

The Catholic Register.

"Truth is Catholic; proclaim it ever, and God will effect the rest."—BALMEZ.

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D'ARCY MCGEE.

The "Register's" Suggestion Approved All Round.

What Our Contemporaries are saying.

The Sunday World

It is now nearly thirty years since the bullet of Whalen removed from the field of public affairs in Canada one of the most brilliant and fascinating figures that has ever appeared in the arena of Canadian politics. "An Exile from Erin" he came to our shores and by the witchery of art and charm of resistless eloquence won for himself an enduring regard in the affections of his chosen countrymen. Driven by adverse fate from the shores of Old



GAVAN DUFFY.

Ireland, he drifted first to American then to Canadian soil and found in the legislature of the nebulous nation a fitting field for the exercise of his gifts. At that particular period of this country's history he threw into the scale of its political forces the weight of his wisdom and his wit, and lived to see the warring forces reconciled, and class and creed and races and religions bound and blent together in the great consummation of Confederation.

It was a dark day in Dublin, where many days are dark, when the spirit of O'Connell passed away, freeing the eager agitators of the "Young Ireland" faction from the last restraint to their fatal ambition to realize visions by violence. Already the agitation for the repeal of the Union initiated by the great tribune had gone farther than his wildest dreams had ever ventured, and led by famine and strengthened by suffering had hovered dangerously near the perilous ridge of revolution. The flames his eloquence had kindled fed on the hopes his heart had cherished and the generation which echoed his denunciations to Britain rejected his counsels of peace.

The year 1848, which witnessed the occurrence of the rebellion which necessitated the departure of McGee from Ireland was one prolific of great events, not only in Ireland, but in almost every country in Europe. Throughout the whole of the Continent the smouldering spirit of revolution, so long subdued and crushed, at last burst forth with a tragic intensity which shook every throne in Europe.

And was it to be expected that Ireland, restless, emotional, impatient, would remain silent in the midst of this univer-

sal turmoil, particularly where the voice of the most eloquent orators had combined with the exaction of the land lords, and the energy of their bailiffs to convince her peasantry that they were the most injured people in the world. The agitation for the repeal of the Union inaugurated by O'Connell had, even before he died passed far beyond his control and fanned by the fiery eloquence of a rising generation of brilliant men, had developed into an impassioned agitation bordering very closely on revolution for the establishment of an independent Irish nation. And now the voice of the agitator and the zeal of the bailiff had found a terrible auxiliary in the great famine, which, sweeping over the country, completed the misery of the people and reduced the unfortunate peasants to a condition of abject destitution and poverty.

At this time D'Arcy McGee, as editor of the *Dublin Nation* was one of the most conspicuous of that brilliant band of Irish journalists who voiced the sentiments of the Young Ireland party, and vigorously incited the people to rise and emancipate themselves from British rule. They were no Home Rulers, but Nationalists out and out, and demanded nothing less than the complete independence of Ireland. They pointed with passionate indignation to the poverty of the people, to the exactions of the landlords, to the starvation of the peasantry, to the destitution of the country, and recklessly declared that all these had been caused by British rule, and would be cured by Irish independence. They painted with a glowing and poetic eloquence the future of an Irish nation with all her people rich and happy, sans landlords, sans bailiffs, sans famine, sans poverty, and the green flag over all. And the poor peasantry, hungry and ragged and driven to desperation by the terrible famine, but ever hopeful, ever imaginative and ever responsive to the voice of eloquence, prepared to arm themselves for the impending struggle, and with rusty muskets in their ragged arms go forth to fight for Ireland under the leadership of the valiant Dublin journalists. There is something strangely pathetic in the credulity of these people, who have so often failed but never faltered and knowing every mood but despair cower among their wretched huts and cherish a hope not born of idle dreams that all will be yet well. The sun forever sinking has never set on Ireland and the genius of her people is seen forever shining in the twinkle of an eye and the smile upon their lips and the unquenchable kindness of their large and loving hearts.

