-placed and well-fitting word, even of his introductory remarks. His voice had nothing of the deep baritone character, it was a sweet silvery penetrating mezzo-soprano, that without seeming effort on his part reached every angle and every ear in the remotest corner of the house. Of loud declamation there was not a vestige, and scarcely a change of attitude. He merely placed the fingers of his right hand occasionally on the palm of his left, then let both hands fall by his side, or on occasion lifted the right hand in solemn warning; but as he wound up a magnificent period

with an appeal to the justice of his cause or the manhood of his country, his whole frame shook, light darted from his eyes, he was so to say, transfigured.

Again and again rang cheers from the whole house, friends and opponents, Grits and Tories, sharing in the general applause and enthusiasm of the moment. Mr. McGee would then settle down to a calm discussion of the motion before the House, and criticise not only its details but the motives of its originators. He always had some harmless joke or witticism of original character to dispense, and frequently even the victim was compelled to share in the merriment its utterance created. Each member of the cabinet came in for his share; and not one of the ministers escaped.

Hon. W. Cayley, Receiver-General, in his canvass of Huron and Grey was reported to have presented small editions of the Bible to his supporters; he was not elected however. Mr. McGee adverted to the widespread rumor, and said that while the people were willing to accept the gospel of peace, they rejected the apostle. The Hon. Sidney Smith, Postmaster-General, in reply to complaints about the scarcity of post-offices—and the long distance many people had to travel to get their mail—arose indignant, and stated that there was no ground whatever for such ridiculous complaints,—he maintained that in every village and small hamlet, in fact wherever a