As time advanced, however, and his great oratorical powers, though not directed to any definite end, made him one of the most conspicuous, powerful politicians of the country. McGee began to acquire a genuine and permanent interest in those new political issues which formerly he had used as playthings. The ambition so rudely shattered in Ireland revived in his new sphere and he determined to fashion for himself a new career in Canada. He studied with much interest the short but romantic history of the new land and his poetical mind found abundant inspiration in the splendid scenery and legend-

ary lore of Quebec and the neighboring provinces. He loved to dwell on the times when the stately courtiers of Louis XIV. sailed over the sea to found a new and freer France beside the great St. Lawrence. He liked to dwell on the heroic achievements of Cartier, La Salle, Frontenac and Champlain and the heroic struggles of the red men to maintain the land against the strangers. He liked to tell of the rivalry of Saxon and Celt, of the heroism of our pioneers and the journeys of the priests and the planting of the cross in the wilderness. And he could paint in winning words a perfect picture of the great linked lakes so vast and mighty, waiting in the rustling forest for the commerce of the centuries, or tell of the broad pulsating rivers, the daring rugged mountains



THOMAS DAVIS.

the quiet fertile valleys and the forests of pine and fir and maple and the slumbering wealth of gold and silver and coal—all waiting for the wonderful days to be. With magical eloquence he would tell of chateau and hut and wigwam, seigneur and chieftain and settler, the ring of the ax, the crack of the rifle, the war cry of Iroquois, the whisper of the winds, the rustle of the forest, the birch canoe gently gliding down the musical running waters, the log cabin the forest, the settler over his fireside, the howl of the wolf in the distance, the harsh shriek from the forest, the sudden alarm, the crack of the trusty rifle, the brand of fire and burning hut, the death of torture, the requiem of the winds—the silence. All the mystery and misery, all the sunshine and sorrow, all the danger and the daring, all the turmoil and the triumph, and in it all and over all triumphant he would tell of the conquering Celt and Saxon, rulers of men and builders of nations; and so he spoke with music of thought and word and eye, music of soul and sense and sight and music of memory, mirth and myth.

And thus the brilliant exile learned to love the land he lived in, and his rich imagination going backward to the era of conflict returned to see the divergent forces reconciled, converging into the frame and form, pattern and proportion of a majestic nation, and with this brightest of pictures in his mind and on his lips D'Arcy McGee became the orator of confederation.

Never was the wayward Irish exile so supremely great as in that last pathetic struggle to rise above the darkness of the past when with full knowledge of the deadly risk he ran he told the honest truth of Ireland.

Nor will the people of this Canada, to which he gave the flower of his days, begrudge that in his dying hours his mind went back to that dear Ireland which for loving he had lost. The green grass grows on Irish soil and loving eyes turn backward to the land on whose gray hills and humble homes the sunlight of perpetual patriotism is seen forever shining and who can send her sons beyond the farthest seas and yet retain them to the very last. The debt we owe to Ireland for McGee this country has striven to repay with Blako. Over the same broad sea where fifty years ago the Irish lad came sailing to fame the fortune, now there has gone back to Irish soil a soldier well equipped with nature's choicest weapons and her wit, and let us hope that they who hear his voice and bow before the magic of his mind will feel some portion of that rare delight which thrilled Canadian hearts when the silvery voice of the "Exile of Erin" rang through our council halls.

E. HARRISON CROSS.

Canadian Freeman.

The Toronto REGISTER's suggestion that a monument be erected to the memory of D'Arcy McGee in Toronto should meet with approval all along the line. We hope at some future day to see monuments erected to both Hon. Mr. McGee and Hon. Mr. Fraser. Canadians owe the two great statesmen this mark of honor.

Halifax Chronicle.

Monuments have been erected to the memories of Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald and proposals are before the public to erect a monument to the memory of Thomas D'Arcy McGee. Very good, but where is the monument that should long ago have been erected to the memory of Joseph Howe, a greater and a better man than any of the three mentioned?

True Witness.

In the last issue the CATHOLIC REGISTER of Toronto struck a key note that should not be allowed to die away in echo. We hope, for the sake of our creed and race in Canada, that the suggestion made will be taken up on all sides and that the idea expressed will soon be carried to realization. The article to which we refer speaks of the statues of public men that are to be found in Canada and of those in contemplation, and it calls attention to the fact that while great, good and patriotic men are being honored by marble busts or bronze statues to perpetuate their names, one of the brightest, grandest figures on the field of our history—the late Thomas D'Arcy McGee—remains without any fitting public memorial. Although Mr. McGee was a poet of high order, an historian of undoubted powers, an orator of the first rank, and a statesman of great acumen, it is as one of the moulders of our Confederation that Canadians in general, irrespective of creed or race, should hasten to carry out the idea that the REGISTER so happily expressed.

What sympathies there are between kindred souls! what mystic ties of melody bind inspired bard to bard! When McGee heard of this noble deed, in honor of one of the sweetest singers Ireland ever produced, he could not resist the natural impulse of snatching